

INSPECTION REPORT

MENDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mendham, Harleston

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124598

Headteacher: Mr C Digby

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 24-27 March 2003

Inspection number: 248602

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mendham

Postcode: Harleston
IP20 0NJ

Telephone number: 01379 852520

Fax number: 01379 854562

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Pye

Date of previous inspection: 1 December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21552	P B McAlpine	Registered inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21103	Mrs V Ives	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Design and technology Foundation Stage Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Inspection Services Limited
PO Box 524
Cheadle
Staffordshire
ST10 4RN

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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?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most. It currently has 50 pupils, all of them full-time, organised into two classes. The younger year groups are oversubscribed but many pupils transfer to a nearby middle school system at the age of nine, depleting Years 5 and 6. All of the pupils are from white United Kingdom families. Five pupils, 10 per cent, are eligible for a free school meal; this is broadly average. The social and economic characteristics of the immediate locality show wider than usual variations but the backgrounds of the majority of pupils are broadly typical in the main. Thirteen pupils, 26 per cent, have special educational needs; this is above average. About half of the pupils with special educational needs have joined the school after the age of seven, reflecting its good reputation in this aspect. Six pupils have statements; this is a very high number for a school of this size. The significant special educational needs include moderate learning difficulties; emotional and behavioural difficulties; speech and communication; and medical reasons including cystic fibrosis. The local authority directs pupils with special educational needs to the school because of its reputation. Since 1996, three-quarters of the pupils entering the Reception year had attainment on entry that was broadly typical for their age. This shows average standards on entry overall, though annual standards vary widely. The proportions of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual time of admission or transfer are high. Of the year groups currently in school, 40 per cent of those admitted into the Reception year at the usual time have already left. About two-thirds have done so because their families moved out of the district. The others have transferred to a local middle school system. The affects on Years 1 and 2 are relatively modest and up until Year 4 the numbers leaving are generally balanced by others joining. The impact is greatest in Years 5 and 6 where more leave than join and only a third of the present pupils joined in the Reception year, with most joining after the age of seven.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in the main. Standards amongst the older pupils are above average in English and mathematics and the achievement of pupils is generally better than typically found. Pupils with special educational needs thrive on the individual attention; provision for them is very good. The teaching is good, having improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher leads effectively by example and has created strong teamwork. There are some shortcomings in the systems for school self-evaluation and links with some parents are not as effective as they should be; these can be quickly remedied. Considering all these factors, together with the relatively high costs of educating each pupil, educational value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- Standards in Years 3 to 6 are above average in English, mathematics, and in art and design.
- The overall achievement of pupils is good.
- The quality of teaching and the general pace of learning are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the general levels of individual care for all pupils are very good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good.
- Attendance is above average.

What could be improved

- The effectiveness of the links with parents is not as good as it should be.
- The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are underdeveloped.
- The accommodation lacks specialist facilities such as a hall, medical room, and a dedicated space outdoors for pupils in the Foundation Stage; this is preventing parts of the National Curriculum and nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage from being taught in full.

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 previously inspected in December 1997. Improvement since then has been satisfactory. Standards have improved more quickly than the national trend. The teaching has improved and is now slightly better than the national picture. Nearly all of the issues for improvement identified by the previous inspection have been acted on successfully although there is still work to do to improve the effectiveness of communications with parents.

STANDARDS

Throughout the school, a substantial number of the pupils in each subject attain or exceed the nationally expected level for their age. In Years 3 to 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In Years 1 and 2, standards in these subjects are average. Throughout the school, standards are average in science; above average in art and design; and average in religious education, geography, history, music, and in design and technology. The evidence in information and communication technology and in physical education is limited; the small amount available shows average standards. Nearly all of the pupils make or exceed the nationally expected amount of progress each year. Long-term achievement, or educational value added, is good in reading and writing and in art and design; it is at least satisfactory in all of the other subjects. Pupils with high attainment on entry do well. Pupils with low attainment on entry, those with learning difficulties and with special educational needs generally do very well. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between boys or girls in current work.

Because the numbers of pupils taking the national tests is below 10, a table giving comparative information has been left out of this section for reasons of pupil confidentiality; in Year 2, there were six pupils tested in 2002; in Year 6, there were only two. The broad picture, based on tests since the previous inspection, is of average or better results at the end of Year 2. However, at the end of Year 6, results have been badly affected by the transfer of pupils to a nearby middle school system at the age of nine and by the influx of pupils with significant special educational needs. Nevertheless, the broad picture at the end of Year 6 is of improvement faster than the national rate and of results coming in line with the average. The school has found it difficult to set meaningful overall targets for the end of Year 6 because the numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school after the age of seven is very high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school, play happily together, and show good levels of interest in lessons. They work hard and sustain concentration well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good throughout the day, both inside and out.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils accept the responsibilities they are given. They show initiative and have a well-developed sense of right and wrong.
Attendance	Better than average. Improved since the last inspection.

Relationships between pupils, and with teachers, are good. Pupils demonstrate good respect for the headteacher. Punctuality is good and there are few unauthorised absences.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching is good overall. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is slightly better than the national picture. Pupils learn quickly in the main. The teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and in religious education. Teaching is satisfactory in music. Evidence in the other subjects is limited but the small amount seen was satisfactory. The quality of teaching for pupils in the Reception year is good. The skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are gifted or talented, is particularly good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Lessons are generally interesting and challenging and add up to a stimulating curriculum. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, though provision for physical education is limited by a lack of a school hall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Specific needs are clearly identified and well met. Support staff are knowledgeable, well trained and work very effectively with their assigned pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for each aspect is good. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and good opportunities are provided for reflection and for pupils to learn about themselves as human beings. A strong moral code is used as a basis for behaviour management and social development. Appropriate attention is given to British, western and eastern cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Child protection arrangements are appropriate. Pupils are very well cared for individually.

All subjects have satisfactory policies and schemes of work. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are effectively implemented. Statutory requirements are met in respect of religious education, sex education and drugs education. The curriculum for pupils in the Reception year is sufficiently based on the nationally agreed curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage to be satisfactory. Appropriate measures are taken to eliminate racial discrimination. The quality of care and support for pupils with special educational needs is a major strength of the school. The teachers take full advantage of the small size of the school to get to know pupils very well as individuals and to tailor work to meet pupils' needs. The partnership with parents is not as effective as it should be.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. The headteacher leads well through the example of his teaching and his excellent care for individual pupils. Teamwork is well developed and the headteacher has the full support of his staff. The educational direction of the school is clear. Communication and consultation with parents are not developed effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. The leadership of the chair is good. Statutory requirements are met but the governors sometimes have difficulty acting as a corporate body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Not as good as it should be. Teaching is monitored and this is a good improvement but the use of performance data to measure effectiveness across a broad range of school activity remains largely underdeveloped.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The management of the budget is typical of many schools. School improvement planning, however, is not based on effective school self-evaluation.

The school is united behind the headteacher and teamwork is well developed. Membership of the governing body lacks balance. Too many of the governors are employed at the school and this is inconsistent with recent legislation; the governors have a transitional period of a few months to make the changes. The principles of best value are applied only to quotations before purchase of major items and not enough is done to evaluate the cost effectiveness of projects and developments.

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 family atmosphere. The general quality of teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications and consultation with parents. Information about children's progress. The arrangements for homework. The range and extent of extra-curricular provision. Leadership and management.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. Inspectors partly agree with parents that communications and consultation with parents are not always good enough. In particular, the inspectors think that governors and senior management should do more to consult parents before making major changes in policy and should periodically survey the parents' views about what the school does well and where it could improve. Parents need to be aware that the headteacher and governors are within their rights to change policy immediately without consultation if they think that children are at risk but are always accountable for their actions. Inspectors find that the written communications are generally of good quality and frequent enough to keep parents reasonably informed. The reports on pupils' progress are consistent with requirements and mainly of good quality. More opportunities are provided for consultation than is required by legislation. The inspectors do not agree with parents about the arrangements for homework, the range of extra-curricular activities, or leadership and management; all are satisfactory in the main.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in English and mathematics are above average in Years 3 to 6 and average in Years 1 and 2. In science, standards are average throughout. Standards are good in art and design in all age groups. In the other subjects through the school, standards are average in design and technology; geography; history; music; and religious education. The evidence in information and communication technology and in physical education is very limited; the small amount available indicates average standards. In physical education, the finding applies to skills in games only; the pupils have almost no opportunity to develop gymnastics skills. In the Reception year, overall standards are above average in mathematical development and are average in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. The provision in the Reception year for physical development is limited, particularly for children to use larger apparatus; notwithstanding, the children are making steady progress.
2. About 80 per cent of the pupils throughout the school are attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level for their age in each subject, often with upwards of a third of the pupils doing better than expected. The proportions overall are average or better, depending on subject, but vary widely between year groups because of the presence or otherwise of pupils with significant learning difficulties. All of the pupils without special educational needs are making or exceeding the expected amount of progress each year. Most of those with special educational needs also make or exceed the expected progress and all of them make good progress in relation to the difficulties they face.
3. The very small numbers of pupils involved in the national tests each year mean that the results are statistically unreliable when used to measure the performance of the school and when used to compare performance with the national picture. Conclusions about individual pupils remain valid but publication of results would breach confidentiality. Only two pupils in Year 6 took the national tests in 2002. Currently there are three pupils in Year 6, two having joined the school in the past year. Very few of the pupils tested at the school at the age of seven go on to be tested again at the age of eleven, revealing starkly the impact of pupils transferring to nearby middle schools at the age of nine. The broad picture at the end of Year 6 painted by test results over several years, a comparison that is slightly more reliable than results from only one year, indicates general improvement over time in all subjects tested. The overall trend of improvement is better than the national trend and results have caught up with the national picture in English and mathematics from a very low base five years ago. Results in science have improved but are not yet in line with the national picture. Overall, the five-year picture represents satisfactory improvement in standards since the last inspection.
4. The performance of the school is broadly the same as others with pupils from similar backgrounds. Annual comparisons with similar schools vary and are unreliable because of the small year groups but the long-term picture is satisfactory.
5. In the tests at the end of Year 6, boys do not do as well as girls in all subjects tested. In English and mathematics, girls do better than girls nationally and boys do much worse. However, more boys than girls are tested and most of the boys tested have significant special educational needs. In lessons in Years 3 to 6, no significant differences in attainment were found between girls and boys.
6. The results of tests at the end of Year 2 carry a similar caveat to those at the end of Years 6. In some years, however, there are more than 10 seven-year-olds entered for the tests and, on these occasions, the results can be published. Currently, there are 11 pupils in Year 2. The broad picture at the end of Year 2 from tests since the last inspection is of average or better standards in reading, writing, and mathematics, though with the occasional wide variation. The results compare typically with similar schools and the overall trend of improvement in reading, writing, and mathematics is in line with the national trend. The seven-year-old girls do best in reading and writing. Not only are the seven-year-old girls doing better than the boys at the school, they are doing better than other girls nationally. These differences do not apply to mathematics, where there are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

7. The very high pupil mobility reduces the proportions of pupils attaining or exceeding nationally expected levels. In the last four years, almost all of those who have left after the age of seven had attained or exceeded the nationally expected level when in Year 2. About half of those who joined after the usual point of entry had significant special educational needs.
8. The long-term achievement of pupils, or educational value added, is good in reading and writing and satisfactory in mathematics. Almost all pupils extend their knowledge and skills by the nationally expected amount, or more, in these subjects. Between the ages of seven and nine, for example, 85 per cent of pupils increased their attainment by at least the expected amount in reading and writing, with a third in reading and nearly half in writing doing even better. The proportions in mathematics were marginally smaller but still in line with the national picture. The pupils with high attainment on entry consistently do well and sustain their position throughout their time at the school. Pupils with low attainment on entry mostly do very well and often catch up with expectations. Achievement in art and design is good. In all of the other subjects except physical education, achievement is at least satisfactory and attainment overall increases by the expected amounts each year. The evidence of achievement in physical education is limited.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. About three-quarters of the pupils with special educational needs have attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics that is below that of their peers. In some cases, they are two or more years behind. The long-term achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in relation to the difficulties they face. All of them are making progress, often the nationally expected amount or more. School records show that over the last three years about half of those with very low attainment at age seven have exceeded the nationally expected progress by the age of nine and end up with typical attainment for their age. Several of the pupils with statements of special educational needs have medical or emotional and behavioural difficulties that have potential to disrupt their learning. Through well-managed therapy and through effective strategies to tackle the emotional and behavioural difficulties, the school minimises disruption to learning and helps pupils to control their behaviour effectively.
10. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress. The school has clearly identified those pupils who are gifted and talented and is making specific provision for them. They have individual programmes of supplementary work and two of the older pupils receive off-site support at local institutions.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Attitudes to school are good. As at the time of the last inspection, the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a significant contribution to their ability to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They play happily together in the playground before the bell rings and then chat quietly to each other as they line up in their classes ready to go in to school. In lessons, the pupils are generally interested in the work, enthusiastic when answering, sustain concentration, and complete their tasks. Older pupils are patient when questions are addressed to a different age group and content to have reminders of work they have already done. They work well independently and when cooperating in shared, paired, and small group work.
12. At break and lunchtimes, pupils enjoy themselves on the field and adventure playground and generally play well together. Small groups busy themselves on different activities and show confidence when asking for help with organising various games. Behaviour is good throughout the day. Older pupils take their responsibilities as play leaders seriously, organising play equipment, and sorting out minor disputes. There is no evidence of bullying or other significant anti-social behaviour. Pupils have quite strong opinions about their rights. These are addressed in class but need to be seen as developmental stages of a strong moral understanding. In the main, the pupils are kind and thoughtful. In a religious education lesson, older pupils showed sensitive understanding and respect of a pupil's different experiences. They demonstrate great respect for the headteacher. Relationships between the pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are good.
13. Attendance is better than national averages; it was even higher in the previous year. This is better than at the time of the last inspection. There are very few unauthorised absences. Punctuality is generally good. Governors report attendance figures annually to parents but they do so for each class rather than for the whole school as is required. This is a minor breach of the reporting requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The teaching is good overall; 71 per cent was good or better, including six per cent, one lesson, that was very good, and none were unsatisfactory. The teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is slightly better than the national picture. The skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught. The pace of learning is good throughout the school. The overall quality of teaching in English, including the very effective individual and small group support, is good. The teaching is also good in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, and in religious education. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory. The evidence of teaching is too limited to make a secure judgement in history and geography, information and communication technology, and in physical education; the small amount seen was satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the Reception year, or Foundation Stage, is good overall when viewed separately from the provision for Years 1 and 2 with which it is normally combined in this school.
15. Where teaching is very good, the pupils are highly motivated and, because of their enthusiasm, learn quickly and confidently. In a very good mathematics lesson in the combined Reception and Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher used a range of methods to generate enthusiasm, including number songs and probing questions that were well matched to and directed at pupils with different levels of knowledge and understanding. The directed questions in particular enabled all pupils to make a valued contribution and to gain a strong sense of personal involvement. This particular lesson was also characterised by clear, detailed planning for different age and attainment groups, which was very effectively implemented over the course of the lesson, and thorough preparation beforehand of equipment and resources.
16. The pace of learning is generally good in English and mathematics throughout the school. This partly reflects the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, which is good overall. In most lessons, the teachers' explanation and questioning skills are very effective. In a good mathematics lesson in the Year 3 to 6 class, the teacher's clear explanations, demonstrations, and challenging questions resulted in pupils grasping quickly how to continue a sequence by adding 15 and subtracting 17. They rapidly gained confidence, which in turn led to high levels of motivation and to sustained concentration throughout the activity.
17. Where teaching is satisfactory, the lesson is successful in the main and the large majority of pupils in the class gain worthwhile knowledge and skills. The content is usually interesting and generally relevant to need. However, although satisfactory overall, such lessons are sometimes less effective in involving all pupils compared to good or very good lessons. At times, this is because not enough questions are directed at pupils with different levels of attainment or from different year groups. At others, it is because the attention of the pupils is allowed to wander for short periods or distractions are not kept under control.
18. The effectiveness of planning is good. However, in Years 3 to 6, there are times when insufficient thought is given to coordinating the work of the different assistants, who all have well defined tasks to support individual pupils but occasionally carry these out at inappropriate times. For example, a child with significant medical difficulties requires regular access to specialised equipment. The timing of this support is not critical but it must occur at least once each day. On one occasion, the treatment was given during the shared part of a literacy lesson, causing considerable distraction while the teacher was trying to explain complex ideas and introduce new knowledge to the whole class. The treatment could have taken place a few minutes later at a time when the class was not receiving direct instruction without detriment to the child.
19. Notwithstanding the previous comment, support assistants are used very effectively in the main. They mostly provide close support for pupils with learning difficulties and special educational needs, overseeing the use of individual and group programmes of work, including phonics, and therapy for pupils with medical difficulties. In a good design and technology lesson in Years 3 to 6, the assistants supported small groups very competently, enabling pupils with special educational needs to participate fully. The assistants are experienced and have received good training. They plan their specified work thoroughly, and show good levels of initiative and care for the pupils they are responsible for.
20. The pace of learning in lessons is broadly consistent throughout the school in each subject. Pupils generally work hard and complete tasks on time. On most occasions, they sustain interest and concentration, only occasionally being distracted by other activities in the room. They show good levels of independence and a willingness to work cooperatively. The older pupils in particular have a good knowledge of their own learning; they know what they have achieved and what they should do next. The teachers manage the behaviour of pupils very well overall and there were no instances seen of significant

misbehaviour. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment and of homework are satisfactory. The teachers often have a very detailed knowledge of what each pupil knows and can do and they are aware of the progress made. However, not enough of this knowledge is recorded, or summarised using National Curriculum levels, and this has potential for a loss of continuity should teachers leave or be absent through illness. It also makes the measurement of progress difficult over time and this has implications for performance management and school self-evaluation. The quality and range of homework is typically of schools nationally. In an English lesson in Years 3 to 6, for example, the homework extended their work on the description of settings in stories by asking the pupils to find pictures of landscapes in magazines and write a description.

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

21. The curriculum, as it is planned and taught, is satisfactory. The last inspection report stated that the curriculum was broad, balanced, and met the requirements of the National Curriculum but lacked detailed schemes of work in mathematics, design and technology, geography and history to help the teachers build on pupils' skills, knowledge, and understanding in these subjects. These issues have been dealt with and improvement since that time is satisfactory. The curriculum is now planned in line with the latest national guidance. All subjects have policies and schemes of work and suitable documentation is used as a basis for planning the subject areas. Planning and implementation of the curriculum are effectively monitored by the headteacher.
22. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily. Planning takes good account of the pupils' ages and ability. Computers are being used effectively to support learning in most subjects. The curriculum offered to the children in the Reception year provides a satisfactory balance between structured play on the one hand and work that is more directed on the other. It is based on the nationally recommended areas of learning for pupils in the Foundation Stage and on the National Curriculum programmes of study and gives the children a secure start, developing positive attitudes to learning and good preparation for work in Year 1.
23. The school successfully includes all its pupils in the different aspects of its life and work. The school's aims and values in this respect are fully achieved and its success in including pupils with specific learning needs within the main provision is very good overall. All pupils have good access to the curriculum and appropriate opportunities to learn and make satisfactory progress. The positive ethos helps to ensure a warm, encouraging and caring environment for learning.
24. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is planned well and all have access to the National Curriculum. They have individual education plans that highlight their needs, containing specific learning programmes that set targets for improvement and are shared with both pupils and their parents. These plans are reviewed termly; this is good practice. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is through a sensible mix of teaching within the pupils' main class and being withdrawn to quieter areas to work individually with their assistant. This works very well in the main apart from a few shortcomings in coordination noted elsewhere. Work when withdrawn usually concentrates on the specific programmes within individual education plans. Support in lessons very effectively helps those pupils with special needs work towards the same general learning objectives as the other pupils in the class. The higher attaining pupils and those with particular gifts or talents are identified and appropriate consideration is given to enhance their learning. For example, two pupils in the Years 3 to 6 class have a worthwhile opportunity to attend a local authority professional development centre for a number of 'super maths' sessions, while the others are given work that is more challenging.
25. Good provision is made for the pupils' personal, social, and health education, including drugs awareness. This is incorporated effectively within aspects of the science curriculum and within the personal, health, and social education programme. Through the sensitive handling of issues in lessons, pupils are made aware of the abuse of drugs. The governors have adopted an appropriate policy for sex and drugs education.
26. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that take place at lunchtime and after school. These include a good number of inter-school sports' tournaments with local schools, and recorder, mathematics and sports clubs. They are all keenly attended. Annual residential visits for pupils in Years 5 and 6 give them access to other parts of the United Kingdom. This year, pupils in Year 6 are joining with other local schools to stay at an adventure activity centre in North Norfolk. These are

potentially useful opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence and ability to respond to the needs of others. Good opportunities are provided for pupils in Year 5 and 6 for dry-slope skiing and water sports. Visitors to school, who enhance the curriculum, include theatre groups, sports' coaches, the local vicar, musicians, and artists in residence, poets, and well-known authors.

27. The school has established good links with other primary schools and the local secondary school. A number of constructive initiatives have been set up in partnership with these schools, including the shared use of sports facilities, collaboration in producing working curriculum documents for mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, drugs awareness, health and safety issues and special educational needs. The school is successfully involved with the local authority in a special educational needs project. The good links with the community support the pupils' personal development and learning. Parents volunteer their time to help in classrooms. Two local football clubs provide worthwhile opportunities for the pupils, for example, to visit their grounds and meet the coaches. The school successfully participates in the district sports competitions.
28. The overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is good. All the teachers, assistants, and non-teaching staff members support the aim of helping pupils to develop physically, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. Overall, this good provision has been maintained since the last inspection.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Collective worship is used well to promote a time for reflection. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to consider their own everyday life and contrast it, for instance, with those of children in Iraq. Assembly themes are aptly planned to be mainly Christian in character. They are suitably linked to the religious education syllabus and include festivals from all the main world faiths. Religious education lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Time to reflect on pupils' own beliefs, values, and experiences is regularly provided in the majority of classrooms and in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils were effectively directed to think about their understanding of specific metaphors. For example, one pupil contributed, *"Life is an adventure because there are so many obstacles to overcome."* Another pupils said, *"Life is a supermarket because everything has a cost."* A scrutiny of displays around the school shows that the pupils are given effective opportunities to explore and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings and so learn about themselves and others as human beings.
30. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. This provision has been maintained since the last inspection. It is reinforced by the personal example provided by the staff. A strong moral code is the basis for acceptable behaviour and this is consistently emphasised throughout the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils are held individually responsible for their actions and are successfully helped to manage their behaviour, for example, through well-planned group discussions and effective role-play. A solid framework of values encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Pupils are commended for their achievements in assembly and appropriate emphasis is placed on celebrating positive behaviour.
31. Good provision is made for developing the pupils socially. The positive emphasis on consideration, tolerance, and understanding promotes socially acceptable attitudes. This provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers are both professional and caring, and there is clear evidence of positive and successful relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 assist the daily running of the school through helping with preparations for assembly. They effectively support younger pupils in the playground and at lunchtime and carry out their responsibilities well. Annual residential visits appropriately enhance older pupils' social development through planning, sharing and amicably working together. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the community, for example, in their support of local charities in collecting goods for a homeless project and inviting old people in the community to come to the harvest festival and concerts.
32. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. This provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are given effective opportunities to learn more about their own cultural traditions and heritage, for example, through local studies of the environment, visits to places of interest and museums and Christmas productions. History contributes well to an understanding of other cultures. For example, through discussions with pupils it was clear that they had enjoyed their topic on the Ancient Egyptians and gained a great deal from a visit to a local museum. Pupils learn about the past through artefacts and pictures. Good use is made of the pupils' grandparents, neighbours, and friends to collect, for example,

first-hand observations of the way of life in the 1960's. They compare different places and cultures when they study regions such as Sri Lanka in Years 1 and 2, the Lake District in Years 3 and 4 and the Alps and Andes in Years 5 and 6. Visits from local musicians, sportsmen, poets, and writers further enhance the pupils' learning and development in this area. Although multicultural links are very limited within the locality, the school seeks to compensate for this by the occasional use of students from different cultures, to widen the pupils' experience of multicultural society. Through religious education, they appropriately learn about other faiths, beliefs, and traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The arrangements for child protection and for health and safety are very good. The headteacher and his staff make good use of the school's small size to develop individuality and to get to know each pupil very well. The school values its pupils as individuals in every way and takes very good care of them. For example, specially trained classroom assistants support pupils with acute medical conditions. The headteacher takes particular care to look for the root cause of a pupil's difficulty, and is good at identifying and diagnosing underlying problems. This amounts to very good educational and personal support for the individual pupil.
34. The headteacher is appropriately trained in child protection and has good awareness of the needs of children placed in the care of the local authority and others. The governors take appropriate responsibility for health and safety matters. Accidents and injuries are properly dealt with and enough staff members are qualified in administering first aid. The staff members use the home-school contact book very well to keep in touch with families. Attendance is well monitored, in a straightforward way. The clerk telephones home on the first day of absence, and uses the contact book to request absence notes. Good behaviour is encouraged and unsatisfactory behaviour is well managed in a way that is appropriate to the individual pupil. Class teachers use their own awards and incentives, such as stickers for the younger pupils. Good quality documentation supports the process of induction to the school, together with good liaison with the link nursery.
35. The arrangements for assessing the attainment of pupils are satisfactory but not enough is done to track progress and use the data to guide curricular planning. Teacher assessments are made annually in all subjects using National Curriculum level criteria; this is good practice. Standardised tests in reading and mathematics are used to measure pupils' progress, which is good, and a range of diagnostic tests is used for pupils with special educational needs. The data is recorded electronically and is used to produce individual profiles of pupils' attainment. Overall, the knowledge teachers have about the attainment of pupils is well used to support specific individuals. However, not enough use is made of the assessment data to measure the progress of each pupil or to support decisions about what pupils should be taught next. The impact of this is reduced somewhat because the teachers know the pupils very well. Not enough is done to measure the educational value added to groups, classes, and the school as a whole. This latter shortcoming is significant because it is limiting the school's self-evaluation, making it difficult for staff, governors, and parents to know how well the school is doing and what it must do to improve further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. The links with parents are not as effective as they should be and have declined since the previous inspection. They have been damaged by weak management of changes recently in school policy and by a long running issue about the transfer of pupils at age nine. In other respects, the parents provide good support for the school and acknowledge its good work, particularly in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
37. There are polarised opinions amongst parents, with a high percentage of parental dissatisfaction. Turnout at the pre-inspection meeting was high, as was the response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspectors received many letters. Some parents are concerned about the lack of a reading scheme and others would like to be consulted before decisions are made. Some concerns relate to security and cannot be discussed in a public document. A common theme was that of poor communication between the headteacher and themselves, and a basic lack of trust. Relationships are obviously not good enough and are affecting aspects of the school's work.
38. In fact, the school communicates with parents well on paper. Newsletters are of good quality and frequent enough. The home-school contact book, an open way of sending quick messages, is a particularly strong feature. These are examined in school each day and used for many purposes including homework, requesting absence notes, and reporting incidents or outcomes of investigations. Parents use them to tell the school if there is a change of arrangements, such as school meals or who will be collecting their child that day, to ask for an appointment or to enquire about an incident. Sticky labels are well used to insert general information, such as guidance on how to support with reading. Annual reports are good, although parents complained about computer-generated comments. These comments are largely unjustified. Parents have two consultation meetings a year, when they are given a clear indication of how their child is

performing against national standards or their own ability; this good practice is more than is required by legislation.

39. Most parents use the home-school contact book well to communicate with teachers. Most parents are keen to support their child with work at home. A small number of parents help occasionally in school, listening to readers, and the Friends of Mendham School Association is very active. Verbal, face-to-face, and other forms of communication, however, are relatively limited and not enough is done to inform parents about the good work of the school through meetings to explain the organisation and content of the curriculum and the teaching. Nor is enough done in advance of changes in policy to consult parents, explain how the changes will work, and to justify them. The policy changes that have sparked the current ill feeling include efforts to stop pupils transferring at age nine; not allowing parents to take photographs in school of children other than their own; the reading scheme; and access to the school during the working day. These changes are justifiable in the main on educational and organisational grounds and arise from a strong desire to act in the best interests of the pupils. The governors, who have largely been responsible for the changes, have acted within their rights, though not always as corporately or as wisely as they should.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The leadership and the management of the headteacher and others with responsibility, together with the governing body, are satisfactory in the main but have aspects for improvement. The headteacher teaches for about half of the school week. The amount of time he has available for carrying out his management role has increased to this level since the previous inspection. The headteacher leads well through the example of his good teaching and his very deep concern and high expectations for each individual pupil. The teachers, their assistants, and all employed at the school are united behind the headteacher, work effectively as a team, and share the headteacher's commitment to achieving the best for the pupils. The school is an orderly community. The management effectively promotes good standards. The skills of employees are utilised well. Delegation is satisfactory though restricted by the turnover of teachers. However, consultation and communication, particularly with parents, are not always as effective as they should be.
41. The governing body only just manages to fulfil its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily because it sometimes has difficulty acting as a corporate body. The chair of governors is relatively new. His leadership and commitment to the school are good and the governing body is becoming more united. An appropriate range of committees is established, each with clear terms of reference. Several governors visit the school regularly and are aware of its main strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher's termly reports to the governing body are informative and provide a satisfactory picture of the school; this helps fulfil the requirements for accountability. All major policies are scrutinised and approved though not always with all governors present or consulted; this could lead to mistrust. There have been deep divisions over issues such as the transfer of pupils at the age of nine that are clearly not in the best interests of the school. The chair of governors is working hard to heal these divisions and is having some measure of success. The governing body and senior management together have succeeded this year in persuading more parents to keep their children at the school after the age of nine; the present Year 5 is the largest it has been for some years. The current composition of the governing body lacks balance. Too many members are directly employed at the school and this is inconsistent with recent legislation. The governing body has not been involved sufficiently in training to improve its understanding of its role and responsibilities. Currently, too few governors have participated in training, including specific training for performance management, financial management, and child protection training; this should be remedied.
42. The arrangements for school development planning are not adequately based on objective evaluations of school performance across the full range of its life and work. Insufficient consultation with parents occurs. A governing body working party is formed each year to examine and approve the school development plan. The current plan, however, is out of date. Its content and organisation are broadly satisfactory but could be more specific and include targets and actions with greater measurability. Neither the headteacher nor the governing body has used a questionnaire or other means of sampling parental views or consulting with them. While there is no requirement to do so, such measures are regularly used nationally by the most successful schools.
43. The systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing the teaching are satisfactory, representing good improvement since the previous inspection. The teaching is observed twice a year by the headteacher. The

local authority inspector and other staff members are also involved in classroom observations. Together, these arrangements keep senior management informed about the quality of teaching. The observations appropriately lead to discussions with teachers and, where relevant, to targets for improvement and to training. Additionally, lesson observations take place as part of the national arrangements for performance management. Samples of pupils' work are regularly checked for quality.

44. Despite the improvements in monitoring and evaluating teaching, the wider systems for checking and evaluating the performance of the school remain underdeveloped and are not adequately linked to the identification of priorities for school improvement. Performance data from tests is being evaluated to provide comparative pictures and establish benchmarks but this is very problematic and unreliable because of the small numbers of pupils in each year group. Alternative and more reliable ways of evaluating the school's performance using measurements of pupils' progress are not being sufficiently explored and this weakens the procedures for school self-evaluation. The range of aspects of school life that are being quantified, measured and evaluated is small, making it difficult for senior management and governors to know objectively how well the school is doing or what must be done to improve.
45. Financial management is satisfactory. There is appropriate separation of roles when placing orders and making payments. The last financial audit by the local authority was carried out five years ago. They found the systems satisfactory but made a number of recommendations, which were acted upon. Expenditure per pupil is very high. This reflects the small size of the school. Compared to the typical school, the expenditure per pupil is more than double the national average. Nearly three-quarters of the budget is allocated to staffing. Expenditure in 2001-2002 was greater than income and the school used some of its reserves. The current level of reserves is just under five per cent of the budget and this is acceptable. Governors are trying to build up the reserves as part of a project to provide additional teaching space and enable the largest classroom to be used as a hall for physical education. Very little is done to ensure that best value is obtained other than receiving quotes before spending on large items and governors should do more to evaluate the cost effectiveness of projects and school improvements.
46. The number of teachers is adequate for the size of the school. The pupil-teacher ratio is well below average, enabling class sizes to be kept small. The number of classroom assistants and the total number of hours worked is very high compared to the national average. The assistants are largely funded by specific grants linked to pupils with statements of special educational needs; this funding gives good value for money. Teacher turnover has been high in recent years. Recruitment is difficult because of the relative geographical isolation of the school. The induction and development of new teachers is good. The policy for recruitment and retention is good. The amount of clerical support is high for a school of this size.
47. The accommodation is poor. It lacks specialist teaching space, such as a hall, a dedicated medical room, and a suitable outdoor area for pupils in the Foundation Stage. This is preventing the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education from being taught in full and is restricting the scope for pupils in the Foundation Stage to learn through physical activity outdoors. Some extensions to the building have been made to provide a much-needed staff room, toilets, and office. The amount of teaching space is barely sufficient for the varying curricular needs of pupils and is particularly acute in the classroom where the Reception year and Years 1 and 2 are taught. Insufficient space is available for the withdrawal of pupils to work individually or in small groups and they have to make do with corridors. The lack of a medical room means that therapy for the pupils with cystic fibrosis is currently provided in a cloakroom; this is unsatisfactory. Resources are sufficient in quantity, quality and range in all subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. The school is operating successfully in the main but its systems for self-evaluation are underdeveloped, particularly the use of objective measures to establish relevant benchmarks and check progress across the full breadth of school life and work. Because of this, senior management and governors do not have ready access to a cohesive picture of how well the school is doing or what it must do to improve further. The links with parents have deteriorated partly because of the underdeveloped self-evaluation systems, which leave no means whereby parental opinion and their levels of satisfaction with the school can be systematically and objectively sampled. The shortcomings with the accommodation are outside the control of the headteacher and his staff, who work hard to overcome them. To improve the school further, the headteacher and his staff, with the support of the governing body and others with governance of the school should:
- increase the effectiveness of the links with parents by:
 - regularly surveying parental opinion about the performance of the school and any proposed major changes in policy;
 - keeping parents well informed about the good work of the school, its curriculum, teaching, and key policies;
(Discussed in paragraphs 36 to 39)
 - improve the arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and developing the school by:
 - developing systems for tracking the progress of pupils so that they become an effective tool for measuring the performance of the school;
 - writing and implementing a policy for manageable school self-evaluation that clearly sets out the extent of the arrangements, the aspects of school life to be monitored, what will be measured and how;
 - reporting annually to the governing body on the implementation of the self-evaluation policy, how well the school is doing, and what it must do to improve further;
 - using the results of school self-evaluation to identify the priorities for the school improvement plan;
(Discussed in paragraphs 40-47)
 - ensure that the pupils have full access to the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education and the nationally agreed curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage by:
 - providing sufficient access to appropriate facilities for gymnastics, apparatus work, and dance for these elements of the National Curriculum programme of study to be taught effectively;
 - providing regular access to outdoor facilities for pupils in the Reception year that allow the nationally agreed curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage to be taught in full.
(Discussed in paragraph 47)
49. In addition, the following minor points for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the governors action plan:
- providing appropriate training for governors to help them carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently (paragraph 41);
 - improving the balance of the governing body (paragraph 41).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	11	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	6	65	29	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	50
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

The pupil mobility data in this table is not typical of previous years and reflects recent success in reducing the transfer of pupils at age nine.

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Tables showing attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) are omitted from this page because fewer than 10 pupils took the tests.

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	50	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.86
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	177,418
Total expenditure	186,716
Expenditure per pupil (based on 43 pupils)	4,342
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,926
Balance carried forward to next year	8,628

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
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)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	55
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	55	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	15	63	7	0	15
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	48	22	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	41	48	0	0
The teaching is good.	15	67	4	0	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	4	33	44	19	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	30	30	15	25	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	26	48	7	0	19
The school works closely with parents.	7	15	48	22	8
The school is well led and managed.	15	19	41	19	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	22	59	7	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	15	26	52	0

Other issues raised by parents

- ❑ Some parents raised concerns about standards in reading and the progress pupils are making in this aspect of English. The inspectors found marked variations in attainment between pupils because some of them have significant learning difficulties in literacy, with the vast majority of pupils attaining the nationally expected level for their age. The methods used by the school to teach reading are effective and pupils with learning difficulties are receiving good individual support.
- ❑ A few parents have concerns about the reading scheme used. This was checked during the inspection. The school has adequate resources to teach the National Literacy Strategy effectively. The resources for pupils to borrow and read at home are satisfactory. The methods used to promote interest in reading and to support reading at home are typical of many schools.

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

50. The good quality provision for children in the Reception year has been maintained since the last inspection. The children are taught together with pupils from Years 1 and 2, with most of the activities for the Reception pupils being overseen by the class assistant. Expectations are clearly identified and targets for learning are focused on catering for the varying needs of the children. There is clear and thorough planning and organisation and the overall quality of teaching is good.
51. There are three intakes into school per year, in September, January, and April. This means that there were only five children in the Reception year this term, with one more child due to be admitted after Easter. Children enter with a very wide range of attainment. For reasons of confidentiality explained elsewhere, a judgement about the attainment on entry of individual year groups is not made. The overall picture from the last six years of pupils at point of entry is of broadly average standards but with wide annual variations. Records together with children's work show that by the end of the Reception year, almost all children have made the expected progress. The majority of children meet the nationally agreed standards in each of the six areas of learning, with a number of children exceeding expectations in mathematical development. Continual observations are made by staff members of each child's progress to ensure that work matches their needs and builds on their previous learning. Planning has mainly been following the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but takes sufficient account of the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage curriculum to be satisfactory. The staff members, including the teaching assistant, work well together and collaborate with planning and assessments of the children's needs. Provision for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors is limited by the lack of a dedicated area for them to use. This is outside the control of the teacher who makes best use of what is available.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. Nearly all of the children are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Considerable emphasis is placed on the personal and social development of the children from the moment of entry. New children are settled in thoughtfully and successfully. With helpful encouragement and sensitive handling, they begin to form positive relationships with one another and with adults. Relationships are good, reflecting the very effective way in which staff members create a warm and caring environment, enabling the children to develop good attitudes to learning and become self-confident. Children quickly become aware of routines and successfully adjust to learning in a whole class group. They gradually develop independence. For example, they help to clear away after completing activities. The children appropriately learn to understand the difference between right and wrong. Simple classroom rules are clearly displayed for the children to appreciate. For example, the 'Whale' award effectively focuses the children's understanding for sharing, helping, listening and working hard. The children's spiritual and cultural development is fostered well through stories, assemblies, and the general ethos in the classroom. There is a high expectation that all children can do well.
53. Teaching and learning are good. Staff are particularly sensitive to children who arrive mid-term or who are experiencing problems. The children's personal needs are carefully assessed and provide good support matched to their needs. The teacher and her assistant provide good role models and explain clearly to the children what is expected of them; they work very well together and fully involve themselves with the children.

Communication, language and literacy

54. Almost all of the children are likely to attain the nationally agreed goals by the end of the Reception year. They listen to stories with enjoyment, showing by their comments that they understand the plot. For example, they know that the story of "The Hungry Caterpillar" takes place on different days of the week. They recall the story well and are able to talk about what happens to the caterpillar after eating the different fruits each day. Their language skills are further developed as they talk about a cocoon. One child observed that, "Butterflies die after they lay eggs". The children listen well for extended periods, particularly when, for example, they participate in enacting the story. They are developing skills in writing that are appropriate for their age and ability. The majority of children are beginning to form their letters correctly and use initial

sounds in their writing. They sequence pictures in the right order and with support compose a sentence. The children have a good understanding of books and handle them competently. They know that pictures tell a story and words have meanings. The children read a number of familiar words accurately and make sense of the story. Children that are more able use a number of strategies to read the text correctly. For example, they sound out the letters and look at the pictures to give them an idea of what the writing is about. They retell the story and are beginning to express a response and offer opinions about different stories. Effective links are made with numeracy through, for example, the counting of fruit in Handa's basket and ordering the days of the week. The use of the literacy hour is having a significant impact on their progress.

55. Teaching is good. Adults interact skilfully with the children, exploiting many opportunities to increase their vocabulary. They use praise well to build up confidence and self-esteem. Challenging work is successfully planned which makes children think and keeps them focused with interest on the activities provided. Staff members encourage all children to take their books home to share with their family and most do this regularly. These children are making good progress in their reading skills. Information technology is used effectively to support this subject.

Mathematical development

56. Children are on course to exceed the national expectations by the end of the Reception year. They recognise numbers to 20 and some children recognise even higher numbers. Most children can match numbers and shapes, sequence patterns, and correctly order numerals and days of the week. They are becoming aware when containers are full; half full; or empty. They know and can describe simple shapes such as triangles, circles, and rectangles and are developing the correct use of mathematical language, such as double, count on and estimate. Mathematics is well related to everyday life, for example, through the effective use of number rhymes. The use of a daily mathematics lesson is having a significant impact on pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics.
57. The quality of teaching is good. It is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them and work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all the children. Learning is effective because the children have many practical opportunities to enhance their understanding and they learn from and with each other. They are keen to learn and are given useful challenges to build on what they have learned. The good collaboration between the teacher and the teaching assistant effectively reinforces the children's learning. Practical resources are well chosen and helpfully support the children to solve problems that are posed to them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Children make the expected progress and are likely to attain the nationally agreed standard by the end of the Reception year. Analysis of the children's work and scrutiny of the teacher's planning show, for example, that the children are given useful opportunities to identify wood, metal and plastic materials through touch and understand that the shape of some materials, such as plasticene and play-dough can be changed. They are given very worthwhile opportunities to investigate and experiment. For example, they explore melting ice and understand the difference between freeze and melt. The computer is successfully used and skills are appropriately developed for their age, as when they effectively used a program to 'dress teddy'. They carefully handle a variety of tools, such as sewing needles to join two flower parts together. Their work shows that they are actively involved in successfully making junk models of different houses, such as the Gingerbread man, Goldilocks and Grandma, creating a useful link with literacy. Good opportunities are provided for children to observe changes over time when, for example, they see differences in old and new clothes and shoes and appropriately learn, for example, that elephants are decorated and used in religious ceremonies in Sri Lanka.
59. Teaching is good. The stimulating displays in the classroom effectively support this area. Children are encouraged to become independent, though staff members intervene with support when necessary. The teaching assistant is very well deployed and makes a significant contribution to the children's learning.

Physical development

60. Provision is limited outdoors and indoors, particularly for physical activity involving larger equipment and apparatus. Even so, the children make steady progress and they are on course to attain the national

expectations for the control and manipulation of small objects, such as pencils, construction apparatus, modelling tools, sewing needles, scissors and paint brushes, which they handle safely and competently. They have effective opportunities to cut, stick, and join objects together as was seen in the junk model houses on display. A small outdoor play area is used to build on their physical skills. The children understand the purpose of a warm up activity and enjoy the familiar game of 'Traffic Lights' to do so. They roll, throw and catch a ball with a partner, retrieve it and send it back. The children respond quickly to instructions and good relationships have been established between children and adults.

61. Overall, the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and this has a positive impact on the children's learning. All the staff members have a very sensitive awareness of the children's safety. Clear routines have been established in which the children's confidence is developed. The children respond immediately to the teacher's high expectation of behaviour.

Creative development

62. All children are making the progress they should and nearly all are likely to attain the nationally agreed goals by the end of the Reception year. The activities provided ensure that the children receive a variety of experiences. For example, they appropriately experiment with a range of different drawing and painting techniques, exploring textures and materials. Satisfactory role-play opportunities are planned for the children to enact familiar stories. For example, the children each wore a head-dress to become caterpillars, while one child had wings to be the butterfly to enact the story of "The Hungry Caterpillar". The children learn to play co-operatively and develop their imaginations. They enjoy music, are usefully learning the names of the percussion instruments, and are taught how to handle them correctly.
63. Overall, the teaching is good. The teacher is well organised and uses stimulating resources which are well prepared prior to the lesson and are chosen to appeal to the children's interest and to develop their understanding. All adults talk well with the children, to help to increase their vocabulary and to ensure that they understand what is being said.

ENGLISH

64. The standard of current work is above average in Years 3 to 6 and average in Years 1 and 2. This represents good overall improvement since the previous inspection. In Years 3 to 6, more than 80 per cent of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected level for their age, with about a third exceeding expectations; this is better than typically found. About one pupil in five has significant learning difficulties; their attainment is often considerably below national expectations. Even so, the long-term progress made by almost all of the pupils since they entered the juniors, including those with special educational needs, has been consistent with or better than the amount expected nationally. Many with significant learning difficulties are catching up with others of the same age. The pupils with high attainment are stretched intellectually and make good progress. The pupils with low attainment, including those with special educational needs, generally do very well in relation to the difficulties faced. In Years 1 and 2, about 80 per cent are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of Year 2, with a quarter to exceed expectations; this is about average.
65. Skills of speaking and listening are generally consistent with or better than national expectations and standards overall are above average. In Years 1 and 2, almost all of the pupils are very confident when explaining their ideas. They include detail to help the listener, speak clearly, use a wide vocabulary, and listen carefully to other speakers. They showed a good understanding of the main points in discussion and asked appropriate questions when seeking clarification. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 are able to talk and listen appropriately for their age. Nearly all of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk and listen confidently in all situations they find in school. They can develop their ideas clearly, give their opinions, concentrate on the ideas of others, and ask relevant questions. A few pupils have significant difficulties when speaking and find it hard to communicate effectively or with confidence but are, nevertheless, making progress.
66. Current standards in reading are above average in Years 3 to 6 and average in Years 1 and 2. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 are largely independent in their reading. The older and higher attaining pupils are capable of reading books of adult difficulty. The majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are capable of reading books such as the 'Harry Potter' series fluently, accurately and with good expression, showing well-developed understanding of the main themes and of the characters' motives. Almost all of them tackle unfamiliar

words quickly and effectively. A few of the pupils in this junior age group have significant learning difficulties and are several years behind expectations; they receive regular individual support and are making good progress in relation to their difficulties. In Years 1 and 2, about 80 per cent of the pupils are already well launched into reading, with time between the inspection and the end of the school year for standards to rise further. These pupils read familiar words fluently and are beginning to gain confidence with the shorter unfamiliar words. They can break these unfamiliar words into familiar letters and letter combinations and can generally blend the letters to predict pronunciation. The higher attaining pupils can tackle longer unfamiliar words and are often successful.

67. Standards in writing are above average in Years 3 to 6 and average in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 organise their writing appropriately according to the purpose. They are able to sustain their writing at length, use paragraphs, include dialogue between characters in stories, and spell and punctuate accurately. The vocabulary used by the majority of pupils is wide, leading to good variety in sentence beginnings and when joining sentences to make them more complex. Almost all pupils show the ability to join letters and write using a legible style. Several of the pupils in Years 4 and 5 are already writing at the level expected by the end of Year 6, showing relatively high attainment for their age. A few pupils in the junior age group have significant difficulties with writing. This affects their ability to write at length, to write legibly, and to spell and punctuate their work accurately. They receive close individual support and make good progress in relation to their difficulties. In Years 1 and 2, more than 80 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of Year 2, with about one in five likely to exceed that level. Most of these pupils can organise their writing logically and use an interesting vocabulary though spelling and punctuation lag somewhat behind.
68. When proper account is taken of the very effective individual and small group support, the teaching is good overall. The direct teaching in lessons is satisfactory, with good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy methods in Years 1 and 2. The challenge in Years 3 to 6 of providing for pupils from four different year groups and with a very wide range of learning aptitudes is met by satisfactorily adapting the National Literacy Strategy and through the very good provision of extensive small group and individual tuition using support assistants. The pace of learning for all pupils throughout the school is generally consistent with their needs and there is no underachievement by specific groups. Good individual attention is given to pupils transferring to the school at other than the usual times, helping them settle quickly with minimum disruption to their learning.
69. In a good lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class, questions directed at specific year groups and pupils provided good challenge and kept everyone interested and engaged. The shared reading methods forming part of the National Literacy Strategy were effectively and efficiently managed, giving all pupils appropriate reading practice while extending their knowledge of words and strategies for dealing with the unfamiliar. During individual and small group work, various tasks were provided for pupils in different year groups and with different levels of attainment; this is good practice. Relationships within the lesson were very good and all of the pupils worked enthusiastically to please the teacher and because they were interested in the work.
70. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory though more could be done to observe lessons and so help to improve the quality of implementation of the National Literacy Strategy in Years 3 to 6 from satisfactory to good. Yearly, termly and weekly planning are satisfactory. The planning is effectively implemented. There are sufficient resources to teach the National Curriculum programmes of study and to implement the National Literacy Strategy in full.

MATHEMATICS

71. Current standards in Years 3 to 6 are above average overall. This is an improvement compared to the previous inspection. In Years 1 and 2, current standards are average. Throughout the school, the progress made by almost all pupils is consistent with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils are properly challenged and their achievement is as it should be. Two gifted pupils are taught off-site on half a day each week to ensure appropriate provision is made. Pupils with special educational needs mostly make good progress in relation to the difficulties they face. There are no significant differences in attainment or progress between boys and girls.
72. In Years 1 and 2, standards in using and applying mathematics, shape, space, and measures and in number and algebra are above average. Analysis of pupils' work shows that the majority of them can, for

example, identify the differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes; have a good understanding of addition and subtraction; and the higher attaining pupils accurately double numbers to 100. Pupils enter Year 1 with above average attainment in basic number skills. These skills are steadily built on as they move to Year 2. The good teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' learning so that nearly all of them make the progress they should. In Year 1, pupils' confidence is developed because tasks are well matched to their ability. For example, they identify different ways of making 10 by throwing dice and recording their answers. Scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that in Year 2, pupils make consistently the expected amount of progress in consolidating their previous learning and understanding of larger numbers and in using mental recall of multiples of 2, 5, and 10. The good teaching ensures that the pupils have a well-developed mathematical vocabulary. For example, the pupils are encouraged to use such phrases as collecting information, difference, doubling, halving and estimating to reinforce their understanding of the concept being taught.

73. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good mental mathematics skills. There is appropriate emphasis on mental work and number work in the teaching and pupils develop a good range of strategies for solving problems. In Years 5 and 6, nearly all of the pupils know the multiplication tables and use number effectively when solving problems. This is fully consistent with the national expectation for Year 6 and shows relatively high attainment in Year 5. Their work shows that pupils can give clear explanations of the processes used to work out a problem. They solve problems accurately and can estimate answers and check if they are correct. They understand fractions, decimals, and their equivalents, and can transfer kilometres into miles and accurately measure the area of rectangles. They can compare and order large numbers to 1000. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils can explain the sequences in number patterns, and identify halves, quarters, fifths and tenths as fractions of shapes and numbers.
74. Pupils who have special educational needs are given work closely matched to their abilities and receive effective support. They make progress that is good when taking account of their previous learning. Good use of information and communication technology effectively supports the pupils' understanding of the subject.
75. The overall quality of teaching is good. Work is modified for pupils with different attainment and age to match their knowledge and understanding. Resources are well prepared, accessible and support the planned activities. The thorough planning is based effectively on the National Numeracy Strategy. Much of the learning is through practical problem-solving activities; this is good practice. Lessons have a clear structure and a good balance between whole-class instruction, mental skills' practice, group work, and a whole class session at the end. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and manage the pupils very well. They use questioning to good effect. Pupils remain focused on the activities because of the suitable pace that is set and the well prepared and stimulating resources. Teaching builds systematically on pupils' previous knowledge. Work is clearly explained. Marking of work in books is generally encouraging; however, it rarely tells pupils how they can improve. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and use the correct mathematical terminology, for example, by explaining what they have learned and how they have reached their answer.
76. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully satisfies statutory requirements. The National Numeracy Strategy is effectively implemented. Numeracy is developed appropriately in other subjects. For example, through measuring the growth of plants in science; use of time-lines in history; using co-ordinates and collecting data to create graphs for various aspects of geography; accurate measurement in design and technology; and learning and using number-rhymes in Years 1 and 2.
77. The leaderships and management of the subject are effective. Teaching and learning are well supported by thorough planning for their development. The headteacher effectively monitors the subject by observing lessons and discussing strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers' planning is checked weekly and resources are satisfactorily maintained. Resources are adequate for the effective delivery of the curriculum. Weaknesses highlighted in the last report have been effectively addressed. For example, a scheme of work has been developed and mathematics is appropriately linked to support other subjects across the curriculum, while the use of information and communication technology is well planned in the subject.

SCIENCE

78. The standard of current work in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 1 and 2 is average overall. Standards are the same as the previous inspection. The substantial majority of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the relevant national level for their respective ages in each of the attainment targets forming part of the National Curriculum; this is broadly consistent with the typical school nationally. Much of the work recorded in pupils' books in Years 3 to 6, however, is very limited in scope and is often of poor quality. The work completed using computers is an exception to this finding as it is generally of good quality. The evidence to support the judgements about pupils' attainment comes from lesson observations and from talking to pupils about their work. In discussions, and when actively engaged in experimental work, the pupils demonstrate the expected knowledge and skills, with several pupils showing exceptionally good levels of application. A comparison of current attainment with attainment when aged seven shows that pupils are extending their knowledge and skills annually by nationally expected amounts and that their long-term progress, or achievement, is satisfactory overall.
79. In the Years 3 to 6 class, about 90 per cent of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected national level for their respective ages. All of the oldest age groups have a typical understanding of fair testing and the younger age groups can carry out investigations with help and guidance. For example, during their experiments the older pupils realised that the sugar substitute was taking longer to dissolve each time they repeated the test because the water was cooling. To check this out, they obtained a thermometer and started to measure the temperature of the water and found that their hypothesis was correct. To make subsequent tests fair, they kept the water temperature constant. Eventually, they presented their findings using tables and charts. These skills, including making predictions, forming hypotheses, controlling variables, repeating experiments, using measurements and starting to take account of emerging patterns are fully consistent with the standard expected by the end of Year 6. That the majority of these pupils are one or two years younger shows a satisfactory degree of high attainment.
80. In discussions, the Years 5 and 6 pupils showed that they have satisfactory knowledge of life processes and living things; materials and their properties; and physical processes. For example, all of them could identify and locate major organs of the human body such as heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys. They were very knowledgeable about their current topic, explaining how to separate materials by filtering, putting into solutions, or, in the case of iron filings, by using a magnet. Using the correct terminology, they could explain that sugar dissolves in water and then returns to a crystalline structure when dried. They had a basic knowledge of forces but were less confident here because the topic was covered some time ago.
81. In Years 1 and 2, the work in the subject this year has concentrated on materials and their properties and on physical processes though they have covered aspects of life processes and living things through their studies of texts in English. The pupils can sort materials according to various properties, such as natural and man-made, can test materials for strength and water resistance, and explain how to keep some elements of the test the same so as to be fair. They can use light sensors linked to computers to measure the brightness of different torches, write conclusions and, with assistance, produce graphs of the results. When experimenting with forces, they could conclude that a marble rolled further when the ramp was steeper, repeating their tests to check for accuracy. In an English lesson, the pupils demonstrated very good knowledge of the life cycle of a butterfly and used the correct terminology when referring to the different stages. All of the knowledge exemplified is consistent with the level of attainment expected of a typical seven-year-old by the end of Year 2.
82. The teaching is good overall but should place greater emphasis on recorded work in Years 3 to 6. In a good lesson in the class containing Years 3 to 6, all of the pupils gained very worthwhile practical experience in testing and investigating solids and liquids, reflecting the teachers effective planning and teaching. The teacher clearly and efficiently shared the purpose of the lesson with the pupils at the start and this helped them see the relevance of the work and gave them confidence that the targets could be achieved. The teacher's questions and explanations were very skilful. The pupils became enthusiastic and fully engaged intellectually. Pupils' comments were handled very constructively, demonstrating the teacher's good subject knowledge. Humour was well used to establish good working relationships and maintain interest. The bulk of the lesson was appropriately given to investigation and experimentation, with the tasks chosen specifically to meet the varying curricular needs of the different year groups.
83. Leadership and management are broadly satisfactory but should give more priority to improving the quality of pupils' recorded work. Curriculum planning is satisfactory and is based on current national guidance. Attainment is assessed regularly and this is good practice. Resources are good. Effective use is made of information and communication technology.

ART AND DESIGN

84. Standards throughout the school are above average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Almost all of the pupils are working at the nationally expected level for their age and a significant number of them exceed the relevant expectation. Achievement over time is good. Almost all of the pupils make or exceed the annual amount of progress that is expected nationally. There is ample scope in lessons for high attaining pupils to excel. Pupils with special educational needs do well; the emphasis on practical work enables them to explore ideas and express themselves effectively and to gain considerably in confidence.
85. In a good lesson in Years 3 to 6, all of the pupils showed a well-developed knowledge of the artist Matisse and knew other famous artists. They were able to explore and compile visual information from a study of the shape of twigs. They had completed detailed and accurate observational drawings of branches and twigs in a sketchbook. From these drawings, and applying their knowledge of other materials, they were able to emulate the natural twig shapes, forms, and colours very successfully in a collage. They were able to talk about their work, sharing their thoughtful observations and ideas using technical vocabulary, and were very willing to adapt and improve their work based on the comments of their teacher and others. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the pupils showed considerable interest and creativity when weaving with different materials. They understood the process and showed appropriate dexterity. Different starting points were used, including weaving, using chicken wire and different fabrics. The pupils collaborated very effectively to finish the task. The knowledge and skills demonstrated by these examples are fully consistent with national expectations for the end of both Year 6 and Year 2 respectively. As many of the pupils exhibiting these skills are one or more years younger, this shows that attainment for a sizeable number of pupils is relatively high.
86. The teaching is of good quality throughout. Planning and preparation are thorough, with the bulk of the time in lessons rightly devoted to practical work. Lessons make good use of shared methods at the beginning to tell pupils about famous artists, explain specific techniques, and demonstrate skills and methods. The shared work is well judged in length, leaving pupils plenty of time to explore and develop ideas through practical work. During activities, the teaching is properly focused on the development of skills and the improvement of techniques.
87. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is adequately planned, leading to interesting and motivating lessons. Annual assessments using National Curriculum level criteria are used; this is good practice. Resources are sufficient in quality, quantity, and range.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. The attainment of the substantial majority of pupils is in line with the national expectations for their age; overall, standards in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 1 and 2 are average. Progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to their peers. Due to the timetable, no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. Judgements are made from the examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' past work on display, on the one lesson seen in Years 3 to 6, together with discussions with pupils and the headteacher. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvement is satisfactory overall.
89. In Year 1, pupils have appropriate experiences in creating repeated patterns through looking at textiles from different cultures, while in Year 2, pupils make good use of a graphics program on the computer to create their designs. In Years 3 and 4, pupils design a jack-in-a-box, while those in Years 5 and 6 design a dragon's head. In all cases, the pupils identify the materials they need to make their designs. These assignments require the pupils to measure accurately, for example, to make wooden frames. Safety issues are clearly emphasised and the pupils handle tools competently and safely. They are effectively taught the different skills required for using the tools. In a lesson in Years 3 to 6, pupils watched carefully how to use a saw and then confidently made an attempt. In discussion with pupils, it was seen that they understand the processes of designing, selecting materials, making and discussing improvements. They are articulate in their explanations about the work they have done in previous years.

90. The teaching is good; it has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and their enjoyment of the subject, and they talk enthusiastically about it. In the lesson seen in Years 3 to 6, the pupils were well managed and cooperated well as they worked. These good opportunities for collaboration effectively underpin their social development. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils in the class. This is achieved through focused support either from the teacher or the teaching assistants in the class.
91. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The scheme of work closely follows the local authority's guidelines, which ensure that skills are built upon year by year and that there is continuity and appropriate progression across the school. However, assessment opportunities are underdeveloped. Resources are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

92. The attainment of the substantial majority of pupils is close to nationally expected levels in both subjects; standards are average overall and pupils make satisfactory progress. The picture is similar to the last inspection. No lessons in Years 3 to 6 in either subject were available for observation because of timetable arrangements, or in history in Years 1 and 2. From the one geography lesson seen, it is not possible to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching. The judgement on attainment in both subjects is based on evidence collected from scrutiny of pupils' previous work in books and on display, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to their peers. The more able pupils bring a good level of general knowledge to lessons and are appropriately challenged.
93. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are gaining an appropriate understanding of the past and the present through finding clues in pictures and contrasting old and new objects, such as shoes and swimming costumes. They are beginning to follow a time-line and, from their current studies, to recognise the changes in swimwear over the years. They extend their understanding of chronology through the study of events and famous people from the past. For example, they learn about Guy Fawkes and sequence the events leading up to his gunpowder plot. The reading for information and the writing make a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills in literacy. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils have satisfactory knowledge of Britain in the 1960's, recognise, and talk articulately about the changes that have taken place since that period. Well-prepared visits effectively enrich the subject. For example, a discussion with the pupils produced animated responses regarding a very effective visit to a local museum to find out about the Ancient Egyptians. They were keen to talk about the stimulating experience and their enjoyment of the visit, which effectively contributes to their spiritual and cultural development.
94. In geography, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 have satisfactory knowledge of the immediate vicinity of the school. They can identify what is needed to make the local area safe; look at road signs and symbols; and collect information to see how many vehicles pass the school. With this information, they can create a graph on the computer. They appropriately study Sri Lanka and consider in what sort of homes people there live. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have satisfactory knowledge of mountain regions, from the Lake District in Years 3 and 4 to those farther away in the Alps and Andes in Years 5 and 6. Discussion with the pupils, show that they have gained much from their studies and can talk knowledgeably about the different ways of life in these regions.
95. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support the subject. For example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced a slide show using a Power-Point presentation. They successfully gathered all their information about mountain areas, put this on to the computer, and introduced animated special effects. In addition, they access information about their projects from the Internet. The curricular planning is satisfactory. The schemes of work, which use national guidelines, successfully support the teachers' planning and ensure continuity and progression throughout the school. Assessment opportunities are underdeveloped in both subjects. Resources are adequate and meet the demands of the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. Standards are average and progress is satisfactory; the evidence is limited. Separate lessons in the subject are not timetabled and all teaching and learning is integrated into other subjects. No direct teaching was

seen but a few pupils were observed using computers during lessons in other subjects. Current standards are broadly the same as at the previous inspection.

97. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 talk readily about using computers and show a willingness to turn to them to help solve problems. For example, in a science lesson in this age group, pupils investigating solutions thought that water temperature was a variable and sought to test this out by using sensors linked to a computer. In work in geography, pupils in Years 3 to 6 used computer skills to construct a graphics display with Power-Point software and present their findings. To complete this project, they were able to search the Internet for information and create animated special effects. The product was finished to a high standard and demonstrated a range of knowledge and skills consistent with those expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of the keyboard and can enter and edit text efficiently for their age. In a good geography lesson in Years 1 and 2, the pupils entered data collected from a survey of journeys to school and produced graphs. Their knowledge of the program and their keyboard skills were appropriate for their age.
98. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. All teachers build the use of computers into their planning and have adequate computer skills themselves. Curricular planning is satisfactory. The yearly, termly, and weekly planning shows appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study, including adequate provision for control technology. Information and communication technology is used widely to support learning in other subjects. The proportion of computers to pupils is better than the national average. Good use is made of laptop computers to provide flexibility and supplement the desktop computers when necessary. The quality and range of programs is sufficient for the curriculum to be taught in full.

MUSIC

99. Standards throughout the school are average and progress is satisfactory. Standards are the same as at the previous inspection. A specialist teacher visits the school once a week to teach the curriculum. The subject skills of other teachers are limited and so little music is taught outside the lessons taken by the visiting teacher. The lesson seen in Years 3 to 6 did not involve pupils in making music and so evidence of their singing, composing, and playing of instruments is limited.
100. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 recognise that music serves different purposes. For example, they know that carols and hymns are linked with praise and celebration; that rock and roll and country and western music create different moods and explore human experiences. When asked to list music suitable for hospital radio, they provided a large quantity of relevant titles and a suitable range, indicating wide taste and knowledge of musical types, including opera and classical. The singing in assembly of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is generally tuneful, showing satisfactory maintenance of melody. In a recorder club containing pupils from Years 3 and 4, the pupils involved showed mastery of a small number of basic notes, tonguing, and rhythm; the standard was satisfactory for their ages.
101. The singing of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is broadly consistent with expectations. They can vary pitch and tempo appropriately. The oldest pupils are showing a satisfactory sense of melody and can follow very simple notation. They know the names of several percussion instruments, such as clave, tambour, triangle, and drum. When playing, the older pupils showed they could maintain a steady rhythm, control the dynamics by varying the loudness of the sound, and are acquiring a vocabulary of technical words such as 'diminuendo'.
102. The teaching is satisfactory. The visiting teacher's subject knowledge is good and is leading to a relative richness in musical content during lessons. However, she has not had the same opportunity as the other teachers to get to know the pupils and, because of this, has not yet fully established a professional rapport with them resulting in short periods when small numbers of pupils are not effectively involved.
103. Curricular planning and provision are satisfactory. The planning for the lessons observed had been downloaded from the Internet. The one used in Years 3 to 6 did not including sufficient performing and composing to be fully consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study but was relevant in terms of appraising and listening. Leadership and management of the subject are left mainly in the hands of the specialist teacher, which is adequate but limits other staff from adding to the curriculum and broadening the provision. Resources are satisfactory in quantity and range.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. Standards are average and the same as at the previous inspection. The school lacks a hall and this significantly limits the extent to which the National Curriculum programmes of study can be taught in full. It has also limited the inspection evidence. The small amount of evidence in Years 3 to 6 indicates average standards. No lessons were seen. Only swimming was planned during the inspection and the authority cancelled this lesson because of a maintenance problem at the local pool. Almost all of the older pupils were observed at playtimes when playing football and using the permanent outdoor climbing equipment. The ball-control skills of the older boys when passing, dribbling, tackling, and shooting with a football are broadly typical for their age. They show a suitable knowledge of the game and of tactics when playing. The girls used the climbing apparatus, demonstrating appropriate agility and willingness to explore the apparatus and what their bodies can do.
105. One outdoor lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in these year groups can stretch, run, and move in different ways, following closely the instructions of the teacher. They can work effectively with a partner, remembering, reproducing, and exploring simple actions. They can throw and catch a beanbag with satisfactory accuracy and control. These are some of the skills expected of the typical seven-year-old by the end of Year 2.
106. There is insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching. The one lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory. The pupils were kept physically active throughout and this good characteristic helps with their general level of fitness. They explored and developed specific skills adequately, with sufficient time allowed for practice and improvement. Coaching of individuals was good and the lesson introduced game situations that became competitive and challenging as well as promoting collaboration and teamwork.
107. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The headteacher and his staff try hard to compensate for the lack of a hall. They use the outdoor facilities as best they can, arrange for regular swimming lessons, and use residential visits and visits to nearby centres for outdoor adventurous sports such as dry-slope skiing, sailing, and canoeing. An adventure playground has been built on the playing field with the help of parents and this is a good resource. Small apparatus, including bats and balls, is plentiful and generally of good quality. Despite these sensible efforts to play to school strengths, the lack of a hall is significantly limiting provision for physical education, gymnastics in particular, and all those with governance of the school should endeavour to provide suitable indoor facilities as soon as funding allows.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Standards are average. They have been maintained since the last inspection. The majority of pupils attain the standards expected in the locally agreed programme of work for Suffolk schools. Judgements are based on additional evidence that has been obtained from discussion with the headteacher, scrutiny of the teachers' planning and discussion with a sample of pupils from Years 3 to 6. No written work was available for scrutiny in the Years 3 to 6 class and very little from Years 1 and 2.
109. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the major world religions. An appropriate emphasis is given to the study of Christianity. The pupils are acquiring a suitable understanding of the depths of feelings that can be expressed through stories and metaphors and from this to discover a little more about themselves and the humanity we all share. The teacher's sensitive handling of pupils' thoughts and feelings give them confidence to say how they feel. Pupils in the infant class recognise that stories can have morals and after listening attentively to a familiar tale they suggest that, "*You should mean what you say,*" "*You should not tell lies,*" and "*Don't trick people.*" Religious festivals in the Christian calendar, such as Harvest, Christmas, and Easter make a positive contribution to their learning. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in religious, moral and social understanding.
110. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers initiate good discussions with and between pupils and make skilful use of questioning to encourage them to think about what is being discussed. The pupils remain focused on a topic, which results in their being well behaved and attentive during lessons: they listen well to the discussions and the contributions of others. Teachers use the end of each lesson well to review what has been learnt and to assess the progress that has been made. The supportive themes

planned for collective worship and the lessons planned for personal, social and health education successfully reinforce pupils' understanding and their spiritual, social and moral development. These make a good contribution to religious education. Pupils' individual needs are met and the teachers' caring approach builds up pupils' confidence and self esteem. The teaching of religious education contributes to pupils' literacy skills through writing sentences in Year 2 about the affects of their actions on others. For example, one pupil wrote, *"If somebody is crying you can help them."*

111. The subject is suitably managed. The school has developed a whole-school scheme of work to support the teachers' planning and to ensure that pupils build on what they know and can do as they move from year to year. This scheme takes appropriate account of the locally agreed programme of work for Suffolk schools. Information and communication technology appropriately supports religious education.