

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STALHAM FIRST SCHOOL**

Stalham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120854

Headteacher: Mrs J Edwards

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods  
21079

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 March 2003

Inspection number: 248188

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 – 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brumstead Road Stalham Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR12 9DG
Telephone number:	01692 580 557
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Lees
Date of previous inspection:	20 <sup>th</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods 21079	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion The Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb 9614	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M Best 10413	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Geography History	
Mrs E Pacey 25925	Team inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Stalham First School is situated near the centre of this small Norfolk market town. There are currently 107 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and eight. The majority of pupils live in the local town, although a small number, around 15 per cent, travel from further away to attend the school. Pupils come from a mix of social and economic backgrounds, with around 10 per cent being known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Very few pupils, less than one per cent, come from homes where the first language is not English. These pupils are competent in English and have no difficulty in taking a full part in school life. Thirty-two per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average, although none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Pupils' attainment when they start school is below average.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with standards in English, mathematics and science being average by the time they leave at the age of eight. Teaching for the youngest children is good, and they receive a flying start to their education. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with the partnership between teachers and their assistants being a significant strength. The school has weathered a significant period of uncertainty, with considerable movement of teaching staff and no headteacher for 18 months. The new headteacher, in post for a matter of weeks, has already made a considerable difference, raising morale and improving pupils' attitudes to their work. She provides good leadership and has the full confidence of governors and staff. Together, there is a strong, shared sense of commitment to improvement and a good capacity to succeed in bringing this about. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides clear and enthusiastic leadership for the school.
- There is a good, shared sense of commitment amongst all staff to succeed in improving standards.
- All additional staff; in the office, the caretaker, and teaching assistants; provide very good support for the school.
- The youngest children in reception enjoy a very good range of interesting activities.
- Standards in reading are above average.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities, including pupils' multi-cultural awareness, is very good.
- The school has very good links with the community, and good links with other local schools.

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

- Standards in design and technology, geography, history, religious education, and in pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of their work, which are unsatisfactory.
- Curriculum planning needs tightening.
- More effective use needs to be made of assessment information, particularly to set pupils targets in English and mathematics.
- The management roles of subject co-ordinators need improving.
- Governors' strategic role in monitoring the work of the school needs developing.
- The school's accommodation leaves a very great deal to be desired.

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

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

The school has made sound progress in addressing the issues from the last inspection in October 1997. Provision for the youngest children has improved significantly, and is now good overall. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) now meet expectations, and ICT is used appropriately to support work across the curriculum. Pupils also use their writing skills appropriately across the curriculum, although standards of presentation, handwriting and spelling need improvement. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects, but these are not being used effectively to provide a consistent, whole-school approach to developing pupils' knowledge and skills in all subjects, notably in design and technology, geography, history and religious education.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	D	C	B	B
Writing	C	C	B	A
Mathematics	D	D	A	A

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

The table shows that standards in the 2002 national tests in reading and writing were above the national average, and were well above average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, based on free school meals statistics, attainment in reading was above average, and in writing and mathematics was well above average. Standards vary each year, depending on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs within each small year group, and the school has effective systems for predicting attainment year-on-year. School evaluation judges that standards for current Year 2 pupils in the 2003 tests will be average, and inspection findings agree with this prediction. For current pupils, attainment in English, mathematics and science is average. Those pupils who took the tests in 2002, now in Year 3, are consolidating their work within National Curriculum Level 3, which is appropriate for their age, and making steady progress. Standards in art and design, information and communication technology, music and physical education meet expectations for pupils' ages throughout the school. In design and technology, geography, history and religious education, standards are below expectations, because there is insufficient attention to developing pupils' knowledge and skills in a progressive way in these subjects. Additionally, standards in pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of their work are unsatisfactory, and the school is aware that this needs addressing as a matter of urgency.

Children join reception with below average levels of attainment. They are making good progress in a lively and stimulating environment, and are on course to achieve standards which meet expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Progress in their personal, social and emotional development is slower, but the majority of children will meet expectations for their age by the end of the year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The majority of pupils are interested, and work hard. The overall positive picture, however, is marred by a minority who do not concentrate well, and are particularly noisy during lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils follow rules conscientiously and care for each other. Some lack of respect, however, is shown to teachers during some lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults are good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, carrying out duties conscientiously.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are punctual in the morning. However, too many holidays are taken during term time.

It is a pity that the behaviour of a minority of pupils mars the overall positive picture, but this is improving as a result of consistent implementation of shared expectations and values by all staff.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Good	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.*

Teaching is satisfactory overall, and good for the youngest children in reception. The school has suffered a high level of disruption amongst the teaching staff, and current teachers are determined to improve both provision and standards. The reorganisation plans in place for April mean that they have a good capacity to succeed in this. The partnership between teachers and their assistants is very good, and a significant strength of the school.

Teaching in reception is characterised by a clear understanding of the needs of young children and their curriculum entitlement. Lessons are planned in detail to provide a rich range of experiences, and all adults working in this area are adept at encouraging children to think and talk about what they are doing. The quality of learning is good as a result, and children make good progress. In the infants and juniors, teachers have a sound understanding of the subjects they teach, and work hard to make lessons interesting and relevant. Teaching in English and mathematics is sound and pupils make steady progress in acquiring the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, teachers expectations of pupils' handwriting, spelling and overall presentation are not high enough. These mar the quality of pupils' written work, and restrict their progress overall. Teachers manage pupils well, and work hard to ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons, but a significant minority of pupils do not show sufficient respect, and dealing with them takes a disproportionate amount of time, affecting the overall quality of learning in some lessons. Teachers' planning in the short term is satisfactory, and in most lessons, work is matched appropriately to pupils' age and abilities. Planning over time, however, lacks cohesion, and as a result, progress in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills is not secure. The use of assessment, particularly to set individual pupils targets in English and mathematics, is underdeveloped.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Curriculum requirements are met, but planning of the curriculum, particularly for mixed age classes, needs improvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. These pupils are identified at an early stage and supported appropriately. Management of provision is sound.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very few pupils in the school come from homes where the first language is not English. They are confident in English and they have no difficulty in taking a full part in all aspects of the school's life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision is good for pupils' personal, moral, social and cultural development, and satisfactory for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good, but the use of assessment needs improving.

Partnership with parents is good. Provision for pupils' multi-cultural development is very good, as is provision for activities outside lessons. This is in part a result of the very good contribution by the community to support the quality of learning in school and also the result of good links with other schools in the area. Curriculum planning is an area for development, as it does not provide sufficient guidance on the progressive development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound, but the information is not used sufficiently rigorously to set targets for pupils to reach.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The new headteacher provides good leadership, and has had a positive impact on morale and attitudes in her short time in school. Management is satisfactory, but the role of co-ordinators needs developing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors bring a good degree of expertise to their roles, and are fully committed to implementing these effectively. Many, however, are new to their roles, and overall their strategic involvement in monitoring the work of the school needs developing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The school has a clear picture of strengths and areas for development, and the school improvement plan is a useful tool to aid it in identifying and monitoring progress towards necessary improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. As a small school, income per pupil is high, but all resources, human and material, are used to best advantage for the pupils.

Staffing levels are good. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the age groups and subjects they teach, and the support they receive from teaching assistants is very good. Resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is sufficient in size for the number on roll, but is unsatisfactory overall. Most classrooms are small and cramped, particularly for the youngest children; the hall is a dreary building with a floor in need of urgent attention, and the number of outside doors makes these very difficult to oversee. The school makes the best of these inadequate buildings, and applies the principles of best value satisfactorily in all its decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Five parents attended the meeting with inspectors, and 42 per cent of questionnaires were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good, the school has high expectations and children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is approachable when they have problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• Some parents do not feel there is a sufficient range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors mainly support parents' positive views about the school, although they feel expectations could be higher and progress could be better. They do not agree that parents are not kept well informed; news and other letters and pupils' annual reports are detailed and useful. They do not agree that the range of activities outside lessons is insufficient. The range of these is very good, and makes a positive contribution to the quality of learning in the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children all join the reception class in September, with the youngest attending school part time for the first term. They have a good start to their education in a rich and interesting environment. Children's attainment on entry to school is below average, particularly in relation to their personal, social and emotional development. The significant improvements to provision at this stage, and good teaching, mean that children make good progress in their learning, and are on course to meet expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development by the end of the year. Improvement in their personal, social and emotional development is slower for some children, but consistent attention to this important aspect means that the majority are likely to meet expectations for their age by July.
2. In the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards in reading and writing were above average compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, standards in reading were above average, and in writing were well above average. In mathematics, attainment was well above both the national picture and standards in similar schools. Teacher assessment of attainment in science was equally positive, with all pupils reaching the expected Level 2, and a third of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Standards vary considerably each year, because the size of each year group taking the tests is quite small. With about a third of the school identified as having special educational needs, the proportion of such pupils in each group has a significant impact on overall standards. The school, however, has effective systems for tracking and predicting attainment in the tests and these are mainly accurate. Inspection findings show that attainment in reading is above average, and in writing, mathematics and science is average for current Year 2 pupils. Pupils in Year 3 are working at levels appropriate for their age, and their attainment in English, mathematics and science is average.
3. Throughout the school, attainment in information and communication technology meets expectations, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards in art and design, music and physical education also meet expectations. In design and technology, geography, history and religious education, standards are below expectations, because there is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and skills in a progressive way. Additionally, in all year groups, standards of presentation, handwriting and spelling mar the overall quality of pupils' work, and these are unsatisfactory.
4. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and receive appropriate support, particularly from teaching assistants. They make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, and attain standards in line with their abilities.

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

5. The school continues to promote the positive attitudes to work and sound values recorded at the time of the last inspection. Children and pupils like their school and the majority arrive on or before time in the mornings. Registration provides a calm start to the school day. Attendance is satisfactory, although too many are taken on holiday during term time despite the school's alerting parents to the disadvantages to their children's education through absence from lessons.
6. From the time they arrive in the reception classes, children quickly learn what is expected of their behaviour and how to work and play well together. Most enjoy their lessons to the full and, especially when challenged, want to please their teachers although they can be chatty. Most are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy new experiences. Those in reception were entranced by their parachute, excited to see how their movement of the 'chute resulted in rippling waves and delighted laughter was heard as two of their number successfully changed places before the 'chute collapsed. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 were dismayed to see the size of the weekly cheese and butter allowance when rationing was in force during World War II and asked intelligent questions of the governor who had experienced this. They were interested to hear that only four people in Stalham owned cars during this period. Year 1 pupils love reading and one, unprompted, gave a very good and

expressive rendition of Dr. Suess' *Pale Green Pants*. Pupils' relationships with adults and their peers are good, and they trust adults to deal effectively with any problems.

7. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils know the rules and most endeavour to follow these. When pupils' interest has not been captured, they 'switch off' and inappropriate or silly behaviour occurs. Some lack of respect is shown to teachers during these lessons, for example, when pupils talk 'over' them. However, the majority respond to 'take five' quite quickly and the school is an orderly community overall. The most effective sanction is teachers' disappointment and further action is rarely necessary. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to work and try hard, although some find it difficult to sustain their concentration. Outside, pupils enjoy exuberant play and respond well to the supervisors. Inevitably, minor incidents occur but these are dealt with efficiently and pupils are concerned if one of their number is hurt.
8. Pupils' personal development is good. They relish responsibility and, for instance, are proud to carry the registers back to the office. Those in reception are keen to share with and to help others. Lunchtime is a sociable experience. Pupils quickly develop a sense of natural justice, and they care for those younger than themselves as well as for those experiencing difficulties. They collect for charities and are aware that some others are less fortunate than themselves.

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

9. Teaching in reception is good, and the partnership between the teacher and her assistants is a strength. All adults working with these young children understand their needs well. They are adept at interacting closely with children as they work and play encouraging them effectively to think and talk about what they are doing. The teacher plans an extensive range of interesting and relevant activities, effectively interlinking the areas of learning in the recommended curriculum for the age group. As a result, the atmosphere in reception is lively and stimulating and children thoroughly enjoy their learning.
10. Teaching in the infant and junior classes is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and just under half of lessons were good or better. As in reception, the teamwork between teachers and their assistants is a strength, and teaching assistants play an invaluable role in supporting pupils' learning and helping manage their behaviour.
11. Daily planning covers curriculum requirements appropriately and teachers have a sound understanding of the subjects they are teaching. Teachers amend their planning when necessary, as a result of the success or otherwise of lessons, and ensure curriculum requirements are covered. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily, and pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring these. Work is mostly matched appropriately to the age and abilities of the pupils on a day-to-day basis, but teachers' expectations, particularly of how much work pupils will complete and the presentation of their work including handwriting and spelling, are not always high enough. As a result, whilst pupils make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding, this is not consolidated in their written work, which is often scrappy and untidy. This is not helped by the high level of worksheets used, which make it difficult for both teachers and pupils to look back over what they have done and see how they are improving.
12. Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods to make lessons relevant to pupils' interests. Where this is most effective, as in a very good Year 3 history lesson on life during World War II, lessons buzz with a lively atmosphere of interested conversation and the quality of learning is good as a result. Teachers' own enthusiasm is effectively shared with the pupils, and the pace of learning is good. In a very good Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were very eager to be chosen to participate in the number line, as the rest of the class placed them in the correct order. Teachers, however, seldom share the aims of the lesson with the pupils, and this results in them being unclear about what they are expected to do, and slows the pace of learning. Additionally, many pupils have short attention spans, and teachers and teaching assistants have to work very hard to maintain their levels of attention and application, as in a Year 1 personal, social and health education lesson. Noise levels in many lessons rise as pupils' attention wanders, and not all conversation is relevant. This slows the pace of learning. Teachers manage pupils well, and constantly reinforce their expectations of good behaviour and hard work, but this is often an up-hill struggle, particularly in Year 1.

13. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is sound. Teaching assistants in particular make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, through their effective support both in the classroom and in additional small group support.
14. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with groups of pupils during lessons, ensuring all are included fully in activities. They encourage pupils effectively to maintain concentration and work hard, which supports their progress well in the short term. Teachers mark pupils' work on completion, but seldom write challenging or evaluative comments on this, to encourage pupils to improve on their efforts. English targets are set, but these are too broad and general, and do not make a useful contribution to enabling pupils to have a clear knowledge of their own learning. Mathematics targets are not set, and this is unsatisfactory. Homework is used appropriately to supplement learning in school.

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

15. The curriculum in the pure reception class is planned comprehensively to cover the six areas of learning recommended for the age group. These children receive a broad, interesting and stimulating range of experiences in which learning is relevant and fun. The few reception children in the mixed age class with Year 1 do not have the same access to a curriculum planned around the areas of learning. These children cope well with the work they are given, and opportunities are provided for them to work with the rest of their year group from time to time.
16. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is broad, and includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum including religious education. Provision for sex education, education about drugs misuse and personal, social and health education are all sound. Satisfactory progress had been made in addressing the issue relating to the curriculum reported by the last inspection, and all subjects now have schemes of work. However, insufficient attention is paid to some elements within subjects, for example, the design and evaluation elements in design and technology, and the use of sketchbooks within art. The school is also aware that the use of time during the school day results in some sessions being too short to be fully effective. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are given suitable emphasis, but their impact is being restricted by a lack of rigour in implementing basic skills, such as handwriting and spelling throughout the curriculum.
17. Weekly and termly planning ensures that all subjects are covered appropriately. However, the system is rather cumbersome, and is accompanied by a wide range of different planning formats, and there is no whole-school overview of the topics to be taught. As a result, it is difficult to monitor the curriculum and ensure that pupils are taught different topics each year when they spend a second year in the same class. Teachers are concerned to plan their work appropriately, but they plan independently for their own pupils and there is too little consultation between teachers. As a result, pupils of the same age in different classes receive a different curriculum. For example in science, one class studied how plants grow, whilst pupils of the same age in another class did not. In classes with mixed age groups, the same work is planned for all pupils. Planning does not take into account the varying maturity, development and experience of pupils of different age groups. There are few references in planning documents to the sequential development of pupils' skills and understanding as they progress through the school. As a result, not all pupils receive an appropriate and relevant curriculum for their age. Additionally, teachers are not able to build on the necessary skills appropriately, and these are consequently frequently underdeveloped, such as thinking and reasoning skills in science, and speaking skills in all subjects.
18. A positive feature of the curriculum is the rotation of whole school topics on Africa, India and China in a three-year cycle. During these topics, all pupils engage in exciting and stimulating creative work suitable to their stage of development, and all take part in the same school visits to enrich their learning. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the school's curriculum. The National Curriculum is not disapplied or modified for any pupil. However, whilst the school strives to be inclusive and to create an atmosphere in which all boys and girls are equally valued during lessons, with much success, pupils in mixed age classes are frequently offered different opportunities. For example, recorder lessons and computer club are given to one group of pupils, but not to others of the same age. Occasionally, attending activities such as recorder groups result in pupils missing other aspects of the curriculum, and timing of these should be reviewed.

19. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Popular clubs include computer club, football, music and drama, 'Little Bloomers' gardening club and a German club who sing to local senior citizens at Christmas. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Most recently the work of a visiting African artist in school provided a stimulating opportunity for pupils to learn about art in other cultures that they talk about very enthusiastically. Good links are fostered with other schools in the area, particularly with others in the cluster group, with many shared events. Pupils from the high school visit to demonstrate and share their talents when playing musical instruments. A science afternoon and visit to the high school production of the Wizard of Oz was clearly beneficial and enjoyed by all who participated. Good liaison with the middle school for a puppet show and multicultural events help to make the transition to the next school smooth and efficient.
20. The very good involvement of the community makes a particularly positive contribution to the good provision for pupils' cultural development. For example, pupils make the palm crosses to be distributed in the local Church on Palm Sunday, and assemble the oranges and candles to be used for the Christingle service. Pupils were involved in the opening of a local Fire Museum with their Member of Parliament. Members of the local gardening club helped pupils to make flower boxes to improve the environment in the playground and at the Town Hall. With the support of the community, pupils were instrumental in obtaining a traffic-calming scheme outside the school. Provision for pupils' multicultural development is very good. For example, during the current topic of 'Africa', a multicultural day was shared with other local schools, at which pupils had the opportunity to join in with African dance, music and art. Teachers' planning and photographs demonstrate that this is part of an ongoing cycle of multicultural events. There is a good range of multicultural books in the school and very good provision of dual text reading and other books. Posters of Arabic letters and numbers and displays of very good artefacts all combine to stimulate pupils' awareness of the richness of a variety of cultures as well as their own.
21. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. All adults in the school set good examples and help pupils to learn the difference between right and wrong. During lessons, pupils are reminded of how their actions affect others and begin to respect other people's feelings. Class and school rules are known and understood by the pupils. Assemblies provide a moral framework for pupils to consider issues, such as bullying and how to deal with it. Provision for pupils' social development is good. They have a strong sense of belonging to the school and care well for one another during playtimes. Year 2 pupils for example, talk proudly about their role in caring for very young children on the playground. They enjoy belonging to clubs and care about their contributions to the school environment. They are justly proud of their contributions to the community, such as the improvement to road safety outside the school. The majority of pupils work together co-operatively. However, a significant minority find it hard to listen to their teachers and one another, or to share ideas and apparatus.
22. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. A good range of assemblies taken by visitors and staff help pupils to develop an awareness of values held by others. During assemblies, they learn that prayer is 'talking to God' and begin to understand that faith affects the way in which people act, for example, when listening to the story of David and Goliath. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities during the school day to take advantage of other areas of the curriculum to develop spiritual awareness by understanding their own or other peoples' beliefs.

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

23. The school has satisfactory procedures in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and the caretaker deals with what he can as soon as problems appear. All staff have been trained in first aid and practice is good. Pastoral care is effective. The headteacher, as the designated teacher for child protection, has received recent training, and local education authority guidelines are followed appropriately. Useful links with external agencies support the school's work well. In particular, the partnership with the speech therapist is very good, and his support in early identification and providing strategies for dealing with problems is valued highly.
24. Good systems for behaviour management are effective, and beginning to have a positive impact. Almost all staff have now received training, although not all use the new 'give me five' strategy. The Golden Rules and rules negotiated in class provide a good structure. Stickers, awarded for

behaviour as well as attitude and achievement, are effective incentives to persuade pupils to behave well, and they try hard to obtain these. Sanctions are few and can include privileges withdrawn. Adult disappointment is usually sufficient to contain any inappropriate behaviour. Bullying behaviour and racist remarks are not tolerated. Exclusion is very rarely used.

25. The school has satisfactory procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance. Most parents respond to the expectation that they will notify the school why their child is absent on the first day of absence. The education welfare officer visits regularly and will be involved in the school's planned initiative to improve the attendance percentage.
26. Procedures for promoting and monitoring personal development are good overall, although this is only recorded in pupils' annual reports. Teachers know their pupils well, and expect them to respond well when entrusted with responsibilities. These include acting as class helpers or ringing the bell at the end of break times, which pupils enjoy. Group sessions known as Circle Time, linked to assembly themes, are useful for resolving disagreements and alerting pupils to problems they may meet outside their school environment.
27. The school maintains satisfactory records about pupils with special educational needs. The recent adoption of a computer program for writing individual education plans is a positive improvement. The targets in more recent individual education plans are much sharper. There are satisfactory procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress. However, some individual education plans do not record the outcomes of reviews.
28. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in all subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory. Children's attainment is assessed carefully when they start school, and significant developments are noted carefully on a daily basis, by both the teacher and her assistants. As a result, the school has a comprehensive understanding of the progress of children in reception, and the information gained is used to identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. Results of national tests are analysed in detail to highlight areas of the curriculum that need improvement, and suggest how results might be improved. Pupils' progress is tracked in English and mathematics, but this is a recent innovation and has not had time to make an impact on standards or the rate of pupils' progress.
29. Overall, the use of information gained by assessment in the infants and juniors is unsatisfactory, and the school is aware that this key issue needs addressing as a matter of urgency. Reading records are kept, but the use of evaluative or informative comments is inconsistent. Teaching assistants work closely and well with teachers, but they are not being used to record pupils' responses during lessons. There is little evidence of teachers keeping day-to-day records of what pupils know, understand and can do, that can be used to help them plan the next stage of learning. As a result, teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils of different ages or those who learn at different rates in the class. A useful, simple system has been introduced to note pupils who have succeeded and those who have found work hard at the end of each unit of work in different subjects. However, it is not used consistently or effectively to support teachers' planning.
30. Teachers collect examples of pupils' work, but the content of the samples, and consequently the usefulness of these, is inconsistent. For example, in one class there was little evidence of work other than in English and mathematics. The work in these samples is often undated, and there are few comments to show what the purpose of the work was and how it was tackled. There is seldom any indication of how the work matches the levels in the National Curriculum. Similar collections of work have started in relation to individual subjects, but the same deficiencies exist in these. Teacher assessments of the levels of work achieved by pupils are mainly accurate, but there is insufficient evaluative marking to make pupils aware of how they can improve or what their teachers expect of them. Targets are set for individual pupils in English. None are set in any other subject. However, the targets are general and not based on the specific needs of individuals to help them raise their standards. Pupils are not involved in setting these targets and they are unable to say what they need to do in order to improve.

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

31. The school has satisfactory links with parents. They approve of its aims and ambitions for their children and a good relationship is developing between school and home. Most have signed the

home/school agreements. Parental support is strong but, despite encouragement, very few help in school. The school has recognised the need to involve parents further and is planning for this. In Year 1, at least half a dozen parents regularly come into school to settle their children in the mornings and they are all welcomed to do so. An 'open door' policy is in force. Attendance at consultation meetings is good, and when productions take place the hall is filled to overflowing with parents and siblings keen to celebrate what 'their' child can do. The 'Parent Teacher and Friends Association', organised by a dedicated few and supported by parents and teachers alike, run successful fun and fund-raising events. Their contributions include subsidising the trip to Suffolk Wildlife Park and giving £100 to each class. The summer fete and Christmas fair are enjoyed by members of the local community as well as parents and relatives.

32. The information parents receive through the school brochure, governors' annual report, booklets and weekly newsletters is good. Parents like the annual reports which detail how their children can improve. If unsure or needing assistance, parents know they can always ask the secretary for help or approach teachers at any time. Use of the home reading records is variable and therefore not always a reliable means of communication between home and school. A minority of parents have chosen not to become involved with their children's lives at school but most endeavour to help their children with work at home. Where this help does not occur, the school compensates, for example, by hearing these children read every day. The school reports that it maintains regular contact with parents and carers of children with special educational needs and invites them to attend review meetings. However, there is little documentary evidence of their attendance and contribution.

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

33. The school has suffered a considerable period of uncertainty, without a headteacher for eighteen months and with a significant amount of change amongst the teaching staff. The deputy headteacher worked hard to maintain stability during this time, but morale and development inevitably suffered. The new headteacher, in post since the beginning of this term, has already had a marked impact on morale, and on improving pupils' attitudes to their work. She provides clear, determined and energetic leadership and has the full support of governors and staff. She has identified a number of areas for improvement, and the school improvement plan is a detailed and comprehensive document, providing a useful tool in identifying, evaluating and prioritising areas for action. She welcomes the inspection findings to support her drive to improve the quality of education and standards in the school.
34. The teamwork and shared commitment to improvement to the quality of learning, and hence standards, amongst all who work in the school is a strength. The aims of the school are reflected well in its daily life, and the school is a warm, caring and inclusive society in which all are valued for their contribution.
35. Management is satisfactory. Recent improvements have led to co-ordinators having a greatly increased awareness of the importance of their roles, and they are working hard to implement these. Most have clear views on how their areas of responsibility should be developed, and many have produced action plans to implement this. However, much of this is at an early stage of implementation, and both the overview of curriculum planning and monitoring of standards are underdeveloped. The school is aware that this is a key issue in need of urgent attention. The headteacher's heavy teaching commitment means that she has limited opportunities for formal monitoring of teaching, but she has a satisfactory overview of the quality of teaching and learning through her regular informal class visits and personal involvement.
36. Management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The headteacher takes over the co-ordination of this area of the school's work at the start of the next term. She has a clear vision for its future development, and from September, she is relinquishing her class teaching commitment to enable her to devote more time to all aspects of management. The governor responsible for special educational needs has only recently taken on this responsibility but demonstrates a clear understanding of her role and ways in which she can support the special educational needs co-ordinator.
37. Governors are fully committed to the school and bring a good degree of expertise to their roles. Many are regular visitors and provide invaluable practical support, for example sharing personal experiences during the war to bring history to life, and running a music club for the youngest pupils.

Committees and the full governing body meet regularly, and are kept fully informed by reports from the headteacher. Many governors are very new to their roles, however, and whilst they have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, their strategic involvement in monitoring its work is unsatisfactory. Governors are determined to improve on this, and the governing body has a useful action plan to support its development.

38. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers, very well supported by dedicated teaching assistants, to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum. Very good team-work is evident in lessons, and the small, friendly staffroom ensures good communication. Procedures for induction and support for newly qualified teachers are effective. Performance management systems are satisfactory, and are to be reviewed by the new headteacher. The competent, approachable secretary and very willing caretaker make important contributions to the smooth running of the school.
39. Although of sufficient size for the number on roll, the accommodation is difficult to manage and is unsatisfactory overall. The Early Years building is damp and draughty, and is not suitable for the youngest children. There is too little space for role-play and other activities, although staff have created a very attractive jungle area which is well used and loved. To reach the hall, used for assemblies, physical education lessons and lunch, a walk across the playground is necessary; the building is dreary and the hall floor is not in good condition. In the main building, classrooms are cramped, and some can only be accessed through others or outside. Lively wall displays celebrate pupils' work and teachers successfully provide a stimulating environment for them, an example of which is the striking multi-cultural area in one class. The caretaker and cleaner endeavour to keep all areas as clean as possible and lettings do not affect pupils' use of the buildings. The small library area has multiple functions, including cooking, which limits pupils' opportunities to carry out independent research or to browse. The staff room is a corridor between office and classrooms. With so many external doors, no one person can oversee all entrances.
40. Outside, reception children now have an enclosed, secure area of good size but, despite frequent promises of refurbishment, the other tarmac-ed areas are still 'tired' and bumpy, and many markings have almost disappeared. The large field is used only when the weather allows, but the millennium garden is in regular use. This is an attractive feature which parents helped to create. There has been little vandalism and the grounds are free from litter and graffiti.
41. The school has adequate resources to teach the National Curriculum subjects and these are good for teaching religious education, music and the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of the local education authority loan service for history artefacts, and the library van visits regularly. Books in the school library area and classrooms tend to be worn but include a good range of multi-cultural and dual language text books.
42. Day-to-day administration is very good and the office runs very smoothly. Financial management and control are very secure. The budget is carefully prepared, with the assistance of the local education authority finance officer, by the secretary and the headteacher and presented to the governors' finance committee. Monitoring of expenditure against budget and of allocated grant funding is good, and the secretary attends finance committee meetings to answer any queries. The higher than average carry forward figure has been spent appropriately, and will reduce to 5 per cent of the total budget in the coming year. Best value is sought for all purchases, but the school does not analyse the impact of expenditure on standards. Although the income per pupil is high, this is a small school, and funds are spent effectively for the benefit of the pupils.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) raise standards overall, particularly in pupils' speaking and thinking skills, their handwriting, spelling and presentation, and in history, geography, religious education and design and technology by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' contribution to lessons and presentation of their work;
  - developing a consistent, whole school approach to teaching handwriting and spelling;
  - ensuring that the aims of the lesson are shared consistently with pupils, so that they are clear about what they are expected to do;
  
  - developing a clear, useful and easily usable whole school approach to planning the curriculum so that:
    - full coverage of curriculum requirements is secured;
    - pupils' knowledge and skills in all subjects are developed in a continuous and progressive way;
    - similar work is provided for pupils of the same age in different classes;
    - all pupils have equal access to the opportunities provided;
  
  - using information gained through assessment thoroughly so that:
    - all pupils are set specific and challenging targets in English and mathematics;
    - targets for pupils with special educational needs are sharper, and additional to, and different from those in English and mathematics;
    - information on pupils' personal development is recorded systematically;
    - work is planned effectively to build on what pupils know, understand and can do;
  
  - enhancing the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring of planning, delivery and the outcomes of pupils' work;
  
  - developing the strategic role of the governing body in monitoring and challenging the work of the school;

*(paragraphs 3, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 26, 27, 29, 30, 35, 37, subject sections)*

- (2) pursue as a matter of urgency improvements to the accommodation where:
  - space available for the youngest children is inadequate for their needs, and is damp;
  - access to some classrooms is only through other classrooms or from the outside;
  - the hall floor is in need of attention;
  - the number of external doors required for access makes these difficult to oversee effectively.

*(paragraphs 39, 40)*

In addition to the issues above, the school could consider the following points for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- adjusting the structure of the school day to make optimum use of time available (16)
- improving pupils' spiritual development by maximising on all opportunities (22)
- improving provision for and use of the library (39, 55)
- providing more large scale apparatus and wheeled toys to support children's physical development, and equipment for physical education overall (48, 84)
- improving provision for whole-class teaching in information and communication technology (78, 79)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	3	11	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	11	41	48	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 nearly four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	9	21

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

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (79)	100 (79)	100 (79)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Where the number of either boys or girls within the year group is less than ten, only the overall percentages are published.*

**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	105	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	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	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y3**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	95

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 / 2002
	£
Total income	261 142
Total expenditure	245 433
Expenditure per pupil	2 430
Balance brought forward from previous year	10 423
Balance carried forward to next year	26 132

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	45
Percentage returned	42

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	24	0	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	44	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	72	4	4	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	47	11	0	4
The teaching is good.	56	38	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	44	18	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	31	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	36	51	9	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	33	51	7	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	2	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	18	2	11

## **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**

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

43. Children's personal, social and emotional development is below expectations for a significant number of children. Good teaching, strong shared values and consistent attention to this important aspect of children's development by all the adults who work in reception, however, means that it is likely to meet expectations for the majority of the class by the end of the year. Most children are happy to come to school and have settled well, although a few remain withdrawn and uncertain, particularly with strange adults. Most are interested and excited by the wide range of interesting activities provided, although this excitement can easily become over-excitement for a significant minority of children. When this happens, noise levels rise and play becomes boisterous. The teacher and her assistants work very hard to encourage children to concentrate, but most have short attention spans and are easily distracted. When engaged, for example through talented story telling, however, children sit quietly and in open-mouthed wonder for reasonable periods of time. Children are not consistently playing with each other, although most play happily alongside each other. A minority still find it difficult to share and take turns, for example with musical instruments, and not all are kind to each other. Only about a third are able to manage dressing and undressing independently, and one or two wait passively for everything to be done for them.

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

44. Standards in communication, language and literacy are on course to meet expectations for the majority of children by the end of the year. Children enjoy listening to stories and the majority join in with familiar refrains and recognise the humour in the text, giggling appreciatively at '...as fast as pickled pineapples'. This is supported well by talented and expressive story telling, which creates an evocative atmosphere and encourages children to offer comments on the story and predict what will happen next. Most children handle books carefully, although a minority are not interested in these as a 'literature'; with one child using his book as a climbing frame and then a tent for a toy lion! The majority, however, turn pages correctly, and notice detail in the pictures, making up stories with reasonable concentration. Children recognise their own names and are building up a good knowledge of initial letter sounds through good teaching and extensive practice of matching pictures to sounds and drawing them. Evidence shows children making steady progress from mark-making to trace and copy writing, through extensive practice, and those seen were holding pencils correctly. They enjoy writing, for example in the post office, and three girls were totally engrossed in copying children's names from the front of their drawers.
45. Good teaching gently encourages children to listen carefully to adults and each other, and to share their views and achievements in closing sessions in the majority of lessons. This provides good opportunities for children to develop their communication skills, but this is the least well developed aspect of this area of learning. Many children are shy of speaking to the whole group and have immature speech. This is consistently, but sympathetically, addressed by all adults as they work with the children.

#### **Mathematical development**

46. Children's mathematical development is on course to meet expectations by the end of the year. Children know a good range of counting songs, join in with these confidently and most hold up the correct number of fingers as the camel's humps reduce from ten to none!

Children count confidently to 10, and about a third of the class continue to twenty with equal confidence. Good teaching uses every opportunity for counting, such as the boys, then the girls and adults in the class, maximising on opportunities to develop mathematical understanding, questioning children effectively, for example, to think whether there are more boys or girls in the class. All adults are involved in this as they work with children, encouraging them to count and compare in all activities. Mathematical sessions are well resourced, with interesting and relevant activities, such as matching mini-beasts to the numbers on cards, and developing an understanding of 1:1 correspondence by filling trees with apples. Children know the names of simple shapes and discuss their relative sizes. Work sampling shows a developing understanding of addition and subtraction.

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

47. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world meets expectations for their age, as a result of good teaching in a lively and stimulating environment. The current African topic, linked effectively to animals closer to home and the story of the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' has thoroughly captured children's imaginations. Children are developing a good understanding of different cultures through this well resourced topic, examining African artefacts closely. Small groups conduct mini-beast hunts with serious concentration, of both real and toy creatures, and discuss those they have found in the school garden enthusiastically. They recognise and name a good range of the alarmingly realistic plastic mini-beasts and the African animals in their jungle. Adults interact with children very effectively, using every opportunity to develop children's reasoning and thinking, speaking and listening, and counting skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the world. The reception environment is rich in opportunities to promote and extend children's experiences. Large-scale group pictures represent the seasons, and textured pictures encourage children to consider their sense of touch. Children handle the computer mouse with reasonable skill to dress a teddy, but the lack of a working printer means that they cannot have a permanent record of their efforts, which is a pity.

### **Physical development**

48. Children's physical development meets expectations. The majority of children move with appropriate co-ordination in the classroom and around the school, and handle tools and equipment, such as pencils and modelling materials confidently. No activities with large apparatus were seen; the school has only just acquired a dedicated play space for these youngest children, and needs to build its range of wheeled toys. The teacher is looking forward to extending activities to develop children's skills in this area. In the hall, the majority of children move with imagination and reasonable control when 'trying on' different foot-ware, such as splashing in puddles with Wellington boots, and kicking balls with football boots. In this very good session, children's delight in their control of the parachute made a very positive contribution to their personal and social development.

### **Creative development**

49. Children's creative development meets expectations, although for a minority their ability to work co-operatively as part of a group is below expectations. Children explore colour with enthusiasm, and enjoy painting and modelling activities. Painting food for the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar', for example, one child explained that her vivid red ice-cream cone was strawberry flavoured. The animals in the African jungle are realistic and show good attention to detail. Children sing reasonably tunefully and have a good repertoire by heart. They play musical instruments competently, although they have difficulty in sharing these with each other. Teaching is good, with many exciting opportunities for children to explore sound, texture and their imaginations. Adults work closely with children, encouraging them effectively to think and talk about what they are doing as they work, developing their understanding well. Children enjoy dressing up, and there are good resources for this.

The fire-fighters, for example, enthusiastically, if noisily, ran around the room putting out fires. They create 'small worlds' for themselves, such as in the African jungle and in the post-office, and become engrossed for a short time in their play. However, few children play with each other on these occasions, and there is little conversation to support their play, unless this is instigated by an adult.

## ENGLISH

50. Standards in English are average for current seven-year-old pupils. In the 2002 national tests, standards in reading and writing were above average, with all pupils reaching the expected Level 2, and around a fifth of pupils working at the higher Level 3. The pupils who took these tests, now in Year 3, are maintaining a steady rate of progress. They are working at a level appropriate for their age, and standards are on course to be average, at Level 3, when they leave the school at the age of eight. This maintains the position found by the last inspection report. Within the subject, however, there are variations. Standards are good in reading, average in writing and listening skills, but below average in speaking skills and spelling. There is no significant difference in the attainment or progress of boys and girls or those with special educational needs. Progress is good in reading, and is satisfactory in listening and in the content of written work. However, progress in handwriting is unsatisfactory and sometimes poor.
51. Throughout the school, standards in listening are average. In the majority of lessons, assemblies and stories, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to one another. However, where the pace of lessons is slow and does not engage their interest, they do not pay attention and many begin to chat instead of listening. In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations that pupils must listen to what they are saying. As a result, pupils talk whilst the teacher is talking, and this has a negative impact on learning. Speaking skills are below average. When given the opportunity, pupils make pertinent remarks about their work, 'Our language is a funny language!' 'It's herbivores that eat plants'. However, too much time is spent on teacher's talking, with insufficient emphasis on pupils forming well constructed and expressed sentences. Teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently to increase the quality and range of their vocabulary. As a result, they use phrases such as 'er...', 'sort of' and 'kind of like...', and find it hard to explain their thoughts clearly and talk succinctly about what they have learnt. This has a negative impact on their learning throughout the curriculum.
52. Standards of reading are above average. Pupils clearly enjoy reading, they are enthused by their teachers, and when reading to inspectors were disappointed to have to stop. They read correctly, fluently and with good expression. They use phonics to build words, but even the most able need to be encouraged, preferring to wait until told words, such as 'manor'. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to use non-fiction books. They explain 'index', 'contents' and 'glossary' very well and are accustomed to using dictionaries. Many use the public library. Home-school reading records, however, vary in usefulness. Some contain good evaluative comments about pupils' reading whilst others are just the titles of books and the dates that they were heard to read. Some teachers' reading records contain useful analysis and notes about pupils' reading which help assess and promote their reading skills. However, this is inconsistent.
53. Standards in writing are average, with pupils writing in a variety of styles, such as poetry and accounts of visits, appropriate for their age. Good use is made of information and communication technology when pupils word process their work to make interesting class books, for example class poetry collections and informative booklets about work in history and geography. However, pupils' handwriting and spelling are below average. Appropriate emphasis is put on the development of grammar and pupils quickly learn to write in well-punctuated sentences with capital letters and full stops. However, capital letters are also frequently placed in the centre of words such as 'turKey', and these are not

corrected. A lack of emphasis on well-formed handwriting means that writing is rarely joined and most frequently composed of uneven print. This has an impact on the quality of their written work throughout the curriculum, with standards of presentation being unsatisfactory overall. Spelling is frequently incorrect and is not corrected sufficiently. The phonics learnt in literacy lessons are not applied to their written work, with comments from teachers such as, 'Don't worry if it's not right', and 'We don't usually do this, but today I'm going to check spellings'. As a result of this lack of rigour, older pupils find even simple familiar words hard to spell, for example, 'bred' for 'bread', although most is phonetically justified.

54. Teaching is satisfactory overall, some is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In good lessons, pupils are managed well, relationships are good and the lesson is presented in a way that interests and is relevant to the pupils. As a result, they are keen to contribute to the lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory but their expectations of pupils' speaking skills, spelling and handwriting are not high enough. The National Literacy Strategy is used appropriately as a basis for teachers' planning. However, the plenary part of the lesson is not always used effectively to assess pupils' learning. Pupils' progress in English is assessed and tracked over time, but not enough attention is given to more day-to-day assessments in order to plan for pupils who learn at different rates in the class. Pupils are given targets to achieve and these are stuck into the front of their books. However, they are 'pre-prepared' rather than specific targets set according to the individual's needs. Pupils of the same age in different classes do not receive the same lessons and this has an impact on the sequential acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in English.
55. The headteacher has taken on responsibility for leading and managing the subject, and is fully aware of deficiencies. Resources are adequate to deliver the curriculum. Reading books are a collection of a range of disparate schemes and non-scheme books, which are colour coded to indicate levels of difficulty. There is no specific, structured reading scheme, but the school is actively involved in investigating these, to promote the systematic acquisition of reading skills. Although there is a library, this is used mostly as an extension to the adjacent classroom, and is not accessible to the majority of pupils. Most books are kept in class areas. They are not always stored in an appealing or easily accessible way. Many of the books are very well used and worn. However, the school makes sound use of the library service to augment its stock and it does have a good range of multicultural and dual textbooks.

## **MATHEMATICS**

56. Standards in mathematics are average for pupils in Year 2, and by the time they leave the school in Year 3, which maintains the position found at the last inspection. The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 were well above both the national average and the performance of similar schools, with all pupils reaching the expected Level 2, and two fifths of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. These pupils, now in Year 3, are consolidating on their achievements effectively, working confidently within Level 3, which is appropriate for their age. Both more able pupils and those with special educational needs are given work which matches their abilities, and all groups of pupils make steady progress in gaining mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills.
57. Work shows that pupils cover an appropriate range of mathematics, although the sample for Year 2 was heavily weighted towards number work. Pupils in all year groups have a sound understanding of number bonds and place value in two- and three-digit numbers as they get older, and both Year 2 and Year 3 pupils are confident in 2x, 5x and 10x tables. Year 3 pupils recognise equivalent fractions. Pupils confidently name two- and three-dimensional shapes, and older pupils classify these correctly by faces and vertices. Pupils in Year 1 compare weights and lengths, using non-standard measures, and by Year 3,

pupils are competently using standard measures in their work. Data-handling is covered appropriately, with information and communication technology used effectively to present some of the results, for example, pictograms of hair and eye colour in Year 2 and graphical results of interrogating data-bases in Year 3. Numeracy makes an appropriate contribution to other subjects, such as science, as pupils collect their information for the data-base. There was less evidence of problem solving in the sample overall, but additional challenges for more able mathematicians were provided in both the Year 2 and 3 lessons seen.

58. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with the lessons seen ranging from satisfactory to very good. In all lessons, teaching assistants made a positive contribution to the quality of learning by providing effective support for less able groups, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were included in explaining their work. Lessons began with appropriate mental arithmetic, although except in Year 1, the pace of these was not particularly brisk. Teachers managed group work well, with mainly appropriate work for the different ability groups in the class. Pupils worked steadily and made satisfactory progress. In the very good lesson in Year 1, particularly high expectations of application and behaviour resulted in pupils enjoying their lesson and making good progress.
59. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator, who maintains an appropriate overview of standards and the quality of teaching and learning through half-termly assessment sessions. However, whilst results in national tests are analysed in detail to identify focus areas for development, the school has not introduced the required target setting for individuals or groups of pupils. The school does not use a commercial mathematics scheme; teachers base their planning on the National Numeracy Strategy and create work sheets to support their lesson plans. This generates a considerable amount of work and copious sheets of paper, making it difficult for teachers to monitor individual pupils' progress effectively, particularly as the sheets are not always kept in school beyond the end of any one term.

## SCIENCE

60. Standards in science are average for pupils in Year 2 and, by the time they leave the school in Year 3, which maintains the position found at the last inspection. In the 2002 teacher assessments, all pupils reached the expected Level 2, with around a third reaching the higher Level 3. These pupils now in Year 3 are continuing to work confidently in Level 3, which is appropriate for their age. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, but much work is practical and oral, so that insufficient work is recorded to enable teachers to assess and build on pupils' learning when planning the following lesson. Where work is recorded, the standard of presentation is below average. All pupils are fully included in lessons, but planning does not always take into account pupils of different ages in the same class or those who learn at a different rate within classes. Additionally, pupils of the same age in different classes do not receive the same lessons. As a result, whilst the curriculum is covered appropriately, development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science is not as secure as it should be.
61. Pupils in Year 1 learn about light and dark. They understand that light is necessary to see things clearly and distinguish between natural and artificial light. They make sound progress when adults help them, and apply previous work on their senses to the work on light. Pupils in Year 2 study healthy eating and exercise, and the effect these have on their bodies. Good use is made of this work to promote an awareness of 'good and bad medicines' and the dangers of smoking. Pupils enjoy using toys to decide how they move and develop an understanding of forces using 'push and pull'. They measure how far toys move on different surfaces, making a useful contribution to their numeracy skills, and have good ideas about making their tests fair. However, too much talking by the teacher

restricts their ability to explain their own ideas and design their own tests. Older pupils examine with interest how plants grow and make careful observations of the roots of hyacinths growing in different situations. They sort materials and carry out experiments on different types of paper to see what happens when it gets wet. However, the number of worksheets and the untidiness of their work, which is often undated and not titled, obscure evidence of their progress and understanding. Many pupils have difficulty with reasoning, explaining their thinking logically and using the correct vocabulary.

62. In the two lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of science, but do not always use it to enthuse and interest pupils. Some activities continue for rather too long and pupils become restless. Whilst many pupils enjoy their work, remember and explain key scientific ideas, such as prediction and fair testing, too many pupils are unclear about what exactly they have learnt. One pupil described science as 'boring' and others nodded in agreement. Insufficient demands are made on pupils to think carefully about their work, explain their thinking clearly and logically, and record their findings with a precision appropriate to their age, so that the subject's contribution to their literacy skills is unsatisfactory.
63. The science curriculum is planned to cover all aspects required by the National Curriculum, although there is insufficient evidence to show that all elements are covered equally thoroughly. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to explore and devise their own tests. Resources are adequate to teach the curriculum, and pupils use information and communication technology appropriately to support some of their work, for example, preparing and interrogating a database of personal facts. There are sound new assessment procedures for the end of units of work. However, they are not being used consistently to plan the next stage of learning. Teacher assessments match the work carried out in class, and samples of pupils' work are collected. However, these are not annotated with dates, context or levels attained, which restricts their usefulness. Management of the subject is adequate, but the co-ordinator is aware that the role needs to be developed to include closer monitoring and the evaluation of pupils' skills development and progress.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

64. Standards in art meet expectations for pupils at the age of seven and when they leave the school at the age of eight. This represents an apparent decline in standards since the previous inspection report, but requirements have changed, and there are strengths in some aspects of the subject, such as in the use of fabric and modelling. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and they are all fully included in lessons. However, there are differences in curriculum planning for pupils of the same age in different classes. As a result, not all pupils have the same opportunities to develop and build on their skills knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
65. Pupils make detailed observational sketches of the school building, looking at the shapes that they are drawing. They look at photocopies of paintings by Lowry to gain an idea of how figures in the foreground of their drawings might be represented. However, they find it very hard to express their ideas and explain what they are doing. Older pupils develop printing skills using tiles based on their drawings of African animals. They work with enthusiasm and know why they have had to modify their work because for example, their original drawing was too small. Displays and a portfolio of artwork include some very good examples of pupils' work. Very good use is made of links with geography and multicultural events when pupils explore African art styles with a visiting African artist. They produce distinctive dyed fabrics using different techniques and vibrant colours. They make very effective masks using clay with great care. Attractive displays of very good quality resources for their work on Africa stimulate and support their work in art. One class has

studied the works of Van Gogh and produced some striking paintings in his style. Information and communication technology is used appropriately, for example to produce work in the style of Mondrian, and free patterns. There are some good examples of collage and weaving on display and in the portfolio, but pupils appear to be unaware of what they have learnt and find great difficulty in explaining what they have done. Few remember or name the artists whose work they have looked at. Only pupils in one class have sketchbooks, but their use, and pupils' understanding of their importance, is underdeveloped.

66. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory. However, the quality of work on display and in the portfolio indicates that some is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and instruct their pupils clearly. However, they do not always make the aim of the lesson sufficiently clear to their pupils. For example, it was only at the end of one lesson when other paintings were shown to pupils that they grasped what it was they had been trying to achieve. Pupils enjoy art. They are very enthusiastic about their work with visiting artists and are very interested in their multicultural artwork. However, their interest wanes and they become less productive in lessons where they are unsure about what they are trying to achieve.
67. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has done much to raise the profile of art in the school by participation in multicultural events with other local schools, arranging exhibitions of pupils work locally and involving visiting artists to share their skills and enthuse pupils. The scheme of work is satisfactory. However, work is not planned to take into account the different abilities, maturity and experiences of pupils in mixed age classes. As a result, the sequential development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school is insecure. The range and quality of resources are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

68. Standards in design and technology are below those expected at the age of seven and on leaving the school at the age of eight, which represents a decline in attainment and progress since the last inspection, although requirements have changed. There is no significant difference in the attainment and progress of boys and girls or pupils with special educational needs, but progress overall is unsatisfactory. The scheme of work for design and technology is based on the guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and includes all of the required elements. Teachers' planning clearly indicates that design and technology is included in their timetables. However, no lessons were seen, and there was insufficient evidence in the form of models or work in books to demonstrate work covered or pupils' abilities in the subject.
69. Pupils in Year 1 have made clowns with hinged arms and legs. Pupils in Year 2 use toy cars to draw ideas for models that they intend to make. However, they find the process very hard and few produce a design from which they can work. Pupils in Year 3 make use of work in literacy to write and follow instructions to make pancakes. They design and make healthy sandwiches to accompany work in science. However, little recording is carried out to accompany the work. Pupils cannot explain what they have done and have little experience on which to base an understanding of what a design or an evaluation are. The development of their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject is very restricted and is unsatisfactory.
70. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in design and technology. However, talking to pupils and analysing their work indicates that it is less than satisfactory. Pupils have little knowledge and understanding of any work that they may have carried out in the subject. The co-ordinator is aware that all areas of

design and technology, but especially those of design and evaluation, are in urgent need of development.

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

71. Standards in geography and history are below those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 3. The school has adopted commercially available materials that reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school teaches geography and history in alternating blocks of lessons to enable pupils and teachers to concentrate on a particular topic at a time. No geography was being taught at the time of the inspection. However, teachers have not systematically planned how pupils will develop skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects as they move through the school. As a result, pupils have some factual knowledge about certain topics but lack specific skills to apply in other settings. Arrangements to ensure that pupils in the same year group in different classes have similar learning experiences are inadequate.
72. In geography, Year 1 pupils follow *Barnaby Bear* as he travels around the United Kingdom and abroad to China. Through this, they successfully develop an understanding of different places and customs. Year 2 pupils compare their own locality with that of an imaginary Scottish island, Struay. They map routes from, for example, the school to the post office. However, much of this work is very simple and does not provide enough challenge for the majority of pupils. Teacher assessments in October 2002 indicate that pupils found it difficult to compare how people live and work in these two contrasting places. Inspectors' discussions with pupils confirm this. Year 3 work on Africa is mainly fact-based, with most pupils' folders containing similar information. More able pupils have added additional information through undertaking some independent research. Pupils have used information and communication technology in their work, for example, to include a political map of the African continent in their folders.
73. In history, pupils in Year 1 are starting to understand the passage of time. They sort a collection of teddy bears into *old* and *new*. With adult help, they identify similarities and differences to help them make up their minds. More able pupils refine their ideas and suggest which are the *oldest* and the *newest*. Pupils make sound use of labelling when drawing the teddy bears in chronological order. Year 2 pupils also make sound use of literacy skills when recording facts about the Great Fire of London, using *contents*, *glossary* and *index* pages.
74. Pupils in Year 3 are currently studying 'Stalham at War'. They have word-processed their own accounts of a talk by a governor about life in Stalham during the Second World War. These indicate that pupils are developing a sense of empathy with this period of history. They listened with rapt attention as the governor, in her second visit, talked about rationing, and were horrified by the small amounts of food available which they take for granted. The quality of teaching and learning in this session was very good. Teachers make good links with the locality but pupils' wider understanding of, for example, the causes of WW II, are too simplistic.
75. The history lesson seen for younger pupils was sound. Learning resources were carefully chosen and questions used well to develop pupils' understanding. Pupils were interested but some were rather over-enthusiastic. This slowed the pace of the lesson when the teacher stopped to re-focus pupils' attention and energies. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others. They receive additional help from staff to complete their tasks. Although there is some evidence of teachers promoting research skills, they do not consistently challenge more able pupils. Within the school, there is an over-reliance on photocopied worksheets for pupils to record their work. These do not provide sufficient challenge for many pupils. Disappointingly, much of the pupils' work in both geography and history is poorly presented and incomplete. In all, standards of teaching

and learning are unsatisfactory because pupils are not making sufficient progress. The headteacher has taken on responsibility for co-ordinating the subjects, but has not had time to make an impact on standards.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

76. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) meet expectations. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when they were below, and the key issue from that report has been addressed fully. Resources and teachers' expertise have improved, as a result of government funded initiatives, so that skills are taught competently and ICT is used appropriately to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils make steady progress in gaining skills as a result, enjoy using computers and treat the equipment with care.
77. Pupils use word processing regularly to support literacy in publishing their work, such as snow poems in Year 2, and confidently import pictures of animals into their writing about these. They understand the functions of a graphics program, and design interesting patterns in Year 1, and art in the style of Mondrian in Year 3. Year 3 pupils have programmed a moving toy, and enjoy making up stories to describe its route. They enter personal data into a database, and design interesting questions for their peers to answer by interrogating this, with results being published in graph form. This makes an important contribution to their numeracy skills. Printout sheets of information on the *Great Fire of London* show appropriate use of computers for research in Year 2, although the text in some of these is difficult for this age group. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the technology, and make progress in line with their abilities, although there was no evidence of them using computers to support their specific targets.
78. In the one lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher had prepared well, linking the e-mails she had sent to the class with characters in the story they are reading in class, which gained their attention and interest well. She carefully involved as many pupils as possible in reading the text, asking and answering questions, so that all were included in the lesson. However, the conditions for the lesson were far from ideal. The only e-mail facility is on the computer in the staffroom, so that the class was very crowded in this small room. The teacher had prepared an effective pencil and paper exercise to supplement this lack of access, so that all pupils were actively engaged in learning. The school could, however, consider adjusting the time available for ICT lessons, so that activities can be completed in one session.
79. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject competently. She has played a significant part in bringing about improvements and is pleased with the progress made. The school values highly the support and advice from a technician, shared with other schools in the cluster, who helps with trouble-shooting and in the classroom. Resources are class based, and are satisfactory overall, but the school would like to have a computer suite to facilitate whole class teaching and learning. Lack of space is an issue. Additionally, the school has no facility, such as a data projector or interactive whiteboard, to enable a whole class to see a single computer screen, which further hampers effective teaching.

## MUSIC

80. Standards in music meet expectations, which maintains the position at the last inspection. Planning shows pupils experience a full range of musical activities, although most observations during the inspection were related to singing. Pupils sing reasonably tunefully, although they do not always sing with great enthusiasm in assemblies, except where they are very familiar with a particular chorus. Year 3 pupils learned new songs related to their World War II project with interest, and enjoyed marching in time with their

singing. Teaching in this session was good, as the teacher carefully questioned pupils about the meaning of words so that the song made sense, making a useful contribution to literacy skills. All pupils were included fully in the lesson, through careful management, and high expectations of behaviour and correct breathing ensured the quality of learning was good. Pupils with special educational needs played a full part in the lesson, and made steady progress. Pupils in the oldest class learn recorder, and they are making good progress in learning notes and producing a melodic sound. However, there is an issue about equality of opportunity in this, as some Year 2 pupils have this experience, whilst the majority do not.

81. Resources are good, and pupils have many opportunities to play and listen to music. Assembly music is discussed weekly, and covers many cultures and eras. Currently, music played as pupils enter and leave the hall is related to their African project, and makes a useful contribution to their very good multi-cultural understanding. Visiting musicians regularly extend pupils' experiences, such as ensembles from the next-door high school and South American musicians last summer term. The school shares an annual multi-cultural day with other schools in its cluster, which includes music, song and dance. A music club for the youngest pupils has recently started, with the valuable support of a governor.
82. The subject is led well, with knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm. The co-ordinator is currently working part time, which limits her opportunity to manage fully, particularly in monitoring the work of her colleagues. Her talent at playing the piano is much appreciated on the days she is in school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

83. Standards in physical education meet expectations, which maintains the position at the last inspection. Timetabling constraints meant that only one session of dance was seen, but planning shows an appropriate range of gymnastics, games and dance, and swimming for the oldest pupils during the summer term. In the lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher led well by example and encouraged pupils effectively to undertake sustained physical activity. Pupils moved confidently to the music, with a good awareness of space, and good controlled movements on a variety of levels. All pupils were fully included, including those with special educational needs; they clearly enjoyed the session and made good progress in developing their skills. This could be improved, however, by allowing time for pupils to evaluate each other's performance. Pupils have a clear understanding of the value of physical exercise to their health, and the lesson had appropriate warm-up and cool-down elements. However, a significant number of pupils missed a large part of the lesson as they went out for recorders, and this needs to be re-evaluated as an equal opportunities issue.
84. Physical education is an important part of the school's life, but resources are barely satisfactory. In particular, the hall floor is in need of urgent attention, as it is in an unsatisfactory condition. The co-ordinator is aware of the deficiencies, and plans to review these in the near future. As a part-time teacher, her opportunities for monitoring standards are restricted, but she keeps an appropriate overview of the subject through discussion with colleagues. All regret that the popular football club is not happening, because of the illness of the club leader.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

85. Standards in religious education are below those expected for pupils by the age of seven and when they leave the school at the age of eight. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection report. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls or those with special educational needs, but pupils' progress in religious education is unsatisfactory. The religious education curriculum is based on a blend of the locally agreed syllabus, the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the school's own scheme of work. It covers an appropriate variety and range of topics for each class, but it does not take into account the pupils who are in mixed age classes. As a result, the curriculum does not provide for the sequential development of skills, knowledge and understanding as pupils progress through the school.
86. Younger pupils learn about belonging to groups, such as their families and school. Pupils in Year 2 consider celebrations and the meaning and importance of the Torah in Judaism. Older pupils study the importance of symbols in our lives including religious symbols, such as those on Seder plates in Judaism. Some assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' knowledge of Bible stories such as David and Goliath. Much of the work in religious education is oral. As a result, there is insufficient work in books to enable teachers to assess learning, or for the subject co-ordinator to monitor attainment and progress. Consequently, there is a lack of awareness amongst teachers of the pupils' misunderstanding about basic ideas and aspects of religious education. Examples of pupils' confused thinking include 'Moses and Jews are Christian because they believe in God', and they 'Learn about other religions because we answer the register in different languages'. Discussions with pupils tend to focus on their feelings rather than on the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' speaking skills are not well developed and many find it difficult to express ideas clearly.
87. Teaching in lessons observed was satisfactory, but overall it is unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and use appropriate resources, such as videos to show how Shabbat is celebrated, insufficient time is spent during lessons on checking pupils' knowledge and understanding. Visits to Churches and the Cathedral provide opportunities for pupils to learn about places of worship and their use in the past. Although the multicultural provision and links with the local Churches are very good, the location of the school means it is not always possible to include visitors of other faith groups to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of different beliefs. The school has an adequate supply of resources and artefacts to support the curriculum. Despite the efforts of the subject co-ordinator to provide a sound religious education curriculum, the lack of recorded work and discussions in lessons hinder the monitoring and assessment of pupils' learning and teachers' potential to correct misunderstanding.