

INSPECTION REPORT

TOFTWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Toftwood, East Dereham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121206

Headteacher: Miss Joanna Whiteside

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Evans
20737

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th January 2003

Inspection number: 248236

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Toftwood East Dereham Norfolk
Postcode:	NR19 1LS
Telephone number:	01362 692612
Fax number:	01362 690159
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Neil Lovelock
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Paul Evans 20737	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs Janet Butler 9428	Lay inspector		Educational inclusion Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Margaret Palmer 20646	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Science Geography History Music	
Mr Mike Wehrmeyer 15015	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Religious education	How well are pupils taught? How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:
TWA Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Toftwood Infant School provides education for children aged four to seven years of age. Two hundred and fifty two children attend the school, 140 boys and 112 girls. At the time of the inspection 11 children attended the nursery part time, four boys and seven girls. The majority of pupils live within the village of Toftwood, although some parents choose to bring their children to the school from outside the school's immediate area. The proportion of pupils identified as being eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is in line with the national average, as is the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school has a slightly higher than average proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language; some of these pupils are at the early stages of acquiring skills in English. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below what is expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of Toftwood Infant School is very good. Standards in national tests show that the school's results are well above average in mathematics. While standards in reading and writing have improved slowly but consistently during the past three years, standards in both subjects are below average when compared to those of similar schools. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. The leadership and management of the school are excellent.

Considering its context, the standards that it achieves, the level of education that it offers to all its pupils and the money that it spends, Toftwood Infant School provides very good value for money

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics are well above average at the end of Year 2.
- By the time that pupils leave the school, standards in information and communication technology are very good and in art and design and physical education they are good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the taking of effective action are excellent.
- The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good, as are the procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour.
- The provision for pupils' social and cultural development is excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards in elements of English and literacy, while improving slowly, are still below average.
- Opportunities to extend more able pupils are occasionally missed.

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 October 1997 when inspectors judged that to build further on its achievements the school should develop effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment. Teachers did not use assessment information well when planning. The role of curriculum leaders was underdeveloped in formally monitoring planning and teaching of all subjects. The teaching of music required improvement. Inspection evidence shows that all these key issues have been dealt with well or very well. The school has made very good improvement in standards in mathematics and good improvement in information and communication technology, art and design, music and physical education. The quality of leadership and management of the school have improved very well. Overall, the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

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	E	C	D	D
Writing	E	E	D	D
Mathematics	E	A	A	A

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

The majority of children in the Foundation Stage reach standards that are below expectations for their age in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development by the time that they enter Year 1. In the other four areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage they reach the expected standards overall.

In the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds, the school's results were well above average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. Standards in science, according to teacher assessments, were average. In 2000 the school's results were well below average in all three subjects. Standards in mathematics rose dramatically in 2001 to well above average and remained at this high level in 2002. The school's overall trend since 2000 has been one of consistent, steady improvement in reading and writing in line with the national trend. Inspection evidence confirms these standards.

When compared to the results of schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, standards in mathematics were well above average and below average in reading and writing.

Inspection evidence shows that when they leave the school, pupils attain standards which are well above expectations in information and communication technology. In art and design and physical education, standards are above expectations. Standards in design and technology, religious education, history, geography and music are in line with expectations. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs also progress well. At the end of their time in school, pupils in both these categories achieve standards which are appropriate for their age and ability.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to attend school and are enthusiastic about the work that they undertake.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The behaviour of pupils in and out of classrooms is good. Pupils are often seen looking after each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers and other staff and visitors.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about attending school and become very involved in the work and activities that they undertake. Behaviour both in and out of classrooms is good and pupils are very aware of the impact that their actions can have on others. All pupils are very keen to undertake any responsibility they are offered. The relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are very good. Attendance is in line with the national average.

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.

In order to reach a judgement on the quality of teaching, evidence provided by pupils' past work and the quality of teaching seen in lessons are considered together. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

Forty-three lessons or parts of lessons were seen during the inspection. In three lessons the quality of teaching was excellent and in another six it was very good. In most other lessons the quality of teaching was good. In 10 lessons the quality of teaching was satisfactory and it was unsatisfactory in only one lesson. The effectiveness of the strategies for teaching English and literacy are less than satisfactory but have been reviewed and are improving. Strategies for the teaching of mathematics and numeracy are very good. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' levels of learning closely matched the quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good quality teaching. The quality of learning throughout the school is good. All pupils are fully included in all the school's activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. The school provides a rich, wide-ranging and well balanced curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and learning support assistants provide good support to enable these pupils to make progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There is good provision provided by the school for pupils for whom English is not the language they speak at home. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are well supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The provision for pupils' cultural and social development are excellent. Very good provision is made for moral development and spiritual development is good. This has a high level of impact on pupils' learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All staff know the children and show real care and concern for their welfare.

The relationship between the school and parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides excellent clear educational direction for the school. There is an outstanding relationship and high level teamwork between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and with subject managers and learning support assistants.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body makes a very good contribution to shaping the educational direction of the school. They are very effective in fulfilling their statutory duties and have a very strong understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the taking of effective action are outstanding.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The use of all resources is carefully planned to have the greatest impact on the standards that pupils reach.

The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The school's accommodation is very good and resources for teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of leadership and management are excellent. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, undertake high levels of responsibility and all feel very highly valued by the school. Team work is very strong and the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement. All spending and management decisions are taken with a clear view to how these will improve pupils' learning. This is very good.

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 quality of teaching in the school. • The fact that they are comfortable to approach the school with any questions or concerns. • The fact that their children like attending school. • The good progress their children make. • The high expectations that the school has for their children. • The leadership and management of the school. • The fact that school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school. • The information they receive from the school, particularly about their children's progress.

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of the great majority of parents who expressed an opinion. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for an infant school. The information provided for parents is very good, especially through the school's very good web-site. In these matters inspection evidence does not support the concerns of a small minority of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection in October 1997, standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 were judged to be in line with expectations in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology, geography, physical education, art and history. Standards in information and communication technology were judged to be above expectations. In music, standards were below expectations. Although standards in science were in line with expectations, pupils did not undertake sufficient experimental and investigative work.
2. Children's levels of attainment on entry to the school are below what is expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have achieved the targets set for children of their age in their personal and social development, in their creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. In their communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, standards are below expectations on entry to Year 1.
3. The latest national test results for 2002 show that at the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards which are well above average in mathematics and below average in writing and reading when compared to all schools. When these results are compared with schools with a similar level of entitlement to free school meals, the school's results were well above average in mathematics and below average in reading and writing. This is because when they joined the school, this group of pupils had higher attainment in mathematics than in English and literacy. Teacher assessments in science showed that standards were in line with the national average. Inspection evidence confirms these standards. Although standards in English and literacy have improved consistently and slowly during the past three years, they remain below average. The school has reviewed its provision in these areas, led by the new literacy leader, and there are now stronger strategies in place. However, these have not yet had time to have an impact on the overall standards achieved. Standards in numeracy have improved significantly due to the significant improvements brought about by the numeracy leader.
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards, as pupils leave the school, are well above expectations in information and communication technology. This is good improvement since the last inspection. In art and design and physical education, standards are above expectations. This is good improvement since the last inspection in both subjects. Standards in history, geography, design and technology and religious education remain as they were in the last report. In music, standards have improved and are now satisfactory.
5. The level of attainment of pupils who have special educational needs is well below national averages. The pupils make good progress overall. In specific support situations with the special needs assistants and local authority specialists many pupils make very good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also well supported. Teachers and learning support assistants undertake training in the support of these pupils and there is one visit a week by a specialist from the local education authority. Pupils are well supported when they are in the early stages of learning English. This continues later when the vocabulary relevant to subjects such as science, mathematics or information and communication technology is well taught. All these pupils reach standards which are appropriate to their individual levels of ability by the time that they leave the school. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is good because they are usually presented with work which extends them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Parents value the fact that their children like coming to school and are enthusiastic about learning. This has supported an improvement in attendance in recent years. Attitudes to school are very good, both in the pupils' keenness to learn and in their excitement about the varied opportunities and experiences provided for them. They are proud of their school and enjoy the responsibilities they are given to improve the quality of school life, particularly through the school council. Pupils are very good at listening, respond well to teachers' questions and try hard with their tasks. They undertake homework tasks conscientiously. Pupils in Year 2 were particularly pleased to see their homework origami 'salt cellars' being used for a Japanese banquet.
7. Behaviour throughout the school is good overall and is frequently very good. Pupils respond very well to the consistent and well-understood Golden Rules. They are polite, kind and careful, both with people and with resources. Those pupils who have difficulties in controlling their own behaviour are very skilfully managed by the teaching and non-teaching staff and only very rarely disrupt learning. There have been no exclusions. The best, exemplary behaviour occurs when pupils are fully engaged by the activities provided, like when a Year 2 class was 'flown' by their teacher from Japan to India for a role-play experience of a Hindu story. Even when denied their outdoor play because of inclement weather during the inspection, pupils rarely became so restless or silly as to prevent others from learning.
8. Relationships in the school are very good. All pupils, whatever their social or ethnic background, are very much part of the school 'family' which is characterised by the friendly and informal style of conversation between adults and children around the school. Pupils show respect for adults and for one another. There is a very caring and tolerant attitude shown towards those pupils who have special needs or who are just beginning to learn English. The school has very effective policies to ensure that there is no harassment of any kind, including racism.
9. Since the last inspection the personal development of pupils has improved and is now very good. They are responding well to the increased priority which the school has given to the personal, social and health education programme and to citizenship. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves right from the start. Early mornings are very orderly affairs. Even the youngest pupils show independence in using the cloakrooms, sorting out their book bags and preparing for registration. Pupils are confident, thoughtful and keen to demonstrate their ability to accept responsibility. Monitors carry out their duties with care and those who act as representatives or officers on the school council are very mature in their approach to making whole school decisions. They appreciate the chance to make a difference. Throughout the school, pupils are developing a real sense of awareness about other cultures. Individually they show that they are capable of thinking about and respecting the differences between peoples of other faiths, cultures and family backgrounds. In response to the daily selection of a 'special person' in each class, pupils are very good at expressing thoughtful compliments to one another and at showing acts of kindness.
10. The very good relationships between pupils are the result of a wide range of opportunities for them to become confident, considerate and friendly towards others. Pupils in reception classes are encouraged to share ideas with a partner during lessons. Working co-operatively in pairs or small groups is a feature of many lessons. Older pupils are sometimes paired with younger ones to help with reading or lunchtime skills. The school council has not only given pupils a voice and an opportunity to improve the day-to-day life of the school, from softer toilet paper to the use of the friendship bench. It has also been a valuable lesson in democracy and citizenship. Year 2 pupils took part in hustings for the

main council roles and pupils in Years 1 and 2 express mature and sensible opinions with interest and enthusiasm.

11. A very noteworthy feature of the school is the pupils' demonstration of sign language in assemblies and some registrations and lessons. This approach by staff and pupils clearly underlines its determination to include all pupils, even those with profound special needs. Pupils are also encouraged to get to know older members of the community. They regularly share lunch with senior citizens both in their school hall and at a meeting place in the neighbouring town of Dereham. Generous support for a range of charities also shows the school's desire to educate pupils in the needs of society at large. Pupils learn to count in Japanese, learn from a Japanese student both about life in modern Japan and the traditional craft of origami, and have first-hand experience of Japanese food and manners in a banquet. The banquet gave pupils a chance to compare and contrast table manners from two different cultures and demonstrated to inspectors their capacity for reflection and respect. Other areas of cultural significance include the visit to the local visual arts centre, artists in residence, an art exhibition held for members of the public and a range of musical opportunities. Physical education lessons include the use of music from other cultures and in assemblies the pupils are encouraged to think about the country from which the 'music of the day' is taken. The result of this is that pupils themselves have clear expectations of the behaviour of others as well as a set of guidelines for their own conduct.
12. Overall, the school's approach to moral development is very good and pupils, from their entry into nursery or reception, have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The pupils respond very well to the selection of a 'special person' each day, both learning to give and receive compliments and understanding that everyone has something special to offer. Assemblies are well used to develop this idea of the unique contributions we all make to the world and pupils are given a chance to think about the bigger picture of our place in creation. Poetry and art are used well to inspire pupils and to encourage them to express their feelings. Some of the teachers are very good at creating an atmosphere of wonder and amazement, but in other classes and some assemblies opportunities for personal reflection or worship are sometimes missed.
13. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are learning English are developing confidence and positive self-esteem as they follow the good role model of their classmates. They relate well to the teachers and support assistants, developing an enthusiasm for their work and an increasing ability to concentrate. The pupils with the most severe difficulties appreciate what is done for them and they try hard to live up to the high expectations of the staff.
14. Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is slightly higher than average because the school takes a very firm stance on punctuality and closes registers at 9 a.m.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching has improved since the school was previously inspected. Three quarters of the lessons seen were good or better. The level of very good teaching has increased, with one in five lessons being very good or excellent. Some good teaching occurred in every year group. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed during the inspection week.
16. The school has tackled the issues raised in the previous report with determination. The improvement in the monitoring of teaching has enabled the school to share expertise. The teachers now emphasise the creation of learning opportunities. These are based on good question and answer techniques, which heighten pupils' interest, involvement and thinking. Teachers are committed to fully including all pupils and make sure they bring everyone

into the discussions. The adoption of a unified planning format has improved the structure of lessons. Teachers lead an introductory session of appropriate length; the overlong lesson introductions have virtually disappeared. Teachers have studied lesson endings and now summarise their lessons with effective plenary sessions. A good strategy seen in Year 1 is to ask the pupils 'What have you learned about this today?' From the earliest days in the nursery onwards, the teachers provide the pupils with effective strategies for learning. Most lessons start with pupils hearing the objectives for the lesson. By the end of Year 2, pupils can be confident and independent in their work, able to solve problems and show persistence.

17. The teachers' planning is based effectively on the long and medium work schemes and lays out pupils' learning as sequences of small steps. In most lessons the sharing of objectives gives pupils a good framework of knowledge about their own learning. This promotes good continuity throughout the year and across the years. This is a clear improvement since the previous inspection, where continuity of learning was identified as a weakness. In most lessons the sharing of objectives gives pupils a good framework of knowledge about their own learning. Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to doing their best for them. Their planning now draws more on accurate ongoing information about pupils' attainment; consequently, the match of work to the pupils' ability has improved steadily. Teachers alter their plans regularly in the light of pupils' understanding in lessons.
18. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. All class teachers are involved in drawing up the pupils' individual work plans, in consultation with the special needs leader and the support assistants, to ensure that pupils get the maximum benefit from their classroom activities. The teachers try to draw in the weaker pupils by including them in all question and answer sessions. All teachers are good at ensuring that pupils with special educational needs experience success in front of their peers. The teachers are beginning to match the pupils' work closely to their abilities so that they have work that is challenging but achievable. The progress is closely monitored by the classroom assistants. They pass valuable information on to the teachers to enable them to prepare their planning at the right level. The teaching of gifted and talented pupils is good overall. However, opportunities to extend these pupils are occasionally missed.
19. The teaching of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Learning support assistants have undertaken training and effectively work with pupils to ensure their understanding and involvement in lessons. They use good strategies to extend pupils' vocabulary and syntax as they become more proficient in English. They also ensure that pupils learn and understand new words in subjects such as science, mathematics or information and communication technology. The teaching of numeracy is very good throughout the school. The use of homework is good overall and is particularly effective in mathematics and numeracy.
20. Often teachers use an exciting and varied range of teaching methods, which catches pupils' interest and holds their attention. In the most effective lessons the teaching is inspiring. Adults make the learning dramatic by acting out the stories and incidents, for instance Rama and Sita in a religious lesson, or Turner the painter tied to the mast of his ship. These dramas make a lasting impact on pupils, particularly if they, too, have the chance to act them. The teachers also use resources in an inspiring way. For instance, in the Japan experience they went to much trouble to ensure the banquet was comprehensive as well as authentic. This gives the pupils the opportunity to observe closely and see real differences at first hand. Teachers manage their pupils well, creating stable conditions for learning.
21. The teachers' instructions are clear and precise. However, they do not always make clear the quantity and quality of the work they expect from pupils. For instance, they rarely refer

to the pupils' individual or group target cards, which they have prepared carefully and displayed prominently. As a result, pupils do not take the most care with spellings and handwriting, do not remember all punctuation and often opt for a shorter rather than longer piece of writing.

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

22. The very good quality and range of learning opportunities provide a rich and exciting daily diet for the pupils which fascinates and inspires them. Their enthusiasm for school and very good attitudes to learning are the result of this broad, varied and well-tailored provision. Lessons for each year group are planned in parallel, so that all pupils receive equally interesting and appropriate experiences. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school adjusts the curriculum for these pupils by means of individual education plans. The school has begun to make the pupils' targets specific to their needs and not just simplified class-work. The targets are more precise than at the time of the previous inspection and the plans are now kept in the teachers' files for quick reference. The plans are good, but do not all show the criteria by which successful achievement of a target may be judged. The review period shown on each plan does not reflect the pace at which several different targets might be achieved. Provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Targets are set both within lessons and for achievement within weeks. Pupils are given good support and are enabled to take a full part in lessons. Teachers make lessons exciting by introducing a little suspense or surprise. For example, a nursery lesson introducing the letter sound 'd' involved a large puppet and a bag of secret items. On another occasion, pupils were encouraged to imagine a sea scene by the use of percussion instruments and a wafting parachute. In this way the richness of the curriculum makes children want to learn more.
23. The curriculum covers all the required subjects of the National Curriculum, with an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. It meets statutory requirements well, including those for children in nursery and reception classes, in all areas of the guidelines for the curriculum for children of this age. There is a daily act of collective worship which covers a range of religious festivals and moral lessons and is broadly Christian in content.
24. The school teaches many subjects through topic work, in which there are very good links between subject areas which are very appropriate for this age group. For example, rather than teaching as discrete subject areas, pupils' work on the growth of a seed involved the social opportunity of a visit to a garden centre, the science of conditions necessary for germination as they planted their seeds, a choreographed dance to illustrate the growth process and the artistic appreciation of the mature plants which later decorated the garden areas. Religious education, history and geography are richly interwoven with multi-cultural input like the current topic on Japan. Very good use is made of information and communication technology to enrich and broaden the pupils' learning. For example, in art they created a variety of computer-generated images based on the work of Kandinsky.
25. There are very good strategies for teaching numeracy skills and the teaching of strategies for mental calculation is very good. Teachers teach specific strategies such as the 'five and a bit' strategy for addition which extends the range of pupils' mental strategies very well. Although teachers give pupils many opportunities to develop their listening and speaking skills, the overall teaching of literacy skills has been less than satisfactory. However, this is an area on which the school is currently focusing. Several new initiatives now in place have yet to have an effect on the standards that pupils reach. In essence there was a lack of rigor in the teaching of spelling and the use of capital letters and pupils were not given enough opportunities for longer pieces of writing. However, teachers do

make good use of key words and encourage pupils to build their vocabulary as they move from subject to subject. The teaching of literacy skills in lessons is now good.

26. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, although the school has not succeeded in conveying this to some parents. Clubs for music, recorder playing and football are in addition to the social-skills nurture group and the attractive range of play opportunities outside at lunchtime. Pupils can choose from a series of new games marked on the playground, as well as from a set of toys like space hoppers and hoops, skittles and balls. These have all helped to make playtime a happier, more sociable experience. Very good links with the neighbourhood and local community have involved pupils in producing an art exhibition for public display and in considering the needs, likes and dislikes of elderly people. The facilities at the next-door junior school have enabled the pupils to receive a very good early training in swimming skills. A broad programme of visits and visitors adds an extra dimension in which pupils get first hand experiences of other cultures, real works of art and the opportunities to perform in public. Clergy from a range of local churches also provide pupils with insights into their local community and contribute to the programme of daily acts of worship.
27. Overall the very good personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is a thorough and wide-ranging preparation for life and includes consideration of healthy lifestyles, including an introduction to drugs awareness and aspects of growth and healthy relationships as a preparation for sex education. The curriculum is both underpinned and interwoven with a strong emphasis on the personal developmental needs of the child as an individual. Overall the provision for these needs is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The greatest strengths lie in the areas of social and cultural development, for which the opportunities provided are excellent. The wealth of cultural experiences provided for pupils is a highlight of which the school is most proud. Parents say that the school makes a good start in preparing their children for life in a multi-cultural society. As well as a visiting performing arts dance group from Zimbabwe and a focus on Hinduism and Diwali in religious education, pupils in Year 2 have a deep and wide-ranging topic on Japan, which involves many strands of the curriculum.
28. A significant improvement in the school's provision for moral development is centred on the introduction of a set of positive Golden Rules which are used consistently by all adults. They form the focus of several assemblies and classroom circle time. Although not a feature of lesson planning, the school makes good provision for the spiritual development of its pupils through a range of approaches. A high priority is given to the development of self-esteem and self-awareness, which is an area in which many pupils are lacking when they join the school.
29. The school has a good range of supportive links with other educational establishments involving a two-way sharing of expertise. Pupils benefit from the insights teachers and learning assistants gain from their visits to partner institutions. Although the individual needs of pupils are well catered for on transfer to junior schools, there is room for improvement in the development of links between subject leaders in the infant and junior schools to ensure good, continuous progression.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school places the welfare of its pupils at the heart of its work and procedures to ensure their health and safety are very good. All adults in school are vigilant, caring and safety-conscious and there is regular risk assessment. Child protection procedures are fully in place and follow local area guidelines. The level of first aid cover is good. Pupils are taught safe practice and are gently but consistently reminded about the need to consider their own safety and that of others.

31. The very good monitoring and promotion of good attendance and good behaviour are the key to the school's success in helping pupils' personal development. Those with particular social or personal needs get individual targets to help them achieve within the normal range of school awards. There is a nurture group which helps pupils to develop their social skills and confidence so that they do not find free play time a stressful experience. Pupils know and value the system of achieving smiley faces, stickers and certificates to celebrate their progress in effort, behaviour and good work. They also understand and are sanctioned effectively by a few minutes lost from 'Golden Time' should they fail to behave appropriately. The system of closing the registers promptly at 9 a.m. results in good punctuality. Attendance figures have increased with the close monitoring of absence.
32. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development work very well. This is, in part, because of the very good relationships between the staff and pupils and also because of the school's commitment to teaching personal, social and health education in all age groups. Pupils learn how to develop a healthy, safe lifestyle through topic work and in lessons such as physical education. Pupils also have opportunities to develop their confidence and skills of social interaction in sensitively handled 'circle time' sessions, when each pupil has an opportunity to express their own thoughts and feelings. Teachers take every opportunity, particularly in assemblies and 'Golden Time' to promote pupils' self-awareness and celebrate their achievements. In addition, the school has recently established a Nurture Group, which successfully supports small numbers of children who need particular encouragement to enable them to gain confidence and interact effectively with others. Teachers maintain records of pupils' personal development in their individual profiles.
33. The school's arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. Subject leaders maintain portfolios of work in English, mathematics and science and all other subjects so that standards in the subject are monitored and moderated. The school systematically analyses national test data effectively to discover overall strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. For example, it scrutinises the performance of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, in order to evaluate the extent to which pupils are making the best possible progress. Senior staff use this data to track pupils' progress and to set group targets for the raising of attainment. The success that the school achieves in the support and guidance of pupils has a very good effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the school's efforts to raise standards.
34. The staff involved with the pupils who have special needs and those who are learning to speak English encourage them to grow in independence and self-awareness. The lessons always have a strong component of social training, how to share and how to work in pairs or groups. The groups of pupils who have special needs and those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English display as much co-operation as any other. These pupils get as much fun out of their lessons as all other pupils. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school's work. The senior managers use the school's tracking systems to identify pupils' needs and pass this information on to the leader for special educational needs. The staff monitor the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language closely. For severe special needs, the leader uses very precise testing, known as P scales, to chart the very small learning steps of the pupils. The school has developed very good links with specialist support agencies. These work to the benefit of the pupils and promote very good progress and guidance on behaviour.
35. The school assessment procedures are much improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. The information from nursery feeder schools is checked early in the reception year by means of a baseline profile to ensure that the children make appropriate progress. Very good arrangements for record keeping in English, mathematics and science have been put in place. Several of the other subjects have simple assessment

procedures so that teachers are beginning to check on pupils' progress in a methodical way. These guide selection of pupils for ability groups and the matching of work to ability so that pupils have challenging but achievable tasks

36. The use of assessment information is good. It allows teachers to guide the relevance of their planning to pupils' needs. For instance, the knowledge that girls are performing better than boys enables teachers to adjust their lesson content to be particularly motivating for boys. The key skills profile in mathematics is a valuable tracking device that has helped regulate the pupils' pace of learning. It has contributed to the rapid progress and high standards in mathematics. English does not have a similar system yet. The monitoring of reading is good in Year 2. The subject leader has identified the need to extend this to Year 1 in her action plan.
37. The senior managers use the school's tracking systems to identify pupils' needs and pass this information on to the special needs leader. The staff monitor progress of pupils who have special educational needs closely. For severe special needs, the leader uses very precise testing, known as P scales, to chart the very small learning steps of the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school works hard to forge and nurture its links with parents and is proactive in seeking their views, as well as keeping them well informed. Overall, parents' views of the school are very good. They particularly value their children's enthusiasm for school, the way the school is managed and the way good teaching and high expectations help their children to make good progress. They find the school very approachable. Several parents commented on the way the school has helped their child to settle or to overcome difficulties. A few parents have expressed concerns about the new arrangements which give pupils more independence at the start of the day, but prevent regular admission into the classroom for parents. However, the school has responded to this well by ensuring that class teachers see their class into the playground at the end of the school day and also by providing extra open afternoons.
39. The links between school and home are very effective. They are based on a thorough two-way flow of information in which the school works hard to maintain a mutually supportive partnership. Regular newsletters, quick response to parental concerns, improved access for parents through assemblies, open afternoons, workshops and formal parents' meetings give parents a good idea of school life and how their child is getting on. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs value the commitment of the staff to care for their children. The school has sought to build up a close relationship with the parents, who are all invited to the important review meetings. The parents are involved in the procedures at every stage. The parents of pupils with English as an additional language are kept very well informed about the progress that their children are making. On some occasions the school involves them in talking to their children about particular lessons to ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English fully understand. Whenever necessary the school uses the Internet to translate newsletters or other information for parents into their mother tongues.
40. A particular feature of the school's information for parents is the excellent website which is used by pupils as well. This is a very valuable tool for involving parents in their child's learning as it contains many teaching games which parents can use at home. Overall, the information provided by the school is very good. The pupils' annual progress reports are very detailed and give parents a clear idea of what their child can do, as well as some targets for improvement. However, they are not clear enough about whether or not the pupil is achieving well for his or her age.

41. The impact of parents on the life and work of the school is very good and includes a good contribution made to their learning at home. Homework tasks, including reading and 'finding out', are taken up well. Parents help their children by contributing to the exciting range of activities held at school. For example, at the medieval banquet Year 2 pupils were helped to 'act the part' by their range of appropriate costumes. Parents support school policies very well and take up invitations to school events with enthusiasm, sometimes even sending a representative to ensure that their child does not feel left out. Several parents give the school valuable help as volunteers and many are generous supporters of school fund-raising or charitable events. FOTIS, the friends' and parents' association, has provided the pupils with a range of popular playground markings such as games and mazes which have been used successfully to improve playground behaviour.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Excellent quality of leadership and outstanding management by the headteacher and key staff are characteristics of Toftwood Infant School. The leadership helps all staff and governors to focus on a very clear educational direction. A top priority is given to school improvement. The management team shares an exceptional commitment to school improvement and the further raising of pupils' standards and promotes these values very well in all staff. The leadership helps provide a very good example and the staff as a whole work extremely closely as a team. The explicit aims and values of the school are completely reflected in its work. The way that management responsibilities are delegated to staff is outstanding. Not only teachers but also support staff take responsibilities for areas of the school. For example, learning support assistants accept management responsibilities, such as for the school's first aid provision, and undertake them at a high level. They take a full part in the performance management strategies of the school, undertaking training, agreeing targets for improvement and being evaluated on their performance.
43. The monitoring and evaluation of the schools' performance are key features of the school. The development of good teaching practice is monitored and evaluated very well. Good teachers are well deployed to influence and improve overall teaching practice in the school and areas of weak teaching have been addressed extremely well. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is excellent. All the teaching staff and learning support assistants have clear performance targets. The team spirit between teachers and support staff is excellent. The school's priorities for development are appropriate for the needs of the staff and pupils. The actions taken to meet the school's improvement targets have had a profound effect on the school's performance during the past two years. The management team has an exceptional commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. This is fully shared by the teaching and support staff and the governors. The induction procedures for new staff are very effective. During the week of the inspection a post-graduate student was on placement at the school and was given very high quality support. Staff development has improved well since the previous inspection.
44. The governing body is very efficient in the way that it discharges its duties to best effect. Governors have very regular contacts with the school. They have an extremely keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are invariably fully involved in making important, strategic decisions which affect the future direction of the school. The governors continuously monitor school improvement and they take a positive part in setting targets for school development and improvement. The governing body ensures that it fulfils its statutory duties. The headteacher works extremely closely with the governors. Governors very regularly set targets for and appraise the headteacher. All the key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well or very well. The chair of governors is particularly effective. He not only plays a full part in monitoring but also makes time to form close relationships with all staff. He has brought his expertise to bear

on some training needs. For example he gives budget training to subject leaders and provides training in the use of spreadsheets in the analysis of the school's test results.

45. While there are only a small number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English, the management of the school's provision for them is very good. Very good learning support assistants are equipped with very good training in the needs of these pupils and they are enabled to play a full part in all their lessons. Target setting and the monitoring of their progress are very good.
46. The management of special educational needs is very good. The senior managers have organised a complex but effective timetable of classroom support. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) manages the training of the support staff very well. Their expertise is growing steadily. The communication between SENCO, teachers and special needs assistants is very good. The leader's process of critical evaluation of the provision is very good and the action plan charts the development of special needs provision over several years. The administration of paperwork is rigorous. The management overall promotes a strong spirit of teamwork in operating the terms of the new Code of Practice. The school gets very good value for money from the special needs budget.
47. The school makes very good strategic use of resources, grants and other funding. Educational priorities are very well supported by the school's financial planning. The efficiency and effectiveness of the financial administrator are very good. However, the software that she is presently provided with means that she has to deal with certain information twice which is not a good use of her time. When faults occur in the operation of this software it often takes too long for the agency supporting it to rectify the fault. Again, this puts a strain on the work of the very good financial administrator. The senior management team continuously review the school finances. Both the school's administration and pupils' learning are very well supported by the use of new technology. The very good school administrators and the very good financial administrator conduct much of their work using computers and often use the Internet for information, support and the transmission of e-mail. Pupils use computers regularly and the use of computers in teaching other subjects is very well developed. This has a positive impact on how pupils learn and the standards that they reach. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purpose to improve the quality of learning. The effectiveness of the way the school spends its money is monitored very well and the school ensures the outcome of expenditure is matched with the school's current objectives.
48. The principles of best value are very well established in this school. The school is fully aware of the need to compare its costs with those of other schools. The school invariably engages in competitive tendering and invariably seeks quotes for all significant purchases. It requires the staff to justify their use of resources. It almost always consults widely on further improvements and major expenditure decisions.
49. The quality of the teaching and support staff at Toftwood Infant School is a real strength. Specialist teachers on the staff have been asked to share their expertise with other schools. There is a very good match of staff to the requirements of teaching the National Curriculum to infant pupils. Teachers are very ably assisted by a team of dedicated and competent learning assistants who are committed to professional development. All the staff work very well together as a team and a notable feature is the willingness of individuals to take on responsibilities and develop the curriculum accordingly. The governing body has demonstrated the way its staff are valued by subscribing to initiatives designed to ensure recognition and support for a healthy working environment.
50. The accommodation is very good. It is spacious, well designed, well maintained, clean and attractive. The extra rooms are well used as specialist teaching areas for information and control technology, baking, literacy support and for music. The library allows pupils to

experience the whole process of borrowing books and recording the loans electronically as if it were a public facility. Displays are informative, attractive and inspirational. They are a good blend of celebration of pupils' work and developmental resources designed to supplement teaching. The grounds provide pupils with a very pleasant and spacious area in which to play, to learn and to discover. The artist project which resulted in a three-dimensional decorated snake continues to make a good contribution to pupils' play and balancing skills.

51. Resources are good overall, with particular strengths in mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education. Teachers make very good use of resources to add colour and first-hand experience to pupils' learning. They also make very good use of the resources in their locality, like the centre for visual arts, to extend pupils' learning still further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to raise standards further the headteacher, staff and governors should:-

- 1) speed up the pace of improvement in the standards that pupils achieve in English and literacy by:-
 - a) teaching pupils to use tables of contents, indices, thesauruses and other key components to improve their access to research information;
 - b) improving writing skills through improved spelling, sentence construction and the practice of writing longer pieces of work in other subjects such as science, history and geography;
 - c) using the good assessment information gathered to ensure that pupils are progressing quickly enough in gaining the key skills of reading and writing;
 - d) improving the pace at which pupils acquire a well formed joined style of handwriting in order to raise further their self-esteem and self-confidence in writing.
(paragraphs 21, 25, 65, 68 - 71, 87)

The governors may wish to include the following minor issue in their action plan:

- opportunities to fully extend more able pupils are occasionally missed.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	3	6	23	10	1	0	0
Percentage	7	14	53.4	23.3	2.3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two 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)	6	252
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	28

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	45	31	76

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	38	40	41
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	65	68	69
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (84)	89 (87)	91 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	40	41	42
	Girls	28	28	30
	Total	68	69	72
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	89 (87)	91 (91)	95 (92)
	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	212	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
Information not obtained	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.7
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	224.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	12.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	494,313
Total expenditure	499,318
Expenditure per pupil	2,013
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,537
Balance carried forward to next year	21,532

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 34%

Number of questionnaires sent out	256
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	33	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	0	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	47	7	0	1
The teaching is good.	69	28	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	32	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	47	8	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	28	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	39	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	26	19	0	23

Please note that not all columns total 100 due to rounding and the fact that not all parents respond to every question.

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

53. The arrangements that the school makes for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Children join the nursery on a part-time basis after the Christmas or Easter following their fourth birthday. They join one of the reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. The oldest children attend full-time from the start, with the younger ones attending part-time until just before Christmas. There is a good range of opportunities for parents and children to visit the nursery and reception classes and meet their teacher both informally and formally before starting school. In this way, the school very successfully promotes a smooth transition from home to school and enables links with home to begin to be established. Most children enter school with below average levels of attainment for their age.
54. The teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to ensure that the reception class is calm and welcoming. This ensures that all boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, settle securely into school life. Children for whom English is an additional language are well supported and encouraged so that they gain confidence and learn well. Children make sound overall progress. However, because of their low starting point, many do not attain all the early learning goals for children of their age by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result, their progress is particularly successful in this area and children are very well motivated to learn.
55. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, some very good teaching was seen. The class teachers and teaching assistants work very well together. The teaching assistants are clear about what the children are to learn in the course of each session. They support groups and individuals very purposefully and make a very significant contribution to children's learning. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Their planning successfully incorporates the required areas of learning. Class teachers assess children's skills regularly, using both local authority and school-based materials. They observe and note children's achievements carefully and create individual records. These are used appropriately to identify children with particular needs and teachers ensure that tasks and activities match children's requirements well. However, the results of assessment are not used as consistently well to identify learning priorities for the more able pupils.
56. The classrooms are thoughtfully organised with a good range of resources that successfully stimulate children's curiosity and encourage them to become independent learners. The nursery has direct access to a secure outdoor area, which provides valuable opportunities for children to learn by working on a more active scale than is possible indoors. Although children in the reception classes do not have ready access to the secure area, teachers ensure that they have regular opportunities to play and learn outside their classroom in either the nursery or bigger playground.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and they achieve the standards expected for their age. The children are happy and well used to the classroom systems. The teachers have high expectations of children's involvement and they respond very well. Children gain confidence and a good degree of independence in their approach to activities and daily routines. Almost all respond promptly to instructions and clear away equipment readily. They show interest in their tasks. They settle quickly and usually concentrate well. However, a minority of children demonstrate a short attention span, which limits the progress they make in the course of lessons.

58. Children handle books and equipment carefully. When moving around school, as when they walk to the library to share books together, they behave sensibly and co-operatively. Almost all are patient and take their turn. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Plans include activities that successfully promote children's self-awareness. For example, nursery children make individual books, 'All about me'. Reception children learn about how they use their senses. The teachers and teaching assistants value each child's efforts and seize every opportunity to praise and encourage individual children's contributions. In each class, children proudly take their turn to wear a badge and be a 'Special Person' for the day. They then carry out particular jobs, such as taking the register to the office and leading the other children out to play. Such arrangements successfully build children's self-esteem and promote their confidence in learning and in their relationships with others.

Communication, language and literacy

59. Children make sound progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills, but many do not attain the expected standards. Teachers plan a good range of worthwhile activities so that children use and gradually extend their skills. Children have planned opportunities to talk to adults and each other. For example, nursery children bring in 'Memory Boxes' and explain in very simple terms the significance of each item. Teachers and teaching assistants ask well-directed questions and consistently extend children's vocabulary, as when reception class children discuss the weather each morning and select the best words to describe it. These activities successfully promote children's speaking and listening skills.
60. Children enjoy sharing stories and rhymes. The quality of teaching is good. Staff take every opportunity to promote children's confidence and involvement. Carefully prepared activities successfully stimulate their interest in letter sounds, reading and writing. From their earliest days in school, children regularly take home a range of books to share with parents and carers. They demonstrate confidence in handling books and looking at the illustrations. Many reception class children recognise familiar words and are beginning to associate letters and sounds. Regular activities and games successfully reinforce their knowledge and encourage them to see learning as fun. For example, reception children enjoy matching letter sounds with items from a bag, including a jug, a jumper and a jelly. All classrooms have writing areas so that children have regular opportunities for mark making and practising writing patterns. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that children hold pencils and mark makers effectively when attempting writing. Most children recognise that writing conveys meaning. In the reception classes, almost all children recognise their own name. Most children write their own name and higher attaining children are beginning to write simple words independently.

Mathematical development

61. Children make satisfactory progress overall in developing mathematical understanding, although many do not attain the expected standards in this area of learning. Children make good progress in counting. They develop a sound sense of number, order and sequence through regular counting routines. Many count reliably to 10 and often beyond. Many children understand the term 'more' when comparing two numbers, but they are not confident with the term 'less'. Although many children have a narrow vocabulary when they start school, they make sound progress in learning mathematical language. For example, they draw 'long' and 'short' snakes. Almost all know the names of colours and common two-dimensional shapes, although they are not yet familiar with the names of three-dimensional shapes. The quality of teaching is good with lots of well-planned practical activities to promote children's mathematical development. For example, teaching assistants take small groups of children on 'shape walks', searching for 'flat' shapes around the school. Teachers and teaching assistants consistently reinforce children's mathematical skills, promote their interest and check their understanding

through well-directed questions. Also, in the course of the day, they regularly introduce number songs and rhymes that successfully boost children's enjoyment and support their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Children make sound progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world through a good range of stimulating activities. Overall standards are in line with those expected as they enter Year 1. They learn about the properties of materials such as sand, water and play dough by handling and working with them. They find out about living things through practical activities throughout the year. For example, they plant seeds and watch them grow. They also take 'seasonal walks' in the school grounds and observe the differences according to the time of year. They gain further knowledge and understanding of the living world through visiting the local park. They also search for mini-beasts in the school wildlife area. The teaching of this area of learning is good. Teachers plan thoroughly so that topics motivate children's learning. For example, as part of their 'Babies' topic, a midwife and a mother and baby visit school. Careful preparation ensures that many of the children's activities are linked to their current topic. This adds relevance to their work and promotes interest. For example, children become familiar with a range of simple computer programs that particularly reinforce their literacy and mathematical development. They also have opportunities to use other forms of technology, including a tape recorder and programmable toy, which soundly support their learning.

Physical development

63. Children's physical development is satisfactory overall. They move safely and confidently in and around their classrooms. They have regular opportunities for vigorous free play outdoors. In the nursery play area children have access to a good range of large equipment and wheeled toys. Children in the reception classes enjoy regular opportunities to be active in physical education lessons when they move with control and usually avoid bumping into each other. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers carefully explain how they expect children to behave and they reinforce this patiently in the course of lessons. Most children respond promptly to instructions. They run, walk, twist and turn with assurance and many are beginning to hop and skip. Children enjoy moving to music and demonstrate satisfactory standards of co-ordination and balance as they swirl paper streamers in a simple Chinese Flower Dance. Within the classrooms, planned activities promote children's physical development alongside other areas of learning. They successfully fit together jigsaw puzzles and construction materials. Children often use glue and paintbrushes independently. However, teachers and teaching assistants give plenty of support and encouragement when children handle tools, such as scissors, as many demonstrate limited manipulative skills.

Creative development

64. Children develop satisfactory creative skills by the time that they enter Year 1. They have frequent opportunities to draw using pencils and a satisfactory range of markers. Children use paint confidently in a range of ways, such as painting self-portraits and mixing colours and making handprints. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan a range of opportunities for children to use modelling materials, including making papier-mâché rice bowls to celebrate Chinese New Year. Children's art and craft activities soundly support other areas of learning. For example, children reinforce their learning about keeping healthy by creating collage plates of 'Healthy Foods'. Staff ensure that stimulating materials and tools are accessible to children. They also provide activities which successfully engage children's interest and promote their use of imaginative language. For example, children collaborate well in the role-play areas, which are set up to link with children's topics, such as a baby clinic. Children join in readily with action songs and number rhymes and the reception classes enjoy singing with the rest of the school. Children enjoy exploring and learning about sounds. Nursery children have fun learning to play percussion instruments quietly or loudly, according to their teacher's

signal. However, older children lack concentration and make little progress in learning to tap a rhythmic pattern when their teacher does not succeed in engaging and maintaining their attention well enough.

ENGLISH

65. Standards in English have been below average over the last few years. However, there has been a gradual trend to improvement and standards this year are much nearer to the average. The staff, under the guidance of the new subject leader, have adopted a more rigorous approach to the literacy hours. The literacy strategy has not been fully effective until recently. Now the lesson introductions involve more active contribution by pupils and this has begun to have a positive impact on standards. Though over time progress has been slower than appropriate, in lessons progress is now good and pupils achieve well. Girls regularly perform better than boys. The staff have concentrated attention and resources on this and in lessons there is no evidence of a significant difference.
66. The teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. Most teachers encourage the pupils to contribute their views and ideas. The teachers manage their classes very well and establish conditions where pupils are interested, well behaved and want to listen to each other. The pupils consider each other's viewpoints and respond to them. They respond quickly to the teachers' instructions. This means that standards in listening are in line with the average. Listening, therefore, is a strength within English standards and pupils have made very good progress in this. The staff pay particular attention to including pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Their support assistants talk quietly to the pupils during the lesson introductions and make sure that the pupils understand the content. These pupils feel sufficiently confident in speaking out loud and joining in the activities. Consequently, they make good progress in learning basic skills.
67. Pupils get many opportunities for speaking. Most teachers give pupils plenty of time to give their answers and encourage them to use whole sentences. The teachers listen patiently and value the pupils' ideas. Consequently, the pupils are making good progress and growing in confidence in speaking before others. Their standards are in line with the average, except for the occasional need for a wider range of technical vocabulary to say exactly what they mean in subjects like geography and science. The teachers model speech in the same way that they do for listening. As the teachers go into dramatic mode the pupils relish the sound of the words and develop a very expressive tone of voice. The question 'Who can give me a fishy voice?' resulted in 30 variations from Year 2 pupils studying 'The Fisherman's Wife.' Teachers link back well to earlier work, even in other subjects. Questions like 'Do you remember what you felt like when we did the parachute?' enable pupils to reflect on their experience and develop an emotional response to it. This skill carries over into reading and helps many to move their reading towards Level 3. All of this is good learning. Overall, speaking and listening standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
68. The pupils enjoy reading. The teachers are careful to include the basic skills in their literacy hours. They help pupils to understand character and plot and to search for below the surface meaning in the text. Most pupils are making good progress and are beginning to develop a range of interest in the new guided reading sessions. Teachers introduce pupils well to non-fiction and many pupils state that this is now their preference. The teachers introduce the use of letter sounds well to the younger pupils, who also learn the proper names of blends and phonemes. This helps the weaker pupils particularly to break up new words and say them correctly. The standards of Year 2 pupils overall are only just average for reading. The pupils have not had the benefit of this level of phonics teaching in the past and a larger number than usual find difficulty in working out new words. Most pupils still have a quite restricted range of interest. They also lack library and simple

research skills, which they would need to undertake 'finding out' tasks independently. However, virtually all pupils read with good expression.

69. Pupils make sound progress in writing, but standards are in line to be below average by the end of Year 2. The teachers tackle a wide range of styles and purposes for writing. Year 1 pupils, for instance, learn about how authors use words to interest the reader, while developing the skill of sentence writing. Year 2 learn to prepare 'speech bubbles' and how to convert them into sentence form. The teachers regularly introduce components of grammar and punctuation. However, the pupils do not get as much time as they need to practise actual writing, either in literacy lessons or in other subjects. The tasks they get are short. Teachers do not state clearly how much each ability group should manage, or what quality the writing should be in handwriting and content. Often these are the very things the teachers have taken care to put up as personal targets, on their desks, close to the pupils. Consequently, there is not a regular flow of extended writing that teachers can use to assess the progress made. Despite having a serious and conscientious attitude, the pupils do not take as much care with spelling and handwriting as they should and these have deteriorated since the previous inspection. Teachers include regular practice sessions for both, but the skills learned do not transfer readily.
70. Marking of pupils' work is good. The strategy of telling pupils what they need to do to improve is beginning to have a positive impact. It helps pupils to know what improvements to try and punctuation is improving because of it. It could be extended to give pupils even more detail of their progress, for instance how they are moving through levels. Many Year 2 pupils are beginning to acquire the habit of self-checking their work. Most teachers have lively classroom displays that pupils can refer to when checking, for instance, accurate spelling. There is a limit to the amount of information that can be put across in this way. Pupils do use dictionaries to find new words, but have not yet had access to the thesaurus to extend the range.
71. Assessment procedures help teachers to track pupils' progress and enable them to identify pupils for the appropriate ability groups and level of work given. They also show when a pupil suddenly fails to achieve as well as expected. However, assessment is not used in a strategic sense to indicate if a whole group or class is moving quickly enough through the necessary components of writing to reach the overall targets.

MATHEMATICS

72. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, standards were well above the national average compared to all schools and when compared to the results of schools with a similar level of entitlement to free school meals. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. Girls did as well as boys. Results since 1998 have improved year on year at a rate which has exceeded the improvement in national averages. Inspection evidence supports the view that this trend is in line to continue. This is because the school has revised its mathematical provision for all pupils and now has very effective systems for promoting high attainment in the subject. This is very good progress since the last inspection when attainment in mathematics was judged to be average.
73. In Year 2 the work pupils were doing during the inspection shows that standards are well above the national average for their age. There is no significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls. Pupils' achievements are very good in relation to their prior attainment. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build securely on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage.
74. The school has developed and implemented strategies for the focused monitoring of teaching and learning and the careful tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school in

order to continue to raise standards. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress, both in lessons and as they move through the school, are very good. The information gathered through these assessments is very well used to modify the work given to pupils in order to ensure that they progress as quickly as they can.

75. Teachers ensure that all pupils are wholly involved in mathematics lessons. This enables all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. Almost all make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is well organised and learning-support assistants are well briefed to develop pupils' confidence and understanding. Learning support assistants provide very strong support for both teachers and pupils. In all lessons seen this ensured that pupils sustained their concentration well when engaged in small group tasks and during whole-class sessions. At the same time the sensitive nature of the support encourages pupils to develop as independent learners. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in Year 1.
76. Most pupils join the school with skills in mathematics that are below average, as shown by tests and assessments. The rate of their learning is consistent; they make good gains overall in their knowledge and understanding of number and in the other aspects of mathematics, including shape, space and measuring, experimenting and investigating in mathematics. They also make very good progress in data handling which is not a requirement for pupils of this age. In particular, as a result of the emphasis that teachers place upon the basic skills, they make very good progress in acquiring mental strategies to deal confidently with number problems.
77. By the age of seven, most pupils develop a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 999, confidently adding and subtracting numbers to 20 and beyond. They estimate and measure length and tell the time, both digital and analogue. The past work of more able pupils shows that they regularly work with larger numbers. Pupils identify the particular features of common two- and three-dimensional shapes and handle data confidently when practising for the school council elections. The frequency chart developed from the data that they collected was used as 'wallpaper' and was overprinted with both pie charts and block graphs of the results. The printed outcome was very professional and demonstrated how very well information and communication technology is used to promote pupils' learning in mathematics.
78. The development of mathematical investigation is very good. The range of investigations within mathematics and the use of pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics in other subjects are very well promoted. They are strengths of the school's provision. Pupils with special educational needs work at a lower level, but, because of sensitive support, they demonstrate good attitudes to their work, apply their skills well and achieve standards which are in line with their levels of ability. This strong level of support is also given to pupils who are learning to speak English and they too achieve the standards of which they are capable by the time that they leave the school.
79. Teachers have been trained and supported in their adoption and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is very good. The three-part lesson structure is firmly established. All lessons begin with a brisk mental mathematics session that captures pupils' interest and develops and extends their calculation skills. In a lesson for pupils in Year 1, for example, as a result of the teacher's quick-fire questioning pupils were keen to respond and as a result learned quickly. Learning objectives for these lessons are always shared with pupils, which extends their knowledge and understanding of their own learning. These learning objectives are referred to regularly throughout lessons and all teachers use the plenary or final part of the lesson very effectively to reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson.

80. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics throughout the school is good. During the inspection some very good lessons were seen. Evidence gathered from looking at pupils' past work shows that, on a few occasions, work is set for all pupils at one level. Although support is offered and all pupils succeed with these tasks, they do not extend more able pupils. Teachers throughout the school have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject overall. They use it well to encourage pupils to discuss the strategies that they acquire for dealing with mental calculations. The very good relationships established within the classrooms are the key to the most successful teaching at Toftwood. They are at the heart of teachers' skilful management of behaviour. Their encouraging manner ensures that both they and their pupils enjoy their lessons and the subject. Pupils see that their contributions are valued and join in discussions readily. The quality of marking is good overall. Teachers often use written comments to tell pupils how they could improve their work further or give praise for pupils' success. Arrangements for homework are good. Mathematical tasks are regularly set for homework and these are closely linked to the work undertaken in lessons. Some homework involves parents and pupils using the school's very good website. This closely involves parents in their children's work and promotes pupils learning very well.
81. The subject leader is used as an exemplar teacher for others in the area. She has been involved in the development of a 'Number Line' project which is about to be promoted nationally. Her work in raising standards in the school is of the highest quality. She is enabled to monitor regularly and rigorously the quality of teaching in lessons. Pupils' work is also regularly monitored to ensure that the intended curriculum is taught and that they are all being set work which is appropriate to their level of ability. The very good assessment information about pupils' progress in mathematics is very well used to track their progress as they move through the school. Resources for teaching and learning in mathematics are very good and are very well used in classrooms.

SCIENCE

82. Pupils' achievements in science are improving. The results of National Curriculum assessments in 2002 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected standard was close to the national average. However, the number of pupils attaining a higher standard was well above average. This number has increased in recent years. Moreover, inspection evidence indicates that pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are good. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection, when they were found to be unsatisfactory.
83. Pupils are making good overall progress in science because:
- teachers' subject knowledge is good and teaching is effective;
 - teachers' planning focuses on pupils' learning by experimenting and investigating for themselves;
 - pupils enjoy science and work very hard in lessons.
84. In the current Year 2 the proportion of pupils on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard is being maintained. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported and develop their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts in line with others in their class. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well included in scientific activities and learn well.
85. In Year 1, pupils use their senses to investigate the world around them. This includes learning about sounds and how they are made. Pupils make good progress in discovering that a sound becomes fainter as it travels farther away from its source. They sow seeds, monitor their progress and learn what plants need to enable them to grow. As part of their topic, 'Ourselves', pupils identify parts of the human body and collect and display

information, such as the number of pupils with brown, blue or green eyes. Pupils identify everyday objects that use electricity. In Year 2, pupils build on their knowledge by learning how to make light bulbs 'work' by completing an electrical circuit. They extend their learning by carrying out investigations to discover which materials are good insulators or conductors of electricity. Pupils find out about mini-beasts and their habitats by exploring the school wildlife area and rock pools at the local beach. They use a range of sources of information, including textbooks, to identify their finds. With appropriate awareness of health and safety issues, pupils discover how water changes when it is heated in a kettle and cooled in a freezer. They make good progress in considering whether the changes they observe are reversible or not. Throughout the school, pupils' work makes a significant contribution to their personal, social and health education. For example, Year 1 pupils learn about caring for their bodies and consider the ingredients for a 'healthy lunch'. In Year 2, pupils consider the effects of exercise on their bodies and set out to investigate which type of exercise makes them hottest.

86. The teaching of science is good. Excellent teaching was observed when the teacher and supporting adults introduced a Year 2 lesson on the properties of materials in a very exciting way so that pupils were highly motivated to find out more. Teachers consistently prepare carefully for the work to be covered. As a result, they use scientific vocabulary confidently and explain the underlying ideas in a way that pupils can understand. They regularly share the aims of the current science topic with pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are clear about what they want pupils to learn and they make and reinforce teaching points consistently well. As a result, pupils approach lessons purposefully.
87. Teachers and teaching assistants maintain very good relationships with pupils, which further encourages pupils' enthusiasm for scientific activities. In the course of investigations and when recapping at the end of lessons, teachers challenge pupils' thinking with probing questions so that pupils' understanding is well reinforced and extended. Teachers successfully promote pupils' social development, as collaborative work in small groups is a routine feature of science lessons. Teachers place a high priority on encouraging pupils' active enquiry. In consequence they often produce little recorded evidence of their on-going work. However, each term pupils undertake an investigation that is marked, carefully annotated and placed in their portfolio. This successfully provides evidence of individual pupils' progress. Pupils often record their observations in drawings. They rarely practise their literacy skills in the course of science lessons. There are sound links between science and subjects such as mathematics and information and communication technology. For example, pupils use their data handling skills when presenting their findings as graphs or charts.
88. The subject leader is determined to raise standards in science. She provides very good leadership for the subject. She monitors classroom practice and gives advice and encouragement to her colleagues. Most notably, she has supported the teachers in successfully adopting an experimental and investigative approach to teaching and learning in science. Well-planned outings, such as Year 1's visit to the Inspire Science Centre, and occasional initiatives, such as the whole-school Science Challenge, further promote pupils' interest, involvement and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

89. The provision for art has improved since the previous inspection and, as a result, the standards are higher. Standards are above expectations by the end of Year 2. The leader has introduced a new planning scheme, based on national guidelines, that enables teachers to develop basic skills step by step. This has enabled the pupils to make very good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs experience success in this subject and often achieve better than their peers.

90. No whole lessons were observed during the week. However, there is sufficient evidence from part lessons, display, photographs and from talking to pupils to confirm that teaching is very good. Teachers continue to give close attention to basic skills, but the real strength is the lengths they go to in creating powerful learning opportunities. Teachers introduce an art topic by giving the pupils experiences on which to build an emotional as well as a physical response to the subject. Pupils now spend more time on looking at the work of famous artists. The Year 2 project was to compare the different way in which Turner and Hokusai painted storm waves, so the teachers prepared the pupils by giving them the experience of waves using a parachute to see the undulating effect and instruments to suggest the crashing sounds. When they start to paint, the pupils already have a feel for what they want to achieve. They are no longer just teacher-directed, but select for themselves the 'tricks and tools' they want to use. This is very good training in independence and cultural development and brings out good skills from all pupils. At the end of the lessons the pupils take it in turn to explain the effect they were aiming at and how successful they were. This is very good training in speaking and listening. Progress through the year is very good. Year 1 pupils can follow a given topic, for instance Kandinsky, through several stages to completion, bringing in drawing skills, printing and three-dimensional work. One of the stages is the use of the computer, which contributes well to pupils' ability to make comparisons.
91. The subject leader monitors teaching and by feedback to staff achieves consistency in teaching. This leads to raised standards because the teachers have a good understanding of what Curriculum 2000 means by pupils finding 'information' to use in their work. The art portfolio is a useful tool for staff to refer to in judging standards and the subject development plan indicates how this will be extended to guide a simple form of assessment. This, in turn, will enable pupils to understand more of the process of their skills growing. The pupils' attitude to art is very good, often excellent. The use of excellent cultural links in art and design has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. They put a lot of thought into their work and behave exceptionally well. The classroom assistants contribute very much to this, ensuring also that children with difficulties in handling equipment get just the amount of help they need. The pupils are rightly proud of their work that goes into the annual exhibition. They are beginning to gain a real spiritual insight, as teachers give them opportunity to reflect on what they are doing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. The staff have worked hard to effect a number of improvements since the previous inspection. More attention is given to pupils' designing skills and to taking to pieces common everyday appliances to see how they work. This increases the pupils' understanding and consequently standards are securely in line with those expected for the pupils' age, progress is good and pupils achieve well. The subject now has an action plan through which the subject leader can ensure that resources are kept up to date. The teachers use the computer more to help pupils to draw up their designs or to decorate their work to extend their range of skills. They still use the topic approach, but the new planning scheme encourages a greater subject rigour and pupils learn real skills in logical order. The links made with other subjects strengthen the learning in both. For instance, the Year 2 lighthouse models have helped pupils to understand structures and how electricity makes the bulbs send out a beam of light.
93. Although no lessons were observed, there is sufficient evidence from teachers' planning, displayed work and photographs to indicate that teaching is at least sound. Teachers provide good practical learning experiences for the pupils. The classroom support staff help those children who have difficulty in handling tools and materials well and enable them to do as well as their peers. The teachers often introduce cultural elements. For instance, in the current topic on Japan, the pupils learn all about origami and make their own paper candle holders to use in the oriental banquet. This is another example of the

school's excellent provision for pupils' cultural development having a very positive effect on their learning. Teachers usually make sure that pupils make good use of their mathematical skills for measuring, folding and marking off. Literacy does not have as high a profile. The pupils are not required to write evaluations of their work in sufficient length or detail.

94. The subject action plan indicates the development of a simple system for recording the pupils' attainment and progress. This could usefully be extended to measure pupils' personal development as they become more mature in handling tools and solving problems. The photographs taken during lessons show pupils co-operating well with each other and concentrating intently on their work. Many say that technology is their favourite subject because they get a chance to work things out.

GEOGRAPHY

95. During the inspection, one geography lesson was observed. However, there is sufficient evidence from this lesson, pupils' work on display and talking to pupils to form the judgement that standards in Years 1 and 2 are in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make steady gains in their learning. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
96. In Year 1, pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of their immediate surroundings. For example, they walk to the garden centre and recognise local features on their route. They know about localities that are different from their own because they visit Great Yarmouth. They explore the beach and notice features which are different from those of their own area. In Year 2, pupils walk in the vicinity of the school and contribute to a file of the locality, containing photographs of local features and buildings. They point out the route they follow on a simple map of the area. Pupils extend their investigations and make very good progress in learning about Japan. They identify Japan on a world map and globe and know of key physical features, such as the volcano Mount Fuji. Pupils enjoy the topic and are very keen to point out differences between aspects of life in Dereham and Japan, including house styles and transport.
97. Because only one lesson was observed, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. However, subject documentation and talking to pupils about their work indicates that teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are sound. Pupils evidently enjoy geography lessons and very readily discuss their work.

HISTORY

98. No history lessons were observed during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' completed work, photographic evidence, displays around the school and from talking to pupils indicates that standards in Years 1 and 2 meet national expectations. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound progress in finding out about the past.
99. Pupils in Year 1 distinguish between aspects of their lives and those of children in the Victorian era. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to examine photographs and items from the past, such as a Victorian blackboard and easel. They show an emerging sense of chronology as they sequence everyday objects from the past and the present day, such as irons and lamps. They learn about historical figures such as Guy Fawkes. In Year 2, teachers carefully plan a visit to Framlington Castle. Pupils dress up

and experience food and entertainment in the style of the Middle Ages. These activities very effectively promote pupils' learning about life in medieval times.

100. As no lessons were observed, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in history. However, from examination of subject documentation, as well as talking to pupils about their work, it is evident that teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are secure. Carefully thought out links with other subjects, such as art and design and music, successfully extend pupils' understanding of the past. For example, pupils in Year 2 design heraldic shields to support their learning about castles. Pupils successfully use their skills in information and communication technology to support their learning. For example, they take digital photographs of the castle and create labels to use as the basis for a classroom display. Pupils clearly enjoy their history topics and are very eager to talk about what they have learned.
101. The humanities subject leader is very new to the post and has started to monitor teaching and learning. She is keen to review the scheme of work and introduce a portfolio of pupils' work. In both geography and history, teachers plan thoroughly and arrangements are in place for teachers to assess pupils' learning during lessons by questioning and observation. The subject leader recognises that the very well planned range of visits and school activities is a strength of the humanities' curriculum. For example, Year 2's 'Japanese banquet', very successfully promotes pupils' learning about Japanese food, music and aspects of daily life. These experiences very effectively motivate pupils, improve the quality of their learning and contribute significantly to their spiritual, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 2 are well above those expected nationally and all pupils make good progress. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be above national expectations at the end of Year 2, but expectations for the subject have increased sharply since then. This represents a good level of improvement.
103. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English, are fully included in the school's work in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils of all ages and abilities regularly use computers in other subjects such as English, mathematics, science and art and design. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 2 the learning support assistant gave very good support to pupils working on a new strategy for addition in the ICT suite, while some pupils undertook the same work on computers in the classroom. This lesson was introduced by the teacher using the school's inter-active whiteboard. This focused pupils' attention very well on the learning intentions for the lesson. There is very good use of data interpretation in mathematics and pupils do have properly managed access to the Internet for research.
104. While there are planned lessons which are entitled 'ICT' this does give a false impression. ICT is not really taught as a stand alone subject but is very well integrated into the curriculum as a means of teaching other subjects. For example, in one such 'ICT lesson' the learning intention was to learn to retrieve information which had been saved and this was achieved very well. However, the basis for the lesson was the pupils' current studies of Japan. The classroom teacher also focused heavily on literacy skills such as the use of the apostrophe or speech marks. This multi-subject style is common throughout the school. Because it avoids breaking pupils' learning into falsely compartmentalised sections, it has a significant positive effect on pupils' learning. Another very good example was seen in a study of 'Plants'. This study was designed in science and involved very good learning in growing plants from seed and in pupils' knowledge and understanding of what plants need in order to flourish. In ICT, pupils used a digital camera to record the

growth of their plants and to record the development of their own dances developed around the planting of seeds and the nurture of the growing plant. There was also very good use of a trip to the garden centre to purchase the seeds which impacted well on pupils' knowledge and understanding of local geography and their personal and social skills. Thus the use of ICT was very well integrated into a holistic study involving many subjects. This is one example of the way in which the school plans the integration of ICT into the curriculum. This approach to learning in ICT has a very positive impact on the standards that pupils reach not only in ICT but also in other subjects

105. Pupils have very well developed ICT skills by the time that they leave the school. They switch on computers, if necessary, and load programs using the mouse to navigate through icon led procedures. They give instructions to a programmable robot and they use modelling software to design an imaginary environment. They talk about the different paint applications in an art and design programme. Children in reception classes use 'Dazzle' to draw pictures incorporating several colours in an illustration of the sequence of their school day. Again, this is a very good use of ICT in art and design and mathematical development.
106. Pupils work well together when required and this happens regularly. However, it is often the case that teachers plan for one pupil to work on one computer in some sessions. This benefits pupils' independent learning skills and increases the pace of learning. In one lesson when this was happening, a small number of pupils did not have access to computers. This was overcome by the teacher planning to provide a good level research experience using the school's library, which is in the same room as the ICT suite. This was based on the same topic as those using computers and was very well supported by a very good learning support assistant. This meant that in the time when they had to wait to use computers these pupils made good progress. This had a positive effect on the learning of the pupils involved.
107. The school has made good progress with its improvement plan for ICT and there is now one computer for every eight pupils in the school. However, the deployment of these computers means that there are only two or three immediately available to any class during lessons. During the week of the inspection, although some teachers' planning included ICT, computers were not used in some lessons where it would have been appropriate. The specialist ICT suite presently has insufficient computers in place to accommodate one pupil per computer. However, additional computers have already been purchased and their installation and the reorganisation of the combined ICT/library research area was postponed because of the inspection.
108. All classes are timetabled to use the ICT suite regularly and were seen doing so during the inspection. The overall quality of teaching is good and all teachers are fully committed to using ICT to further pupils' learning. Other resources for teaching and learning in ICT include a scanner and an inter-active whiteboard which is very well used for whole class demonstrations. There is a CD/tape/radio in each classroom and there are headphones which pupils use well when computer programs have a sound track or when listening to music or instructional material. The provision of these resources and their regular use has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
109. Pupils thoroughly enjoy working with computers and all have equal opportunities to do so. They show good co-operation when asked to work in pairs and many pupils show good skills when working alone. Their behaviour is always good or very good in these situations and they are very well managed by their teachers and learning support assistants.
110. Parents give good support to pupils using ICT in the same pattern as the school. Many parents and almost all pupils access the school's very good web-site at home. This provides a great deal of information about the school and also a very good selection of

subject based games which are well used for homework. The school also uses these games in some lessons. Both the school's very good web-site and its wide use by staff, pupils and parents have a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

111. The co-ordination of ICT shows many strengths which are evident in the standards that pupils reach. Overall the leader gives excellent guidance to all staff, is continuing to develop the subject provision very well from an already very high level and has a very good action plan for improvement in the future. He has worked in an outstanding partnership with the leader for mathematics to develop the 'Number line' project for the local education authority. The programme which they have developed is soon to be launched nationally. There is very good monitoring of the quality of teaching and of the delivery of the curriculum and this also has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

MUSIC

112. During the inspection, one music lesson was observed. However, there is sufficient evidence from this lesson, observation of assemblies and talking to pupils to form the judgement that pupils reach expected standards in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have regular, well prepared opportunities to sing, play musical instruments, make simple compositions and listen to and appraise music. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' standards were unsatisfactory and too little time was allocated to the subject. Teachers and teaching assistants are committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are sensitively encouraged and supported. This enables them to make as much progress as other pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully involved in musical activities and learn well.
113. Pupils know a wide range of songs and hymns. They sing tunefully and expressively. They control their voices well. They sing joyfully and sing with confidence. The subject leader completes planning for all year groups. This arrangement gives added structure to the music curriculum so that pupils progressively develop their musical skills. By Year 2, pupils are familiar with the names of many instruments. They handle them sensibly and with confidence. They enjoy creating and developing their musical ideas. For example, pupils collaborate effectively in small groups to compose musical effects to represent the story of Coppélia. They make very good progress in exploring how dynamics can be used to convey particular emotions such as 'love' or 'anger'.
114. Because only one lesson was observed, no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. However, observations of assemblies, subject documentation and talking to pupils about their work indicate that teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good. Pupils evidently enjoy musical activities and very readily discuss their work.
115. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader teaches singing lessons and gives valuable practical support to colleagues. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was not enough guidance for teachers. This has resulted in raised standards in the subject. Teachers make effective use of the good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. These are readily accessible in the music room, which provides a useful space for musical activities. Each day, pupils listen to recorded music as they enter assembly. There is a termly theme, such as national anthems, and pupils answer questions about the selected piece of music in a weekly 'Challenge'. Pupils have opportunities to learn the recorder and participate in the music club. This successfully reinforces and extends the skills of those involved. During the year, pupils participate in a good range of musical activities, including concerts, which they perform for parents. Musicians and dancers, including a group of performers from Zimbabwe, visit the school. These activities promote pupils' very positive attitude to the subject. Overall, music contributes very strongly to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Standards in physical education are above expectations by the time that pupils leave the school. Two lessons were observed. The overall quality of teaching was good. This judgement shows good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers' planning was clear. They used warm up, stretching and warm down appropriately and questioned pupils about the importance of these procedures. This enhanced pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical exercise and of their own learning. Pupils showed that they have skills in running, jumping, balancing and stopping to a level appropriate for their age. Teachers' management skills in these lessons were good; pupils listened well, followed instructions and overall made good progress.
117. Other evidence gathered from photographic and other evidence in the leader's 'physical education evidence file', from talking to teachers and to pupils shows that standards in dance and gymnastics are above expectations overall.
118. The school follows the latest national guidelines for physical education linked to its own scheme of work. All aspects of the subject requirements are fully covered. Swimming also takes place throughout the year and all pupils have swimming instruction in the pool in the adjacent junior school. The standards that pupils achieve in swimming, overall, are broadly in line with those expected as pupils leave junior school. Almost all can swim. The great majority swim 20 metres and approximately half swim 100 metres and have other water skills. This is a very high level of provision and achievement.
119. Norwich City Football Club provides a football day for boys and girls, Swaffham Rugby Football Club runs a rugby day and a variety of games skills are promoted through Breckland Free Style. These experiences are in addition to the regular lessons in traditional games skills. The school holds an annual sports day in the format of a 'Race Day' which gives all pupils the chance to demonstrate their skills and abilities.
120. All pupils have full access to the physical education curriculum provided by the school, irrespective of gender, race or ability. The school has a good range of resources for physical education and the subject leader supports staff and promotes the subject to a very good level.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Pupils attain standards which are above expectations for their age by the end of Year 2. The impact of the structured planning scheme has grown steadily since the previous inspection and has enabled the pupils to make very good progress. They achieve particularly well in learning from religion, which appears in their moral attitude, pleasant nature and the care and concern they show for others. The teachers and classroom assistants give good support to pupils who have special educational needs. They are included well in the question and answer sessions and get good opportunities to express their views.
122. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. All teachers plan well, but in the strongest lessons the teachers' methods are inspiring. In these lessons the teachers get the pupils fully involved and thinking about how the learning applies to their own lives. The adults often act out the stories from Christianity and other faiths to the accompaniment of appropriate music. The dramatic effect makes an indelible impression on the pupils' minds. As a result they learn and remember many facts, for instance about Rama and Sita and the birth of the elephant god. By acting the story themselves they gain a deeper understanding, in a process which also enhances their speaking and listening skills. With lessons like this the teachers make pupils aware

that different religions focus on similar concerns, but express them in different ways. Pupils show by their own questions that they know that these are important issues and relevant to special features in their own lives. They have a very good attitude to their learning.

123. The pupils do not express their ideas sufficiently in writing. Even the higher attaining pupils lack the necessary wider vocabulary of abstract terms. The teachers tend not to promote aids to writing and simple research skills to enable pupils to explore independently and develop their literacy skills in a different context. The subject leader's action plan indicates the phasing in of a simple assessment scheme to log pupils' attainment and progress. The commitment of the leader and the staff to make religious education especially relevant to pupils makes a strong foundation for the development of the subject and for spirituality in the school. This in turn enhances pupils' learning in religious education.