

INSPECTION REPORT

RALEIGH INFANT SCHOOL

Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120993

Headteacher: Mrs C Shildrake

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 248207

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Admirals Way Thetford Norfolk
Postcode:	IP24 2JT
Telephone number:	01842 762810
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Hasluem
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20704	Terry Elston	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Design and technology Pupils with English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20653	Eva Wilson	Team inspector	Children in the Foundation Stage Religious education Art and design Music	
14976	Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Mathematics Science History Geography Pupils with special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small infant school just outside Thetford. Of the 170 pupils, 56 attend the Nursery and the Reception classes part time. There are a few more girls than boys. Around 16 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs; these figures are lower than national figures. Less than three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. Portuguese is the most common language other than English. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils come from military service families; ten per cent of these pupils are from the nearby American air force base. This explains the high number of pupils who joined or left the school during the last school year at times other than the normal ones. The school is part of the Thetford Education Action Zone (EAZ) that provides support for work in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). The attainment of pupils on entry is average. The school gained an Achievement Award last year for its improved national test results.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, much appreciated by parents, that serves its community well. The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership, so that the school continues to improve. The quality of teaching is good and, as a result, most pupils make good progress. Pupils behave well, and love coming to school. The funds are managed efficiently and provide sound support to the priorities for development; the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils do well in writing mathematics and science.
- The excellent teaching in the Nursery gives children a very good start.
- The leadership and management are very good, and contribute strongly to this happy and successful school.
- Links with parents are very good and do much to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning ensure they get the most out of lessons.
- The school makes very good use of funding and support from the EAZ to raise standards.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading attained by boys are not high enough, nor is there sufficient challenge for more able pupils in history and geography.
- Some pupils are withdrawn from assembly for extra reading, and miss an important start to the day.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998, and with the benefit of a comprehensive action plan has made very good improvement, notably in:

- the monitoring of teaching, (and its quality has improved significantly as a result);
- the role of the deputy headteacher, who is now a key member of the school's management; and
- the planning to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are now above average.

Pupils' standards in writing, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology have also improved. However, standards in reading have not risen because not enough attention has been focused on boys' achievements. Curricular planning is more thorough than before, and the more focused leadership is enabling the school to use assessment data much better to raise standards. With such a strong emphasis on self-evaluation, the school is well placed to improve further.

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	B	C	C	D
writing	B	B	B	C
mathematics	B	B	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The comparison with similar schools should be viewed with caution, because the significant number of pupils from air force families are not eligible for free school meals, and this is the basis upon which schools are categorised. In science, the teachers' assessments showed that standards were above average. The figures for reading are affected by the performance of boys, who over the past two years have fared significantly worse than girls in the tests. The trend is noticeably upwards in mathematics, but is dipping in reading.

Children in the Foundation Stage¹ make good progress, and are on course to achieve above average levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year in all areas of their development.

This inspection finds that, by Year 2, pupils' standards are above average in speaking, listening and writing, but only average in reading. In mathematics, pupils' standards are well above average. Their numeracy skills are very well developed because of the regular practice teachers give them in numeracy lessons. Standards are above average in science, where the good focus on experimental work gives pupils the confidence to explore scientific processes. Standards are also above average in art and design, and design and technology, and average in all other subjects. Pupils make good progress to achieve these standards. Those with special educational needs do well, and consistently achieve their targets. With the exception of boys in reading, and all pupils in history and geography, more able pupils make good progress, and attain particularly well in mathematics, where half attained higher levels in this year's national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and delight in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Lessons take place in a calm and busy atmosphere, and pupils play happily together outside.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good, and they relish the many opportunities to take responsibility. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory, and has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

Pupils' very good attitudes to work enable them to get the best out of lessons. They value each other's opinions, and rarely fall out.

¹ The stage of learning for children aged three to six years.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good, and promotes pupils’ learning well. The main strengths in the teaching lie in teachers’ good knowledge of the subjects they teach, effective use of practical tasks and teachers’ good use of resources to make lessons interesting. This is why pupils enjoy learning and develop a good range of skills. For children in the Foundation Stage, the teaching is good overall. It is excellent in the Nursery where children have a rich variety of experiences and make very good progress. In Years 1 and 2, the good quality of teaching builds well on the foundations laid earlier. Teachers in both year groups plan lessons as a team. This works very well, making the best use of each other’s expertise. Teachers’ expectations are generally high but they miss some opportunities to challenge more able pupils, particularly boys who, on the whole, are less enthusiastic than girls. The teaching of writing, spelling and number is good and pupils develop good skills in these areas. The teaching of creative skills is also good. This shows in pupils’ standards in design and technology and art and design. Teachers’ careful planning means that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported very well by skilled teaching assistants who ensure that they understand the work and complete the tasks set by the teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. This is a well-planned and interesting curriculum. The numeracy strategy is working very well and leads to high standards. The literacy planning is sound but lacks the sharp focus that would raise standards further in reading. There is a good range of activities outside lessons to extend the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good and pupils make good progress. The co-ordinator works closely with teachers to plan appropriate tasks for these pupils. The withdrawal of some pupils from assembly for extra reading, however, is unsatisfactory and means the school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide pupils with a daily act of worship.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	This provision is good. Good spiritual provision encourages pupils to be reflective and think deeply about issues. Very good social provision shows pupils how to work together and accept responsibility for their actions. Good moral provision gives pupils a clear understanding of right and wrong. There is a good range of activities to develop pupils’ understanding of their own culture, as well as that of other people in the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Their personal development is monitored effectively and the very good assessment procedures enable teachers to track pupils’ progress carefully. Not enough use is made of these assessments, though, to raise boys’ standards in reading or challenge more able pupils in history and geography.

Parents are very well informed about the curriculum and their child’s progress, and their links with the school are very strong. Very good links with the local community and the EAZ add much to the quality of the curriculum by helping the school to target areas for improvement, and monitor the progress of these initiatives.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has very high expectations of all pupils and staff and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Both have a very clear understanding of how to raise standards of teaching and learning. They work very closely with the governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is a good governing body, which is keen to see the school do well. It has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works closely with the staff to raise standards. The chair of governors leads her team very well and has a very good understanding of her role. All statutory requirements are met except the requirement that all pupils should be able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All available data is analysed and used very effectively to raise pupils' standards. Pupils' work and teachers' lessons are monitored well and the effective action taken brings about continual improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good, and very good use of EAZ funding to raise standards. The school applies the principles of best value well, evaluating the quality of its own provision effectively and making useful comparisons between the performance of this school and others. The school had a large amount of money carried forward to this financial year, but this is to replace older computers and to keep single aged classes.

The school's good accommodation and grounds support pupils' learning well. The staff are well qualified, and improve their skills effectively by good in-service training. The good supply of learning resources helps to make lessons interesting.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high quality of the headteacher's leadership • The consistently good teaching • The behaviour and maturity of pupils • The very good quality of the information about the school and their child's progress • The good provision for pupils with special educational needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few feel that children are provided with too few activities outside school.

The inspection team agrees with parents' very positive views, but finds that the school does, in fact, provide a good range of activities at lunchtime and after school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the latest national tests:
 - the highlight was pupils' results in mathematics, when almost all of them did as well as expected and half did better than expected. Boys and girls did equally well; as a result standards were well above the national average, and well above the average of similar schools;
 - in writing, the school was above the national average, and in line with similar schools but boys' writing was not as good as that of girls;
 - the school's reading results were significantly lower than writing and mathematics; they were in line with schools nationally, but below similar schools; boys' performance in reading was the problem.
2. The trend in standards is upwards in mathematics, constant in writing, but dipping in reading. The reading results were affected significantly by pupils arriving during Year 2 with reading difficulties. The underachievement of boys, however, is a concern; it was the same in 2001, and teachers' predictions for next year show a similar pattern. Boys are less keen to read, answer fewer questions in literacy lessons and find it harder to read purposefully to themselves without supervision. Conversely, in more practical subjects such as mathematics and science, boys do well, and perform just as capably as girls.
3. Looking at other subjects, by Year 2, standards are better than expected in the creative subjects of art and design and design and technology, and as expected in all others. Compared with the previous inspection, standards are higher in speaking, listening, writing, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology. This represents very good improvement.
4. Pupils achieve well to attain these standards by Year 2. They make a very good start in the Nursery, where provision is very good, and teaching often excellent. By the end of the Reception, children are above average in all areas of their development, and there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and nearly all attain, or come close to, national standards in the national tests by Year 2. They benefit from good, informed support and respond enthusiastically. Their reading and spelling improve well because of the good measures put in place by the school to give them the skills and confidence to tackle new words. Nearly all meet the challenging targets in their individual plans. In some practical subjects, such as art, design and technology and physical education, pupils with special educational needs excel and their work is sometimes amongst the best in the class.
6. In history and geography, while most pupils make steady progress to attain expected levels by Year 2, more able pupils underachieve. Much of the work is in the form of worksheets that are the same for all pupils, and those who are capable of gaining a deeper understanding of the subjects are held back.
7. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because they are supported well. These pupils soon develop a good use and understanding of English so that they can take a full part in all lessons.
8. There is a high number of pupils coming in and going out other than at the usual starting and leaving times because the school serves families stationed at local air bases. If the national test results of pupils who have been at the school since the Reception year are analysed, they show that they attained very high standards compared with schools nationally in mathematics, well above average standards in

writing but still only average in reading. Pupils coming to Raleigh Infants, therefore, part way through their school life, make steady progress in reading, but good progress in writing and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' personal development is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Nearly all parents at the meeting and in response to the questionnaire felt that their children liked school, and all felt that they worked hard and tried to achieve their best.
10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are very keen to come to school and are punctual. They generally concentrate well and are eager to get on with their work. Boys, however, find it harder to concentrate on reading, especially when left to read independently. This results in some wasted time when boys will look at pictures and chat to each other while girls focus on reading quietly to themselves. Pupils listen well to one another's viewpoints and this helps them come to informed conclusions about their own work. The school works hard at building their self-esteem and, as a result, pupils are confident and keen to put forward their ideas. They work well together in groups and independently. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson on comparing the strength of different materials, pupils were eager to begin work in pairs and concentrated hard. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language take pride in their achievements. Pupils are open and friendly to visitors. Their participation in out-of-school activities and trips is very good.
11. Pupils develop well spiritually, learning to consider issues such as friendship and loyalty in some depth. This was seen to good effect when they were learning about the story of the Good Samaritan; they listened carefully, and clearly saw the moral of the story in relation to the way they act in the playground.
12. Pupils behave well, and respond readily to teachers' high expectations of them. Pupils also behave well at lunchtime and at playtime and they move around the school in an orderly fashion. Many have a well-developed sense of morality; they know the school rules, and respond well to the rewards system. They feel they are treated fairly. Very occasionally, a few boys lose concentration, particularly in reading sessions. When bullying occurs, parents and pupils are confident that it will be dealt with effectively and fairly. This is rare, though, and no evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection. Relationships within the school are very good, and in the Nursery they are excellent. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and volunteer very readily to help others in class duties. The 'Buddy' system and the 'Bus Stop' on the playground work very well, and ensure that pupils who are alone or upset soon have a friend to play with. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons contribute very well to pupils' personal development. Pupils have respect for one another's feelings and cultural differences, and parents speak highly of how these qualities develop.
13. Attendance is in line with national averages, despite the high numbers of pupils who come to and leave the school during the year (last year over 40 per cent). The high rate of unauthorised absence is due to parents taking their children on extended holidays. There was one fixed-term exclusion last year and proper procedures were followed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good, and promotes pupils' learning well. In more than eight out of ten lessons, the quality of teaching was good or better, and half the lessons in the Nursery were excellent. No lessons were unsatisfactory. Parents feel strongly that the quality of teaching is good, and is the reason why some chose this school rather than others in the area. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when teaching was satisfactory, and one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory. The main improvements are:

- teachers now make the purpose of the lesson much clearer to pupils;
 - the pace of teaching and learning is quicker;
 - teachers manage pupils' behaviour better; and
 - pupils have more opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
15. For children in the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is good overall, and excellent in the Nursery. Teachers use assessment findings about children's learning very well to match provision to children's needs. Teachers, working closely with classroom assistants, form very good caring relationships with the children who, in turn, have good attitudes towards work. In the Nursery, all of the activities are highly focused, structured and supervised. The Nursery teacher make lessons fizz with excitement, and all are packed with learning. Children enjoy this work, and parents speak highly of the very good start the Nursery gives their children. In the Reception classes, adults are good at consolidating their teaching with well-structured group and individual work. However, activities when children choose their own tasks are not as well focused and supervised as in the Nursery, and some opportunities are missed to move children on at a faster rate. Support assistants in the Nursery play a vital role in helping children in all areas of learning, and this explains why they do so well. Reception teachers do not always make the best use of the support assistants to monitor children's work and their progress is slower as a result.
16. In Years 1 and 2, the good quality of teaching builds well on the foundations laid earlier. The effectiveness of the teaching can be judged by the overall good progress pupils make. Teachers' planning is thorough, and generally pays good regard overall to the different levels of attainment in the class. However, sometimes their expectations are not high enough in reading, history and geography and as a result the tasks given to more able pupils do not always extend their learning. In one literacy lesson, for example, the work given to the best readers was far less demanding than that provided for other pupils, and worksheets in history and geography lessons were identical for all groups. As a result, too few pupils develop a deeper understanding of these subjects. Teachers in both year groups plan lessons as a team, and this works very well, making the best use of each other's expertise.
17. Teachers show a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this gives pupils confidence to ask questions. Teachers all use resources well; this is particularly the case in art and design and ICT, and they add much to pupils' interest in the subjects. For example, when Year 1 pupils were given the challenge of producing a picture in the style of Picasso, they were shown colourful examples of the artist's work, and then provided with a very good range of exciting materials with which to create their picture. They could hardly wait to get started, and produced some excellent pictures. The methods that teachers use work very well; they make lessons very interesting by including lots of practical activities, and this involves pupils very well in their own learning. These important strengths mean that lessons are full of learning, and pupils enjoy their work. Teachers' teaching of new skills to the whole class is good, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. They explain new ways of working out words or mathematical calculations clearly, and this promotes pupils' learning of the basic skills of reading and number effectively. When teachers plan group work, it generally goes well because pupils of different abilities are set tasks that are challenging but realistic. These are especially effective in numeracy, and all groups of pupils make very good progress in their use and understanding of number.
18. In English, teachers teach writing skills well; they have high expectations of the quality of pupils' writing, and give pupils the skills to write interesting stories and factual accounts. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to speak clearly, and to use a wide range of descriptive words. Teachers are confident teaching literacy, but sometimes talk to the whole class for too long, and pupils start to lose interest. One lesson, for example, started well and pupils enjoyed reading the book together. The teacher then talked with the pupils about the story, but extended this session to such an extent that the boys at the back became bored and started chatting to each other. Teachers do not always see that boys are not joining in when the whole class reads aloud, and that boys soon lose interest in individual reading sessions. These are reasons why boys lag behind girls in their reading

19. Teachers start lessons very well by explaining to pupils what they are going to learn and this adds purpose to their task. Teachers use time at the end of lessons to review what pupils have learned; this is good practice, because it gives teachers a clear picture of how well they have learned, and which topics may need to be revisited. Sometimes in numeracy lessons, however, these sessions are rushed. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good, so pupils' levels of concentration are high and this increases their rate of learning.
20. The strengths of the teaching were exemplified in a very good science lesson. Pupils were discovering which materials were best suited to survive the wear and tear of children playing. The teacher began by asking pupils about how different materials were suitable for hard wear; her questions were pitched at just the right level so all groups were included in the discussion and all responded enthusiastically with well thought-out answers. They were given a selection of materials to test, and they quickly began to predict likely favourites. Their testing was rigorous, and recorded accurately. Pupils worked feverishly together, and listened carefully to each other's views until they came to scientific conclusions. More able pupils pressed ahead, while pupils with special educational needs made very good progress with the support of the teaching assistant. By the end, all had completed an excellent project, had great fun working and learned much about the characteristics of different materials.
21. Teachers' marking is good and provides pupils with clear guidance to help them improve. A few parents are concerned that their children have too much homework. This inspection finds that the level of homework is appropriate and helps consolidate the work done in class without over-burdening pupils.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. As a result, pupils make good progress, especially in their reading, writing and number work. Teachers have a good awareness of pupils' needs, and their lesson planning is well focused on their individual targets. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils very well. They ensure that these pupils are included in all parts of lessons by careful prompting and help with understanding teachers' questions. The benefits of this support are clear when pupils shoot up their hands and beam with pride when they provide the correct answer. The 'Catch-up' programme, where pupils work with support assistants on structured reading skills, works well, and pupils make good improvements in their reading. For some pupils this is, however, at the expense of inclusion in assemblies.
23. The few pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good support. When necessary, they have individual help, and this ensures their inclusion in all activities. They make good progress as a result, and do as well as other pupils in the national tests.

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

24. The school provides a rich, lively and varied experience for all its children in the Nursery. All areas of learning are planned for very well. Learning assistants work with individuals or small groups very effectively. As a result of these experiences, Nursery children are enthusiastic and confident learners, who make very good progress. Reception class children build on these experiences, again throughout an active learning day, but the planning of group work is not as good as in the Nursery, and this means that some time is wasted.
25. From Year 1, the school provides pupils with a wide and interesting curriculum that forms a sound basis for teachers' planning of lessons. Good quality policies and plans ensure there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning. The successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has overcome the shortcomings identified in both English and mathematics in the last report.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils on the special educational needs register have very good individual plans, which are used well to monitor and improve their learning. Support assistants offer skilful help in all classrooms, thereby ensuring the fullest access to learning for these pupils. The practice of taking some pupils out of assembly for extra reading work is, however, unsatisfactory, because it denies them the chance to worship and share the successes of others. As an example, pupils from a Year 2 class were presenting a short play in an assembly and the whole school was spellbound by the story. Pupils returned to their class, chattering excitedly about how well it went. Two pupils with special educational needs had missed a worthwhile experience and had to ask others about what had happened.
27. Pupils with significant special educational needs are integrated into school life very successfully. For example, the school makes sure that staff have the skills to use sign language and improvements have been made to the building to ensure easy access. Governors are working with the local authority to develop this further. Although more able pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics, some are not fully extended in other subjects. For example, in reading, history and geography, not all pupils are fully challenged by the tasks provided. The EAZ has given valuable support to the school's efforts to include pupils and their families in all curriculum developments. For example, many parents joined pupils in a visit to a local forest, and spoke very enthusiastically about how much they had learned about the teaching of geography.
28. A good range of activities, visits and visitors add an extra dimension to the school day. Multi-cultural music, skipping, dancing and recorders are popular, well-attended clubs. The churches, shops and immediate area are used for local studies. Pupils travel further afield to Norwich Castle, and other museums. As a result, they experience at first hand costumes and artefacts from the past and in recent visits they have:
- ridden on a chariot simulator;
 - searched for hidden artefacts with museum staff;
 - dressed as Victorians and played with Victorian toys; and
 - scoured Hunstanton beach.

These experiences make subjects become 'alive', as the excited faces in the school's collection of photographs show.

29. PSHE is provided for well in different subjects. For example, health education is taught effectively as part of the science curriculum, which includes such topics as healthy eating and drugs awareness. Sex education is not part of this programme, but the governors' statement makes it clear that questions will be answered sensitively and honestly, and parents will always be kept fully informed. Pupils' personal development is good, not only because of the everyday pastoral care of teachers and assistants, but also because pupils have regular planned opportunities to sit in a circle and explore experiences such as friendship, anxiety or bullying. A good example of this was when Year 1 pupils looked at photographs and thought about what it meant to be a friend.
30. Links with the community and nearby schools are strong and well maintained, sometimes with the help of the EAZ funds. They include the:
- very good links with parents before admission to the Nursery;
 - very close co-operation between schools on transfer at age seven;
 - extensive involvement of parents in pupils' learning;
 - involvement of churches and local shops or supermarkets; and
 - involvement of local businesses who support the school, for example, visiting weekly to hear pupils read.

These constructive relationships contribute very well to pupils' learning and development.

31. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in the way pupils' social skills are developed. The daily collective act of worship encourages pupils to be sensitive and reflective, promoting their spiritual development in the broadest way. In religious education, Bible stories such as 'Joseph's Coat of Many Colours' and 'The Good Samaritan' build well on these themes. There are good opportunities in other subjects too, such as art, music, reading, geography and history, to broaden pupils' spiritual and moral awareness. Sometimes teachers' skills in telling stories are so good that pupils' faces shine with excitement. This was the case in the Nursery when the teacher shared the story of 'The Blue Balloon' with the school's youngest children. Pupils are given the opportunity to make their class rules, and this shows them the importance of living in harmony with one another.
32. The provision for pupils' social development gains much from time set aside for them to discuss such matters as 'Sharing', and 'Friendship' when they sit in a circle and talk about their ideas and experiences. They are taught to listen sensitively to each other, take turns and respect each other's points of view. Parents see this as a great strength of the school. At lunchtime, older pupils are asked to take responsibility for younger ones, helping to open bottle tops and difficult wrappings. This works well. Adults in the school set very good examples for pupils to follow in the way they show concern for one another, and value each other's opinions.
33. The school does much to show pupils the richness of different cultures and religions. Pupils dress up, eat special food, sing songs and act out rituals in the festivals of Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Diwali, and Chinese New Year. Subjects across the curriculum enhance pupils' cultural development. In history and geography, for example, they have good experiences of their local culture in the study of Thetford, and visits to Norwich Castle when they dress up in period costumes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school has effective procedures for ensuring the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. It has a warm and friendly atmosphere. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. In some areas, such as child protection procedures and PSHE, there has been good improvement.
35. Child protection procedures are now effective. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs and the headteacher have both been recently trained to manage child protection. All staff have received training in what is required, although training for supervisors was some time ago. Local authority guidelines have been adopted. They work well.
36. There are clear policies to ensure health and safety. All statutory procedures are in place and are well implemented. Many staff have been trained in first aid. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions and with accidents are very effective. Good levels of supervision at play times ensure that pupils are safe and cared for if they are upset, for example, or fall over.
37. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are good. There is a clear and comprehensive policy. The school and classroom rules are discussed with classes at the beginning of each year; this works well because it helps pupils remember what is expected. Staff monitor pupils' personal development effectively. The Nursery teacher, in her home visits, has discussions with parents on children's likes and dislikes as well about what they can do, and these are well recorded. They are used to support children's development when they start school. Class teachers keep good records of pupils' personal development that are helpful when they move on to the next class. The 'Well Done' badges are recorded in some pupils' annual reports so that parents can see how well their children have done at school. All pupils have personal targets that help them to develop their social skills. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, including the 'Special Person' each day and the

'Buddy Stop' on the playground for pupils to look for friends to play with. These are good initiatives that show pupils how the school values them and looks out for their well-being.

38. Procedures for promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Registers are monitored each week for patterns of absence. However, there are no awards for good attendance to improve attendance further. Links with the educational welfare officer are good. The majority of unauthorised absences are due to parents taking their children on extended holidays.
39. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection and is the result of very good organisation and monitoring of assessment by the deputy headteacher. Realising that assessment in school was not effective as it could be, the deputy headteacher introduced a new system that tracks pupils' progress from Reception to Year 2. This works very well, and gives the school useful information so that weaknesses can be identified and addressed in teachers' planning. All pupils now have challenging but realistic targets for literacy and numeracy. Pupils' results in the national tests are monitored carefully to see where more work needs to be done. Last year, for example, this identified only a few pupils doing better than average in mathematics. In response to this, teachers worked at extending more able pupils' learning. The benefits are clear in this year's tests when half the pupils attained above average results, a big improvement from last year. The school has picked out the underachievement of boys in reading, but has yet to put in place measures to improve boys' achievement. The issue of more able pupils underachieving was the focus of a new bid for funding from the EAZ. The school is due to receive specific funds to develop the skills of gifted and talented pupils further.
40. On a day-to-day basis, teachers make effective use of guidance in the curricular documents to see how well pupils are achieving. Detailed assessments made on entry to school enable teachers to identify children with special educational needs. The evaluation of these assessments enables the school to support them without delay. The school make quick and accurate assessments of the large numbers of pupils entering the school from families attached to the air force bases close by. These enable teachers to provide work at the right level for these pupils. They do reasonably well in the national tests.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting were very supportive of the school. Quite rightly, parents felt that behaviour was good, that their children were making good progress and that the school expected them to work hard. A very high proportion felt that teaching and the leadership and management were good. A few parents were concerned about the amount of homework their children were given. A few others thought that the range of activities is unsatisfactory. The inspection team supports parents' positive views. The team does not agree with parents' views about homework. This is appropriate and supports pupils' learning well. The number and range of activities outside normal lessons are good, and provide pupils with interesting additions to the work done in lessons.
42. The school has very good links with parents. This is an improvement on the finding of the last report. The information it supplies for them is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are attractively presented and easy to understand. There is a separate and helpful brochure for the parents of Nursery children. Induction for Nursery children is carefully and sensitively handled. Advance information on the curriculum is given each term to parents, and this provides them with useful guidance on how to help their children at home. Newsletters are frequent and lively. Annual reports to parents are very good. They are full and clear, include pupils' targets and offer opportunities for parents and pupils to comment. Questionnaires are sent to parents each year, and these provide good information on parents' views to help the school work more closely with them.

43. The good range of consultation meetings each term help teachers keep parents well informed about the school's work. Parents feel that all staff are always willing to hear concerns. Reading diaries are used very well as a means of dialogue between home and school, and keep both teachers and parents informed about how well pupils are doing. Parents make every effort to attend class assemblies and school performances. A very good number of parents volunteer to help in school, and they provide valuable assistance, particularly in hearing pupils read or helping in practical work. At the end of each term, parents of Nursery children are invited to join in activities for a week. These activities show parents the different targets their children should aim towards and, as a result, parents feel very well informed and involved.
44. The 'Share' scheme, organised with the EAZ, works very well, and does much to enable parents to understand the work of the school and help their children at home. Parents come into school and see how, for example, the literacy and numeracy strategies work, and take part in 'fun' activities such as making Christmas gifts. Parents' enthusiasm for this scheme has grown, and the numbers participating are the highest of all the five schools involved.
45. The Friends Association runs a good range of social and fund-raising events, and raises good sums to help the school to buy equipment to enhance pupils' learning.
46. The school does much to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in their children's work. Parents are given a copy of their child's individual plan, and are kept well-informed of their progress. Parents justifiably see this provision as one of the school's strengths.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The very good quality of the leadership and management is central to the school's success. The headteacher leads very well. She has a very clear vision of what sort of school this should be, and communicates this effectively to the staff. The leadership has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in terms of:
 - the analysis of assessment to raise pupils' standards;
 - the delegation of responsibilities to senior staff; and
 - the effectiveness of the governing body.

These important developments account for the continued improvement of the school, and ensure that pupils make good progress. The headteacher works hard to develop very good relationships in the school, and this has created an excellent team spirit so that pupils and staff work effectively together with a common purpose. Parents feel strongly that the headteacher's leadership is a significant strength.

48. There is a well-established culture of self-evaluation here, and this is an important way that all aspects of the school's work are improved. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance in the national tests, for example, identified weaknesses in spelling, and the new word-building programme soon led to higher standards. The school is closely involved with the local EAZ project, and this provides excellent support for self-evaluation. Projects aimed at involving parents more in their child's learning, and developing provision for writing, numeracy and ICT, have all been supported by the EAZ, but only after the school put forward well thought-out arguments for the funds. The EAZ agreed with the school challenging targets in numeracy for specific groups of pupils to achieve. The EAZ is delighted with the school's commitment to the project, and with the improvements the funding has brought about in these key areas.
49. The school has good performance management procedures to set targets for teachers and the headteacher to aim towards. These work well because the school took informed advice from consultants about how to set targets, and how best to monitor the progress of staff towards them.

Governors had a big part to play here, and all attended useful training to give them the skills necessary to put procedures in place.

50. The school's leadership has used the principles of self-evaluation very well to address the main issues from the previous inspection. The action plan was thorough, and the progress towards the targets was monitored closely by the headteacher and governing body. All issues have been addressed very well, and the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.
51. The headteacher has done much to develop very strong links with parents, and they see her as approachable, and sensitive to their concerns. A particularly helpful strategy was the questionnaire sent to parents to canvass their views on all aspects of the school. This is very good practice, and makes parents feel an important part of the school.
52. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor teaching effectively. Teachers are observed regularly, and given useful feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers value this process because it is done constructively, and helps them teach better. The headteacher sees teachers' planning regularly, and makes helpful comments when necessary. As a result, the quality of planning is consistent, thorough and provides a good structure to lessons.
53. The school monitors pupils' standards very well. Their results in the national tests are analysed carefully to see where improvements need to be made, and this has, for example, brought about significant improvements in numeracy and spelling this year.
54. The headteacher works very closely with the deputy headteacher. They share a common vision, and their leadership is valued highly by parents, staff and governors. The deputy headteacher plays a key role in the analysis of assessments, and produces useful data to guide staff in their planning and teaching. Importantly, the deputy headteacher sets a good example by her own teaching.
55. Subject co-ordinators support staff well. They work closely with teachers to ensure a consistency of teaching between classes, and monitor pupils' standards well. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs supports staff and pupils well, and benefits from good support from the designated governor. The weakness of the management of this provision lies in the decision to withdraw pupils from assemblies for extra reading.
56. The governors, well led by the knowledgeable chair, are enthusiastic, and provide good support to the staff. They have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and most visit the school often to monitor their areas of responsibility. They are keen to raise pupils' standards, and are enthusiastic about their monitoring responsibilities. Governors work closely with the headteacher to put forward their own priorities. They were, for example, very enthusiastic about a new project to improve pupils' spelling and reading; although staff were doubtful at the start, they were encouraged by the governors to see how well it worked. They did, and all were delighted with the improvements made in pupils' spelling.
57. The school's planning for future developments is sound, and includes priorities that are important to move the school forward. The annual audit of progress during the year is useful, and provides a rigorous evaluation of how well the targets were met. The planning for only the year ahead, in most areas however, does not go far enough. This year, for example, the school has developed very good systems to assess pupils' standards, but has no long-term view of where pupils should be in two or three years time. This is particularly important when considering boys' reading; this is an issue from Year 1, but the school has no measures in place to address the issue from the start, or set targets for the youngest boys to achieve by the end of Year 2.

58. The school manages its finances well. There is a large carry-forward this year, but this is earmarked appropriately for new computers and to maintain single-age classes should numbers drop next year. Governors work closely with the headteacher and very efficient school secretary to ensure that all funding is allocated to get the best value possible. The school compares its spending with similar schools, and consults with the local education authority and EAZ to ensure that there is a good link between expenditure and raised standards. Governors are involved closely here, and their investigation into securing a better quality of school dinners for pupils yielded good results; these lunches are now of a far higher quality, and pupils love them.
59. The school is well staffed with a good, well-qualified supply of teachers and support assistants. Teachers new to the school benefit from sound induction procedures, including valuable support from experienced mentors.
60. The accommodation is well maintained and adequate for the size of the school. Very good improvements have recently taken place in the Reception and Nursery classes, as well as in the entrance hall and staff room. The shared areas for Reception classes help teachers to plan lessons together. The hall is only just large enough for physical education, and presents some storage problems. The library design is satisfactory but its situation near the entrance limits its usefulness. The playground now has shaded and quiet areas. Resources are good in most subjects, including ICT. Resources in geography and history are satisfactory. The library's supply of books is good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to continue the rate of improvement, and meet statutory requirements, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) raise standards in reading, history and geography by:

- a. providing more challenges to interest boys in reading;
 - b. monitoring more closely the reading by boys in group reading sessions and taking effective action to remedy any weaknesses;
 - c. ensuring that literacy lessons provide reading tasks to extend more able pupils; and
 - d. ensure that teachers provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in history and geography;
- (Paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 10, 16, 18, 27, 39, 72, 76, 108-118)

(2) ensure that all pupils are included in assemblies.

(Paragraphs 22, 26, 55)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Set longer-term targets in the school's planning for future developments. (Paragraph 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	68

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	4	26	6	0	0	0
Percentage	5	11	68	16	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	125
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	27

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	37

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	93.8
National comparative data	5.6

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	33	15	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	30	32
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	42	45	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (85)	94 (91)	98 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	32	31
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	43	47	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	98 (96)	96 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	113	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	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	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.4
Average class size	22.1

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.5

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	335282
Total expenditure	359116
Expenditure per pupil	2896
Balance brought forward from previous year	68448
Balance carried forward to next year	44614

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	147
Number of questionnaires 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.	68	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	44	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	44	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	32	12	0	4
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	24	5	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	39	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	29	0	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	63	27	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	27	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	27	15	2	12

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

62. Children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis in the autumn term of the year in which they will reach the age of four. At the time of the inspection, 56 children were at the Foundation Stage. The school's induction process is very effective in providing children and their parents with a smooth start to school life. Very good home/school relationships begin right at the start when staff visit the children at home; this is good practice, and helps children settle into school quickly. The school continues to nurture a very good working partnership with parents, through such initiatives as the 'Share' project, where teachers show parents how to help their children at home. As a result of such involvement, parents contribute very well to their children's learning.
63. There has been good improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. It is now good because:
- the Foundation Stage is led and managed very well by the headteacher, who is supported very well by the Nursery and Reception teachers and support assistants;
 - a rich curriculum addresses thoroughly all of the required areas of learning;
 - careful planning has included implementing the school's action plan to improve children's speaking and listening skills, which were found to be below average at the time of the previous inspection; and
 - the recent opening of the Nursery has provided children with excellent early learning experiences, which have contributed very positively to their improved standards of attainment.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage as a whole, and excellent in the Nursery. Significant strengths of teaching include teachers' knowledge of how young children learn and the way they use this knowledge to plan very well structured and balanced experiences for them. Children with special educational needs are supported very well, and make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority, which enables both boys and girls to make good progress and attain above the expected level in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is good, and very effective with the few children who are shy; these children soon develop confidence because all adults take great care to listen to their concerns and give them time to learn at their own pace. More able children develop good social skills, and quickly learn how to work independently. Teachers and support assistants value children's efforts, and the responses they give. As a result children feel secure and enjoy their learning. Children relate well to each other as they work and play. Most show good self-control in using large and small equipment, such as the large building blocks, and small paintbrushes, working carefully and safely. They dress and undress for physical education lessons with little help, and children in the Nursery wash their hands without fuss. Children are keen to observe classroom rules, and play their part willingly in tidying away equipment. They learn to respect people with different beliefs and customs through such happy celebrations as the Chinese New Year.

Communication, language and literacy

66. The quality of teaching is good in this area. It is excellent in the Nursery. In the Nursery, adults provide a wealth of opportunities for children to speak and listen, and both boys and girls make very good progress. All of the tasks and activities are very well organised. Guidance for adults helping children is carefully written out and placed by each activity, so that everyone knows the purpose of the task, how

to develop it and the language that could emerge. This is exceptionally good practice, ensuring that everyone is chasing the same goal and helps lower ability children in particular to improve their language.

67. In the Reception classes, the quality of teaching is good in this area. Adults gain children's interest quickly using stories such as 'The Fox Got My Socks'. Children listen carefully for rhyming words and place pictures in order to make the story. They are good at recognising the key words of the reading scheme from cards held up by the teacher and from the computer's large screen. They have great fun doing so. They gain a good grasp of word sounds by taking part in the daily, concentrated work on letter sounds, and they take reading books home to share with their parents. Alongside reading, children's speaking, listening and writing skills are fostered well. Teachers encourage children to talk about their work, as was illustrated in one lesson when children explained, "We were painting our names, doing zig-zags with our hands, and then we put pictures in the right places to tell a story." By the end of the Reception year, children's attainment is above that expected for this age group.

Mathematical development

68. The quality of teaching of mathematical skills is good, because teachers involve children in a wide variety of interesting activities. The Nursery teacher does this particularly well, so that children soon recognise numbers, count, know about shapes and use mathematical vocabulary appropriately. An example of this was seen at story time, when children looked at a picture of a story character's birthday cake with three lit candles, and pretended to blow them out, correctly counting to three. In the Reception classes, adults provide good support so that children learn quickly how to count objects and form patterns. They know the number names and recite them in order and count accurately a set of objects. They count on from a given number, and more able children begin to add and subtract with confidence. Children recognise, name and describe two and three-dimensional shapes. Teachers are patient and are skilled at asking the right questions to make children think. They give lots of time for children to practise and consolidate their understanding and, as a result, both boys and girls make good progress to attain above the expected level by the end of the Reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. The quality of teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes is good, and children make good progress to attain standards above those expected by the end of the Reception year. Adults provide many good opportunities for children to explore nature, as was seen when they made astute observations of seasonal changes during walks in and around the school grounds. Reception children's good skills are illustrated when they make leaf and bark rubbings, and talk about patterns in nature. They collect leaves and cones and, when back in the classroom, use them to make a very good picture-graph. Nursery children make perceptive observations of insects in the garden, and make 'cakes' for the birds in wintertime. Such experiences add significantly to children's spiritual development. Adults provide a good balance of compulsory and free-choice activities, and this develops children's skills and independence side by side. However, during such freedom of choice activities, supervision is not sufficiently focused in the Reception classes, and at these times children's attention wanders, particularly that of boys.

Physical development

70. The quality of teaching is good overall in this area, and children make good progress to attain above the expected level by the end of the Reception year. Teachers plan exciting physical education lessons when children quickly grasp a good awareness of space in routines and games, which involve a variety of movements such as running and jumping. They move imaginatively like tadpoles, frogs and crabs, showing good control and co-ordination. Children with special needs are guided and supported very carefully so that not only do they achieve well, but gain great enjoyment from the lessons. Children follow instructions well, and demonstrate a good range of physical control. The new Nursery outdoor

play area adds significantly to children' physical development as they climb on the large apparatus or ride on tricycles. Children are given many opportunities to strengthen their fingers so that they use scissors, pencils, paintbrushes and a variety of construction toys well.

Creative development

71. The quality of teaching is good overall in this area. Children quickly improve their creative skills as they enjoy stimulating activities involving art, music, dance and imaginative play. Children paint bold, colourful patterns of animals' coats or self-portraits. They sing and perform action songs such as 'Ring A Ring of Roses' and 'The Grand Old Duke of York' with great enthusiasm. Good opportunities, such as the Christmas Play, give children the chance to perform to an audience. Children are especially good at role-play, pretending to be families in the 'house' or builders in 'builder's yard'. Nursery children and their parents greatly enjoyed taking part in adventures in role-play at a nearby leisure centre. All children are highly motivated in creative activities, and they make good progress to attain above average standards by the end of the Reception year.

ENGLISH

72. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is above average in speaking, listening and writing, and average in reading. Boys lag behind girls. Boys show less enthusiasm for reading. These findings are in line with this year's national tests. Standards in speaking and listening and writing have improved since the last inspection because of:
- the school's very good focus on developing these skills, both in literacy lessons and all other subjects; and
 - good use of assessment to show where pupils could do better.
73. As they move through the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive well-planned and effective support in classes, and teachers review their progress regularly. Pupils who have English as an additional language are supported well by the teachers' careful planning, and good support in group work. In one lesson, for example, a pupil who had not been in school long settled quickly to the task set, and with good support from a teaching assistant finished the work before others in the group. He was justifiably very proud. .
74. Nearly all pupils speak and listen well. Children enter the Reception classes with average levels of competence in spoken language, but achieve well by Year 2 because of good teaching. Teachers place great emphasis on pupils listening carefully in lessons, asking them astute questions to check their understanding. This works well, and makes for good progress. Pupils speak clearly and form their sentences well. Teachers reinforce this by having high expectations of the structure of pupils' sentences, often asking them to reform a sentence if it is said incorrectly. Pupils' wide vocabulary was illustrated when the teacher read them the story of 'Mog and the Vee-ee-tee'. The teacher read with very good expression and pupils were spellbound; when asked to think of words to describe the feelings of the cat in the story, pupils quickly empathised with the cat's predicament and suggested he would be confused, sore and very afraid.
75. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils with special educational needs to ensure they are included fully in all activities. They sit with pupils in whole class sessions to ensure that they understand the work, and this gives pupils the confidence to answer questions. Their help in group work makes sure that pupils are able to read the text, and get the most out of the activity.
76. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are average but could be better. Girls read well, with fluency and good expression. They enjoy reading, and while all attained at least average standards in this year's national tests, 40 per cent attained the higher Level 3. A significant proportion of boys, however, underachieve; only 82 per cent of boys attained the national standard this year, and less than 25 per cent attained Level 3. Many boys lack concentration when reading alone. In literacy lessons, it is the girls who lead whole class reading sessions, and boys often sit and just listen. In sessions at the start of the day, when the teacher and support assistant read with groups and leave others to read independently,

girls are happy to read quietly while many of the boys just look at the pictures. Teachers do not always pick this up, and some boys continue to 'tread water'. More able pupils are not always well supported either. One lesson started very well, with skilful teaching of abbreviations helping pupils develop a good understanding of how words are shortened. In the group work, however, while some pupils were supported very well by the teacher and teaching assistant, the most able group were given a role-play exercise using puppets to make a story. The girls worked hard at this and did well in developing their speaking skills but boys soon lost concentration and did little to improve their reading.

77. The more structured teaching of reading in the literacy hour works well. Carefully planned lessons, particularly those that provide specific plans for teaching assistants and other helping adults, ensure that pupils learn basic readings skills well. Teachers focus clearly on the best ways to work out unfamiliar words, and how to read with expression. Effective teaching, for example, in one lesson helped pupils develop a good understanding that words in italics, bold type or capital letters should be read with a particular emphasis, and that full stops show when a sentence has finished. A good strategy used by two teachers was to ask pupils to clap at the end of the sentence when they saw the full stop; this worked well, and helped pupils see how to pause before starting a new sentence. With non-fiction texts, good teaching ensures pupils understand the purpose of the contents page, chapter headings, index and glossary, and teachers reinforce this well in other lessons.
78. The school has done much to raise standards in writing. Recognising by good analysis of assessment that pupils' written work was weak and spelling poor, teachers provided more opportunities for pupils to write outside the literacy hour. They introduced a structured programme to help pupils read and spell unfamiliar words. These measures work well, and pupils' writing has improved significantly as a result. Importantly, teachers have found that pupils will try spelling a new word now, whereas before they would often look blank. Pupils write at length, and their news books show they use sentences well, and try hard to find interesting descriptive words. Pupils write lists of instructions on how, for example, to clean your teeth that show how good they are at organising information.
79. Teachers maintain their high expectations of pupils' writing in other subjects, and their Japanese poems written in Haiku format, and vivid accounts of the life of Jesus, are of very good quality.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and this gives pupils the confidence to ask questions. Teaching assistants are well prepared and, in the best lessons seen, were active in working with the teacher and managing the pupils. Most lessons have a brisk, purposeful pace because they are well-planned and pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. The teaching of writing is very good; in these well-structured lessons, teachers have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work, and this extends all groups. Teachers focus well on the technical side of writing, and this explains why pupils' stories are well put together with a clear beginning, middle and end. Teachers use homework and reading diaries well to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
81. The experienced and well-organised co-ordinator manages the subject well. Rigorous assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses gives teachers clear direction for their future planning. The issue of boys' underachievement has been identified but no procedures are yet in place to raise their standards. A good new initiative is the allocation of funding from the EAZ to get the best out of gifted and talented pupils.
82. The supply of learning resources is good. There is a good selection of books in the classrooms, including a wide range of poetry. The selection of books for the fluent reader is more limited and this contributes to the underachievement of the most able pupils.

MATHEMATICS

83. Standards of attainment in mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 2. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection and matches the results of this year's national test results. All pupils make very good progress; work is planned for three different levels of ability and, as a result, pupils always have work which challenges their thinking. Classroom assistants help those with learning difficulties skilfully, either as individuals or in small groups.
84. Standards have improved because:
- the numeracy hour has been successfully introduced since the last inspection;
 - teaching has improved – all teaching is now good;
 - no groups of pupils underachieve, as some did previously; and
 - 'routine' and 'boring' worksheets have been eliminated.

The developments have been successful because:

- the co-ordinator leads the subject very well;
 - the local authority and the EAZ have given very good support to all mathematical initiatives;
 - the co-ordinator has observed lessons and helped teachers improve;
 - the school has analysed pupils' work from all ability levels and paid very close attention to the school's results and national comparisons in its target setting; and
 - targets for improvement have been exceeded, particularly in the case of more able pupils – half of all pupils reached the higher level in the recent national tests.
85. The content of each lesson is matched very well to the age and experience of the pupils. All have a workbook and a collection of worksheets. Although these show that the pupils cover the same ground, the three ability groupings in each lesson means that the numbers and calculations are much more difficult for the most able pupils compared to those with special educational needs. Thus in number work, the more able pupils are quicker mentally and know more of simple multiplication tables such as 2, 5 and 10. These pupils confidently add numbers such as 85 and 18 or 48 and 36, while those of middle ability tackle $16 + 20$ or $35 + 15$ and less able pupils attempt $15 + 7$, but sometimes need help.
86. In work involving shape and measures, there is the same pattern. For example, more able pupils recognise solid shapes such as cylinder, square, pyramid and sphere readily, whilst middle and lower ability pupils recognise cube, cuboid and cone confidently, but show uncertainty with pyramid and sphere. In two-dimensional shape work the work ranges from accurate drawing to scale of triangles or hexagons on squared paper, to connecting names to shapes on a prepared worksheet. In money work, a few pupils calculate change quickly from £1.00, while other pupils need help in working in simpler amounts to 50 pence.
87. There are regular well-planned opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills, usually in the numeracy lessons, but not always. For example, in an ICT lesson, pupils excitedly followed up their learning about two-dimensional shapes using a large screen attached to a computer. In science, they collect data about their favourite 'healthy foods' and draw simple graphs of their findings. They are beginning to use different approaches to solve problems and are able to explain their thinking.
88. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that:
- all pupils complete a substantial amount during the year;
 - it is always very neatly recorded;
 - it is marked and monitored carefully by all teachers;
 - all aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy are covered in detail; and
 - all pupils are working enthusiastically towards mathematical targets agreed with the teacher.

These are important reasons why pupils make very good progress.

89. The teaching of numeracy is always good. Teachers and pupils work together very well because relationships in all classrooms are warm, positive and based on mutual respect. Consequently, pupils respond very confidently when they make observations or answer questions during oral sessions, showing a developing mental agility. Pupils are keen to learn because teachers use praise and encouragement well, as do the learning assistants in their successful work with pupils with special educational needs. Planning is good; the structure of all lessons, and their subsequent pace, is managed well so that good learning is maintained throughout. Thus, pupils grow in confidence because all are able to be successful, yet at the same time they have to think carefully about what they are doing. Teachers make sure pupils share the good resources sensibly, and concentrate hard during group activities. Teachers meet together regularly to check on pupils' standards and progress.
90. However, there are some shortcomings in everyday aspects of teaching; for example, sometimes teachers miss opportunities to use simple resources such as number lines to help pupils learn, and occasionally they hurry the end of lessons when they are drawing the results of group work together.
91. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She knows the many strengths of the subject, most of which she has worked to develop with teaching colleagues. She is already looking ahead to tackle any changes that will take place in the annual tests in the future.

SCIENCE

92. By Year 2, pupils achieve standards in science that are above average compared to other schools nationally. More pupils are now reaching higher levels in this subject than in previous years. All pupils make good progress in their learning because they build their scientific knowledge and understanding through a well-planned programme of scientific enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when they have extra support from learning assistants to help them plan and record their work.
93. The school has made good progress in science since the last report:
- standards have risen from average to above average;
 - teaching is good whereas before it was satisfactory; and
 - all pupils now make good progress.

The good improvements have happened through:

- the use of national subject guidance, which has strengthened planning at all levels;
 - better resources matched to this planning;
 - a strong focus on scientific enquiry;
 - careful monitoring of the revised planning by the co-ordinator;
 - more in-service training for teachers, some with guidance from the local authority, which has improved the quality of teaching; and
 - the co-ordinator's very good leadership of the subject.
94. Year 2 pupils have a good grounding in science. For example, in a lively lesson about the best materials to use for play clothes, pupils predicted which would be the best material by using a five-point grading system, experimented with sandpaper blocks to find out the effect of wear and began to record their results in a simple way. They then began to agree conclusions from these experiments and ended by comparing them with their original predictions. This very good lesson taught pupils much about the properties of materials, and even more about how to discover scientific facts for themselves.

95. Pupils discuss the principles of a fair test before they begin so they are confident they are comparing like with like. Displays and pupils' workbooks confirm similarly high standards when they explore how electricity works or think about the importance of living healthily. For example, they label different parts of the body, make graphs of 'healthy lunchtime food' and design a 'fitness poster'. They look at electricity, make simple circuits and record these using symbols. It is clear from the collections of pupils' work that the full programme of study for science is covered well.
96. However, within these similar experiences there are differences. All pupils respond to the teacher's suggestions and put forward their own ideas. They use simple texts and reference books to find information, use equipment sensibly, record the results of experiments and use scientific vocabulary in their predictions and conclusions. In some cases pupils need help to achieve these things, whilst the average and above average pupils complete these independently. The more able pupils answer in more detail, recognise patterns more quickly and take more care in their experiments, thereby demonstrating a greater depth of scientific knowledge and understanding.
97. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is consistently good. The strength of science teaching in every year is the strong focus on experiments. These are planned and prepared well, so that pupils explore their scientific ideas in a way that is suited to their age and experience. Teachers ask well-directed questions to involve pupils of all abilities and praise their answers, and this is why pupils are so confident in their answers. Good resources are to hand; for example, the materials used during class lessons in Year 2 are plentiful and so well organised that every individual has his or her own supply. As a result, practical work flows smoothly and effectively. Teachers ensure that work is matched well to pupils' abilities. This means that while most pupils will work on the main task of the lesson, and those with special educational needs will have good support from an adult, more able pupils will be expected to write independently and in more detail. This is why all groups of pupils make good progress. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils are well-behaved, enthusiastic scientists.
98. The co-ordinator is leading the subject very well. In her analysis of planning and pupils' work, she has identified the next developments in teaching and learning. She recognises the need to improve teachers' assessments in the subject, and set targets for pupils to achieve, as in English and mathematics.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Since the previous inspection, attainment levels have risen from the expected level to above that expected for seven year olds. Pupils build artistic skills, knowledge and understanding well. The well-qualified co-ordinator has brought about this improvement by:
- using her expertise to raise the level of teachers' skills;
 - putting in place a well-structured scheme of work which guides teaching and learning efficiently; and
 - monitoring teachers' planning and giving advice on how to make improvements.

As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, especially in terms of teachers' expectations of what all groups of pupils should achieve.

100. In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was satisfactory; now it is good. This is reflected in pupils' good attitudes towards work, good behaviour and as indicated above, increased attainment levels. Teachers have especially good relationships with pupils, which result in purposeful and orderly lessons. Teachers use resources well to inspire pupils and enable them to produce a higher quality of work. Another strength of teaching is the effective way they evaluate pupils' learning, particularly at the end of lessons when pupils are encouraged to suggest ways of improving their own and others' work.

101. Pupils in Year 1 make large, bold paintings of themselves or of a favourite toy. In Year 2, their landscape pictures show increasing detail, subtlety of colour and definition of shape. They develop good skills in mixing paint and drawing figures. They are skilled at drawing houses, and their pictures of the 'Three Little Pigs' are very good. Year 2 pupils make good observational pencil drawings with detailed features of shoes and boots. They also paint a vase of flowers and bowl of fruit in striking still-life drawings. They produce interesting work in different media such as pencils, crayons and charcoal. Teachers provide a good range of exciting materials for pupils and they explain things clearly so that pupils know exactly what to do. Pupils are good at creating atmospheric backgrounds to their pictures, as is illustrated by pupils in Year 1 who drew planets in the night sky and pupils in Year 2 who painted burnt out buildings against the flames of 'The Great Fire of London'. Pupils make good progress in the development of techniques of patterning, leaf rubbing, marbling, tie dying and collage.
102. Teachers provide many good opportunities for pupils to work in the style of well-known artists, and Year 1 pupils' 'Picasso' paintings are especially effective. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and their portraits are among the best in the class. As a class, pupils evaluate their own and others' work in a critical yet constructive way. This works well, and helps pupils of all ability refine and improve their own art and design. Pupils capture the mood well in landscapes, such as when pupils in Year 1 collaborated on a Corsican scene in the style of Anne Redpath and pupils in Year 2 painted a desolate impression of Winifred Nicholson's 'The Gateway to the Isles'.
103. The co-ordinator has audited the school's resources thoroughly and added to them, ensuring that they match the areas of learning being taught. Resources are now in good supply.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. By Year 2, pupils' standards in design and technology are above those expected for seven year olds. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average and shows the benefit of teachers placing a greater emphasis on the quality of pupils' drawings. There is good evidence of work both in food technology and in using different materials. All pupils achieve well and the work of those with special educational needs is often as good as any in the class. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and make a good contribution to other pupils' cultural development when they bring clothing and materials into lessons from different parts of the world.
105. Pupils develop, plan and communicate ideas well. They work confidently with tools to make good quality products. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 2 designed glove puppets and these provided very good terms of reference when they began constructing their models. They kept turning back to their sketches to ensure that they were working to plan and this helped them produce exciting and colourful puppets. All were delighted with the finished products and had great fun playing with them. Their research skills are good and enable them, for example, to unearth important information on different fastenings. Pupils take great care with the finish of their creations. Their hats made in the shape of geometric shapes show considerable awareness of how to use colour and texture to enhance their work.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan in detail, and this ensures that all pupils, whatever their ability and background, make good progress. Teachers have all materials ready for pupils to use and this makes the most of pupils' enthusiasm and the time available. Other elements of the good teaching include the way teachers use challenging questions to help pupils think carefully about their designs, and the good links teachers make between design and technology and other subjects. This was particularly evident when pupils were making bread and their lists of ingredients did much to reinforce similar work in literacy lessons.
107. The new subject co-ordinator has made a good start by:

- auditing resources to see how they can be improved;
- producing a comprehensive action plan to raise standards further; and
- making effective use of national guidelines for the planning of the curriculum, so that pupils' skills are built upon as they move from Year 1 to Year 2.

GEOGRAPHY

108. Standards in geography are average by the time pupils leave, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The progress of most pupils is satisfactory. Those with special educational needs make good progress because work is matched to their abilities and classroom learning assistants give very effective support to small groups and individuals. Middle and higher ability pupils make only satisfactory progress because they are not always fully challenged.

109. The school has made sound improvements since the last inspection, in that:

- the progress of pupils with special educational needs is now good; and
- planning has developed well with the introduction of national guidance.

Nevertheless, the school recognises that there are other things that it can do better, and therefore plans to re-examine the subject in the spring term.

110. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there is an over-reliance on photocopied sheets to record work during group activities and these are often the same for all pupils. The assessment of pupils' progress is difficult because extension activities for more able pupils are not usually included in the planning, so these pupils tend to produce similar work as the middle ability, but neater and better labelled.

111. Pupils show a sound geographical awareness of places beyond Thetford. They carry out geographical tasks methodically, using resources provided by the teacher, answer and ask questions using a satisfactory geographical vocabulary and use their knowledge, skills and understanding in local studies. However, the more able pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explore environments in more depth or to use their research skills and own vocabulary to communicate their findings.

112. The curriculum is planned with strong links to history, so that pupils in Year 1 study weather, the locality, food and shopping and a contrasting locality. In Year 2, they study Thetford, the seaside and another contrasting locality. The best of this work is the comparison between the Thetford area and the Isle of Struay, because some of the work is in pupils' own words; even this, however, does not fully challenge the most able pupils. The only work which shows more clearly what these pupils can achieve is the folder about Japan, which is much more wide ranging, and pupils' views and vocabulary in response to geographical questions are above average.

113. The teaching of geography is satisfactory. Teachers are knowledgeable and well prepared for lessons so they flow smoothly. Teachers are good at making pupils feel their views are important. This encourages them to contribute enthusiastically to class discussions. As a result of this approach, which is always calm and warm, the relationships in all classrooms are very good. Resources such as maps, including those on the computers, help pupils learn, and are well matched to the age and knowledge of the pupils. This was seen in both Year 1 and Year 2 classes. In Year 1, for example, the use of a computer-generated map of the British Isles, supported by the same map printed out, meant that all pupils gained a good knowledge of the topic. Teaching assistants support pupils very skilfully, adding quietly and effectively to the learning of individuals and groups. Pupils learn best during whole class teaching when teachers extend more able pupils by their searching questions and ensure that those with special educational needs can answer questions at their own level. However, when pupils begin work in

groups, their learning slows. This is because they are given the same tasks, and more able pupils are held back.

114. The co-ordinator has already influenced standards in the subject. She has:

- developed a whole school 'curriculum map' using national guidance so that each term's work is planned well;
- updated resources carefully to match these plans;
- successfully introduced 'Walter Rabbit's Journeys' so that pupils learn the location of different countries;
- helped teachers produce attractive classroom displays, which interest and inform pupils; and
- organised a useful subject manager's file to help monitor standards.

In the management file she has identified appropriate areas for improvement to include:

- better experience and understanding of environmental issues;
- improvements in the planning of work for more able pupils; and
- the development of more useful assessment methods.

From this it is clear the co-ordinator understands the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and the steps that are necessary to raise standards.

HISTORY

115. No lessons were seen for history during the inspection. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work, teachers' plans, displays and photographs shows that, by Year 2, pupils' standards are broadly in line with national expectations. The subject is 'on hold' because there is no subject co-ordinator at present, and it is being supported on a temporary basis by the headteacher. At present:

- the planning of the curriculum is sound, based on national guidance and linked well to other subjects such as geography;
- teachers work together enthusiastically, sharing ideas and skills in their daily planning;
- teachers are knowledgeable about the subject, which is evident from the well-planned visits and visitors;
- pupils record their work neatly and complete each area of the subject satisfactorily; and
- pupils like history, particularly when they have first-hand experiences.

116. The well-planned visits are a strength of pupils' learning experiences. Their visits to local museums, such as Norwich and Gressenhall, and their exploration of Thetford as a town of history, are well chosen and stimulating. Photographs of pupils capture the excitement they feel on these occasions, for example, when they 'dig for artefacts', 'ride the chariot simulator' or 'become Victorians as they dress in costume'. It is obvious these capture pupils' imagination and make history come alive.

117. In lessons, teachers place too much reliance on photocopied sheets for pupils to record their work. These sheets are the same for all pupils so that, although those with special educational needs are able to complete the task with the help of the teacher or an assistant, other pupils working independently, particularly the more able groups, are not challenged sufficiently. This means that, although pupils of lower ability progress well, the middle and higher ability pupils miss opportunities to develop their skills to the full. In practical terms, although all pupils are developing an understanding of chronology, place some events in order, recognise how the past is represented and talk about events in the past such as the Fire of London, more able pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop a deeper historical understanding. For example, they are not given sufficient tasks that help them to use sources of information for their own research or to express their own reasons in their own words for changes in the past.

118. The headteacher recognises that history needs to develop further. The school plans to re-examine the teaching of history in the spring term.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

119. By the end of Year 2, standards in ICT are average, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. All groups of pupils achieve standards in line with their abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and welcome the success that using word processing programs gives them when writing stories.

120. Year 2 pupils use computers with confidence to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure their writing is clear, well presented and free of errors. They type in text confidently, and use computers naturally because of the regular practice that teachers give them from the time they start school. They use the spacebar appropriately to create spaces, the shift key to create capitals and the backspace key to make corrections. They have a good awareness of how the Internet is useful, and use web sites effectively to enhance work in history and geography. The co-ordinator has enhanced this further by building the school's own excellent web site, which pupils and parents can use to find out more about the school.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers introduce pupils to the new work in a systematic way and their explanations are clear and well informed. As a result, pupils develop a sound range of basic skills and work purposefully at a good pace. Teachers use ICT well to extend pupils' learning in other curriculum areas. This helps pupils to understand how computers are useful in all aspects of their work. Particular strengths are evident in English, where pupils follow up punctuation work later on the computer, and geography where pupils use a computer program to plot weather on a map of Great Britain. Pupils make good use of a computer attached to a microscope to investigate plants and small insects.

122. Teachers show secure knowledge of the subject in their explanations and instructions and this gives pupils confidence to ask questions and extend their learning further. Teachers have had the benefit of some good recent training, and the co-ordinator has supplemented this with specific work on the school's own software. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboard²; this works very well because all pupils can see what the teacher is doing and they delight in touching the screen to make things happen.

123. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, and has done much to raise standards, particularly by:

- training staff in the use of the microscope, computer whiteboard and digital camera;
- introducing a good scheme of work, based on national guidelines, which addresses all the required elements of the curriculum; and
- monitoring pupils' work to see where any weaknesses exist and taking effective action.

Assessment procedures, based on targets in the scheme of work, are sound, and give teachers a clear idea of pupils' attainment and progress.

MUSIC

124. Pupils in Year 2 attain the standards expected for their age. These findings show that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

² Large boards that are used to project information from computer screens and also to write upon, which teachers and pupils can use to show, for example, mathematical calculations, sentences or phrases.

125. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but teachers' confidence has increased since the last inspection. This has been brought about by better guidance, notably because;
- the co-ordinator has qualifications and expertise in the subject and this means that teachers are better informed about what and how to teach;
 - she has put in place a scheme of work to help teachers plan their lessons; and
 - the school has developed the supply of resources such as tapes, discs, books and percussion instruments, including those representative of different cultures, so that pupils learn a broad range of musical skills.
126. Teachers' planning is effective so that lessons focus on important skills; this ensures that pupils make good progress. Pupils have particular strengths in singing, using instruments and responding to each other's music making. They sing with good pitch control, clear diction and accurate timing. They sing songs very tunefully from a Pinocchio arrangement, such as 'Flying Free' and 'Merrily Sings the Donkey'. Using their voice range expressively, they show their understanding of 'quiet' and 'loud' notes. They follow their teachers' directions attentively. In one successful lesson, keeping to the Pinocchio theme, they provided the instrumental accompaniment to represent the donkey. It worked very well; they chose the best instruments for the task, and created trotting, jumping and braying noises, accompanying the melody effectively. They appreciate the sounds they and others make. Pupils' composing skills are less well developed, and they struggle when asked to make up their own tunes.
127. Pupils gain obvious pleasure from music and are keen to participate. They have good attitudes to musical studies. This is obvious at assemblies where they listen appreciatively to a variety of music such as 'The Planets' by Gustav Holst. Also at assemblies, they sing a wide range of songs such as 'Count Your Blessings' and 'Living and Learning', remembering the words very well. Such experiences add positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their singing creates an uplifting atmosphere at assemblies and in lessons. Many pupils in Year 2 add to their achievements and sense of accomplishment by learning to play the recorder in the school's recorder club.
128. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. Besides structuring the curriculum efficiently, the co-ordinator has arranged for specialists to come to the school and work alongside teachers to further their skills and confidence, particularly in improving their teaching of composing skills. Assessment procedures are sound, and gauge how pupils are progressing and attaining at the end of each unit of study. The quality of teaching and learning is improving because of:
- the expertise of the co-ordinator;
 - the appointment of a musically talented member of the teaching staff; and
 - teachers' improved expertise.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Pupils' attainment in physical education is average and similar to that reported in the previous inspection. In gymnastics, pupils work energetically and safely, with a good idea of space. They show sound skills when devising different ways to travel around the room and when creating small and large shapes with their bodies but struggle when they try to link complex moves to form a sequence. They have a sound awareness of the effects of exercise on the body and talk knowledgeably about the increase in the rate of their heartbeat. They make careful observations of the work of others and improve their own performance as a result. Pupils' dance skills are average, but the progress of boys is sometimes hampered by their embarrassment at having to move around the hall as if they are on the moon or showing how a seed 'explodes' using their bodies. No games lessons were observed.
130. Pupils are making sound progress in developing their skills in physical education. They are keen to improve their work and generally accept advice to achieve better standards. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in physical education; they benefit from very good support

in lessons to help them, for example, link moves together, and are delighted when the teachers pick them out as examples of the best practice.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well and use initial warm-up sessions effectively. Teachers demonstrate techniques clearly in order to improve the quality of pupils' performance and they use pupils effectively to demonstrate how well a move can be done. This ensures that pupils improve their skills, and are able to refine their moves using the expertise of higher attaining pupils. The teachers use praise and encouragement well, and this persuades pupils to attempt challenging tasks. Teachers are mostly well prepared for lessons with resources ready to use, but not all are familiar with audio systems; when these fail, the pace of lessons suffers.
132. The co-ordinator for physical education has a good grasp of how to raise standards in the subject. She has made good use of advice from the local education authority to improve teachers' confidence in teaching dance. The school uses a good scheme of work, which teachers modify according to the needs of their class; this works well and gives a good structure to physical education.
133. The subject has a good range of resources, with plentiful apparatus and equipment. The hall is small but just about adequate for gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained. Pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding well in accordance with the guidance from the local education authority on what should be taught in religious education.
135. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan thoroughly, and lessons are focused well and guided from the outset by clear statements of what pupils should know by the end. With such careful provision, including interesting visits, pupils make good progress. In talking to pupils and looking at their work, it is obvious that they have good attitudes towards religious studies. They present their work neatly and are proud of it.
136. Pupils in Year 2 know that a Christian's special place of worship is the church and that their special book is the Bible. They have a thorough knowledge of stories from the Bible, such as 'The Good Samaritan' and 'Joseph's Coat of Many Colours'. They visit a local church and understand how the building is used for different Christian celebrations and ceremonies, such as Easter, Christmas, weddings and funerals. They greatly enjoy joining in the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Pupils have a good knowledge of world religions such as Judaism and Hinduism; they know, for example, that the synagogue is a special place of worship for Jewish people and that the boys wear a capel when they go there. They join in the Hindu Festival of Light and enjoy making lamps to make the topic come to life. Teachers make a big effort to promote the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in religious education throughout the school.
137. Religious education is promoted well at the daily assemblies. Speakers from different religious bodies who come to talk to the pupils make a particularly strong contribution. Talks concentrate on themes such as friendship and sharing; these help pupils to become sensitive and reflective, and promote their spiritual development in the broadest sense. They also encourage pupils' moral and social development when they become aware of the importance of belonging to a caring community.
138. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who since taking full responsibility for the subject a year ago, has:
- introduced a good scheme of work that gives teachers many useful ideas to help them plan lessons;
 - developed a good range of resources to support the different areas of learning for use by both teachers and pupils; and
 - built up a good stock of books and materials to illustrate the main features of several world religions and make them come to life.