

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BARROW CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124690

Headteacher: Mr J Gibson

Reporting inspector: Mr J Heap  
18824

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 September 2002

Inspection number: 248617

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Colethorpe Lane Barrow Bury St Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP29 5AU
Telephone number:	01284 810 223
Fax number:	01284 810 223
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Raine
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Registered inspector	English Science Geography History Physical education English as an additional language Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9957	S Watts	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?
18370	K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Barrow Church of England (VC) Primary School serves pupils aged four to nine years from a social background that shows few signs of deprivation. Most pupils live in the village or in nearby villages, but some come from further afield, including the nearest large town of Bury St Edmunds. There are 116 pupils on roll: 59 boys and 57 girls and the school is much smaller than the average primary school in England and Wales. The role has increased significantly in recent years. The majority of pupils are white and the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority families is well below the national average. Seventeen pupils (15 per cent) are on the list of special educational needs and this is below the national average. One pupil (one per cent) has a statement of special educational needs and this is below the national average. There is a range of special needs and most involve moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural or multi-sensory impairments. The proportion of pupils (five per cent) entitled to a free school meal is much lower than the national average. The levels of attainment of children entering the reception class are mixed, but generally they are average. There are five classes in the school and each caters for a single age group. A recent development has been the reduction in the amount of time the headteacher teaches a class; now stands at two days per week.

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

This is an effective, happy and developing school. Its strengths far outweigh the areas for improvement and this is recognised by many parents. Overall, pupils achieve well and attain the standards that they should. Pupils' attitudes to school and the way they develop personally and form relationships are very good. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Overall, the school's provision and practices ensure that that each pupil benefits equally from what the school offers. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory, with areas for development. The school provides good value for money.

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

- By the age of nine, pupils' attainment and achievement are good, overall.
- Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.

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

- At the age of seven, standards in writing are not high enough.
- There are weaknesses in the management of the majority of subject co-ordination.
- There are inadequate learning resources in information and communication technology, history, geography and the library.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in December 1997. In relation to the key issues identified, there has been:

- good improvement in the attainment of seven-year-olds;
- a satisfactory and successful revision of the headteacher's teaching commitment, that has allowed him to be much more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and standards;
- the role of subject co-ordinators in English and mathematics has been developed well, but in other subjects there are areas for further improvement;
- satisfactory improvement in development planning;
- good improvement in financial management and control;
- good development of the governing body's role.

The overall quality of teaching has improved satisfactorily. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	C	B	C
writing	D	E	C	D
mathematics	D	E	B	D

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

In relation to the national test results for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards were average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics when compared to all schools. In comparison with similar schools results were average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. Proportions of pupils gaining the higher than average Level 3 were average in reading, above average in mathematics and well above average in writing. Early indications are that results in 2002 were similar, except in writing where none of the pupils achieved Level 3. Girls are doing better than boys in mathematics. Overall, the schools trend of results is inconsistent, but generally upwards.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards of the seven-year-olds are generally in line with national expectations. However, there are higher standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and art. Numeracy standards are higher than literacy standards because there are too few opportunities to use literacy skills across the curriculum. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about physical education.

By the age of nine, standards seen during the inspection are above expectations in English, mathematics and art and design and in line with expectations in science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology and music. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about physical education, however, all pupils are confident in the swimming pool and the majority reach the standard for 11 year olds by the age of nine.

Overall, pupils are achieving at least the standards expected and those with special educational needs are making good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. This is due particularly to the challenging targets set for them in their individual education plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen, enthusiastic and like their school very much.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority of pupils are very well behaved, but a very small minority occasionally disrupt lessons to the detriment of their own learning. There has been one exclusion in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Good. The attendance rate is above the national average. Unauthorised absences were low last year.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
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.*

Overall, teaching is good. All lessons were at least satisfactory and 16 per cent were very good or better.

In the Reception Year the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The overall strengths are teachers' very good knowledge and understanding and their very strong emphasis on the basic skills. Expectations are high and the children are managed very well.

In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of English and mathematics is good because the teachers are implementing the national strategies well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for extended writing. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of subjects. However, occasionally expectations are unclear in the lesson planning and management and control are just adequate. This leads to pupils learning less than they ought to because they do not produce enough work and at a slower pace.

The strengths in Years 3 and 4 are the effective management of pupils and the use of accurate judgements of attainment to check progress and assist forward planning. Pupils learn well because they are interested in what they do and have a clear view of their own learning.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, overall. Their needs are met well, mainly because the match of task to individual is usually effective. They make good progress in relation to their prior learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well. Provision is effectively enriched by activities outside lessons and the support provided by the community. Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Learning is well supported within the classroom. Teachers and classroom assistants use independent education plans effectively to promote pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision makes a significant contribution to pupil's very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships and promotes the view of the school as a large 'family'. Particularly strong is the excellent provision for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are good. The management of the school are vigilant on safety matters, but there are a few that remain difficult to resolve. Assessment procedures and practices are good, and these are adequately used to guide curricular planning.
Relationship with parents	Good. Parents' views about the school are positive. The quality of information for parents is good. Parents make an effective contribution to the life of the school and their child's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, satisfactory. The headteacher is a strong leader who provides an impressive example in his teaching, Monitoring and evaluation have improved, but the role of subject co-ordinator has areas for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Strong support for management. Positive and open approach that enables them to be effective 'critical friend', most particularly in financial matters.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The priorities for development are appropriate. A range of effective measures has been introduced to judge pupils' work, the quality of teaching and to check performance in national tests.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Grants are used well for their designated purpose. A careful check is made by governors on income and expenditure. The school has sound measures to ensure the efficient funding of services and resources.

Overall, the accommodation is good. However, recent improvements have reduced significantly the hard-play area. Staffing levels support teaching well throughout the school. There are inadequacies in the resources for several areas of learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The progress that their children are making.</li> <li>• The good standard of behaviour.</li> <li>• The good quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• The expectation of the child to work hard.</li> <li>• The closeness of the home/school relationship.</li> <li>• The effective leadership and management.</li> <li>• The way the school helps their child become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their child's progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Overall, inspectors agree with the majority of positive comments. The amount and quality of the homework given to pupils are satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, standards are above national expectations and pupils' achievement is good by the time they leave the school as nine-year-olds. However, the attainment of seven year olds is in line with expectations, mainly because higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should, most particularly in the quality and range of their writing. The initial judgements of children's levels of attainment on entering Reception are average and children achieve soundly. By the time they leave the Reception year, the majority of children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and emotional development.
2. Standards in the 2001 national tests were average in writing, and above average in reading and mathematics when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools reading results were average; writing and mathematics results were below average. Proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, were average in reading, above average in mathematics and well above average in writing. Teacher assessments in science were well below average. Over three years, results in reading exceeded the national average, but fell below average in writing and mathematics. The results in 2001 show improvement, with all subjects exceeding the national average. Girls are doing significantly better than boys in mathematics. National trends have remained steady and in comparison the school's trends have been inconsistent, although there is a general improvement. The number of pupils who take the test is relatively small and this means that there is a need for caution in the interpretation of the results. Early indications from the results of the 2002 national tests show a similar picture to those gained in 2001, although none of the pupils managed to gain the higher Level 3 in writing.
3. Overall, standards of work seen by the age of seven are in line with national expectations. These standards represent satisfactory achievement for the majority of pupils. Those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in individual education plans. Attainment is above national expectations in mathematics and art and design and in line with expectations in most of the other subjects. Standards in physical education could not be judged because of insufficient evidence.
4. By the age of nine, standards of work seen during the inspection are above expectations in English, mathematics and art and design. Standards are in line with expectations in most of the other subjects, the exception is physical education where there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement.
5. In English, standards in speaking, listening and reading are above expectations. Pupils listen attentively and converse easily on a range of topics. They enjoy reading and have strong basic skills, particularly in their use of letter sounds to build unfamiliar words. Older pupils build effectively on their skills, knowledge and understanding and read challenging texts well. Most have detailed knowledge of their books and make imaginative predictions about the progress of the story. Library skills are adequate, but achievement is less than in other areas. Standards in writing are in line with expectations at age seven; however higher attaining pupils do not achieve the standards they ought to. Nine year olds have above expected attainment because the

range of writing is greater and the expectations are higher, particularly in areas such as the basic skills as handwriting, spelling and grammar.

6. In mathematics, seven year olds have a good grasp of number to 100. They solve simple problems, using addition and subtraction. Pupils recognise an adequate number of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They investigate number and recognise sequences, such as odd and even digits. Overall, achievement for the majority of pupils is good. By the age of nine, pupils have securely built on their skills, knowledge and understanding. They know the value of digits in numbers to 1000, solve problems that now include multiplication, division, area and perimeter. Good links exist with investigatory work in science, when measuring temperature. Again, achievement is good and all evidence points to an overall improvement in standards.
7. In science, seven year olds are beginning to recognise that they can investigate aspects of human phenomena through simple experiments. They have a clear understanding of how senses provide information and through which organs the human receives this information. Most know that materials have similarities and differences and that forces make the materials react in various ways. By the age of nine, pupils know the characteristics of a fair test. They have a good working knowledge of the human skeleton and which materials provide the human body with the most effective protection. Investigations are carried out carefully and there is accurate and well presented recording of findings.
8. In information and communication technology, seven year olds have sound basic skills. They know how to word process, change fonts and exit a program. Good progress is being made in accessing the Internet to find information. By the age of nine, pupils have built on their skills well, particularly in word processing. They competently use the Internet for sending and receiving information and successfully combine text and images to produce multimedia presentations. Although links with other subjects such as music, literature and mathematics are established, there is scope for further development, most particularly in finding information for a variety of topics in geography, history and religious education.
9. Standards in literacy are developing soundly in Years 1 and 2, and development is good in Years 3 and 4. There are good examples of pupils finding information for history, geography and religious education topics. This leads to some good writing, particularly in Year 4, about characters such as the local monk, Brother Jocelyn. In science, writing skills are used and developed well when pupils describe an investigation, such as measuring force. The use of numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. In science, there is a lot of linear measuring and using graduated measures, for temperature and volume of fluids. Most classrooms have a timeline for the period of history they are studying.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good. The vast number of pupils behave very well but a small minority occasionally disrupt lessons to the detriment of their own work and occasionally others. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic in what they are doing and generally listen and act on what they are asked to do. All pupils are involved in the rules pertaining to behaviour and understand what is expected of them. Exclusions are rare although last year there was one pupil excluded. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their learning and personal development by teachers and learning support assistants. Progress is carefully

monitored and learning targets are adjusted as appropriate to take account of these pupils' achievements.

11. Parents comment that their children are eager to come to school. This is evident when the bell rings to go into school, they do so quickly and happily. Pupils greet visitors and are happy to talk with them and are courteous to both adults and other children. They enjoy showing their work and often go into the secretary to show her what they have done. The school expects pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. There is the opportunity for pupils to voice their opinions over a particular issue through discussion. Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils and also between the pupils themselves. Staff know the pupils well and this is evident in registration. There is an atmosphere of happiness and joy in the school, which indicates the positive attitudes of the pupils and encourages learning. Pupils are expected to share with others and they help each other if any of them are upset or hurt. Within assembly pupils were able to explore their feelings and listened with rapt attention and wonder as they heard about the fruits of harvest.
12. Pupils' attendance is good at 95.9 per cent, with absences due to illness. On one of the days the inspectors were in school every child was present and this included the part-time pupils. This level of attendance has remained fairly constant since the last inspection.

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

13. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, over their whole time at the school, pupils achieve well. This is a satisfactory improvement on the quality of teaching reported at the time of the last inspection. The amount of good, and better teaching has increased by about a half and there is no unsatisfactory teaching compared to last time when six per cent was unsatisfactory and located in Years 1 and 2.
14. Teaching and learning in the Reception Year are good. The significant strengths are:
  - teacher's very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and young children, that lead to the children acquiring the necessary basic skills, knowledge and understanding, most particularly in early literacy and numeracy;
  - a framework of good, informed planning exists.

In the best lessons, there is good partnership between teacher and classroom assistant. Teachers' expectations are high and this promotes children gaining and maintaining very good levels of concentration, interest, independence and behaviour.

15. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. However, there are a couple of areas that require some improvement, even though they are satisfactory. The two areas for development are teachers' expectations and the management of pupils. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough in:
  - the amount of writing and overall presentation. Consequently, the higher attaining pupils do not reach the advanced levels of attainment to which they are capable, particularly in the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation;
  - the occasional lapses in behaviour of a small minority of pupils, most particularly in Year 2.

This leads to pupils losing concentration and being less productive personally and reducing the productivity of others in the class. Overall, teachers' planning is good and appropriate focus is placed on developing basic skills, particularly in reading,

mathematics and science. Teachers are strong in teaching letter sounds that aid pupils to read unfamiliar words. A variety of teaching methods are employed, which include discussion, following exemplars in subjects such as physical education and individual and group work. The impact of support staff is important in making this variety of methods work. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, support staff were very well briefed about questioning and the pupils gave thoughtful, if sometimes incorrect, answers. Nevertheless, they responded well to prompts by the adults. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well because they judge pupils' levels of attainment at regular intervals and notes are taken which form the basis of future lesson content.

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 and 4. There are no shortcomings in the teaching and this goes a long way towards making up the relative shortfalls in Year 2. For example, the broadening opportunities for pupils' writing, the expectation of higher standards in relation to presentation is successful in developing skills and attitudes, and pupils' behaviour is well managed. In the best lessons, the planning ensures brisk pace, a variety of teaching methods and equal access for all. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson the mental starter was quick fire, challenging and consolidated basic number skills. Pupils were very well supported and the individual education plans for those with learning difficulties guided the good support staff effectively. In the same class, the history lesson included the very good use of an actor playing the part of a local medieval monk. The actor interested the pupils completely and concentration levels were very high and all of this led to good questioning from the pupils. For instance:
- What did you eat and drink?
  - How did you grow herbs?
- Furthermore, moral development was promoted when a pupil asked why the knots on the monk's belt were there and had not been untied. The answer was correctly concerned with how right it was to maintain commitments and how wrong it was to give them up when circumstances did not suit.
17. Overall, the quality of marking is satisfactory. It is strongest in Years 3 and 4, where comments are more evaluatory and informal targets are set. Throughout the school, formal targets are now set either individually, or for groups. These targets focus pupils on improving skills. Pupils report that they find the marking to be helpful.
18. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to extend work in English and mathematics. This is particularly strong in reading and the learning of multiplication facts.
19. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and music. It is satisfactory in physical education. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement in information and communication technology and geography. However, the teaching of writing in Years 1 and 2 is only satisfactory, because of shortcomings in the development of basic skills and in the lack of opportunities to write across the curriculum.
20. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and occurs most often in groups within the classroom. Occasionally small groups are withdrawn for specific, more focused teaching, for example when following the reading recovery programme. Teachers and learning support assistants know pupils well and are sensitive to their particular needs. Teaching is well planned to ensure pupils make the best possible progress.

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

21. The school's curriculum is effective in promoting the good progress of pupils. The breadth, balance, relevance and positive enrichment through visits and activities outside of school time have been maintained since the previous inspection. Arrangements for the teaching of personal, health and social education are good. The science curriculum provides opportunities for teachers to deal sensitively with sex education and the possible harmful effects of drugs.
22. Curriculum planning is better because teachers work closely as a team and share a more corporate view of what is taught throughout the school. The national frameworks for literacy and numeracy have added good structure to planning in those areas. National subject guidance is used effectively to plan some subjects such as design and technology, history and geography. In other subjects, such as art and design and music, the school has successfully incorporated schemes which reflect more directly the pupils' needs and the aims of the school.
23. The curriculum is fully accessible to all groups of pupils. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities are integrated very well into the school and their needs are fully supported. Those who are on the school's register for special educational needs are given good support by teachers and classroom assistants. These pupils have full access to the school's curriculum. The help of outside agencies is sought where pupils have specific additional needs in order to achieve full access to learning. Individual education plans provide a basis for ensuring pupils' learning needs are satisfied.
24. Numeracy skills are taught well. Throughout the school there is a good focus on basic mental and written calculation. There are planned opportunities for pupils to apply mathematical skills such as data handling to studies in science and geography for example. Nevertheless, there is scope for broadening the use of mathematics and information and communication skills even further to include a wider range of subjects. Pupils learn basic reading skills well, most particularly the use of letter sounds to build words. There is a satisfactory emphasis on the teaching of spelling and vocabulary. However, there is too little writing across the curriculum, whereby pupils can be expected to develop their ideas and express them clearly using the language specific to that subject.
25. Pupils' learning is enriched by a good range of activities outside of lesson times. Seasonal activities including soccer, netball, quick cricket and swimming help pupils improve their physical skills and foster their interest in those sports. There are also opportunities for chess, pottery, singing and information technology through the 'Newspaper Club' to help develop pupils' interests and enthusiasm. Learning in history and geography is supported through visits to places of interest such as West Stow, the British Museum or York. The school also arranges for visitors to come to school to contribute to learning in history, art and design, literature and dance.
26. Work undertaken in partnership with the community and other organisations adds to the quality of provision. The school is developing good links with the residents of local sheltered accommodation. The use of Bury St. Edmunds sports centre ensures that physical education continues throughout the year and there are very strong links with the local church. A local agricultural research unit welcomes pupils who visit to find out about its work. This contributes well to pupils' learning in science about plant growth. There are very good links with local playgroups who prepare children for their

Reception year in school. Effective liaison with the middle school, particularly over curriculum organisation ensures pupils' learning is not interrupted during their change of school.

27. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents a strengthening of provision since the last inspection.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good and benefits not only from the significant input from the local parish church, but also from the influences and teaching provided by the school. During assemblies pupils listen to stories which deal with clear moral issues and encourage them to reflect on the values of honesty and truthfulness. As a result pupils understand what is acceptable and what is not. Prayer and reflection feature strongly at the beginning of the day. In some classes moments of prayer bring the day to a calm and thoughtful close. During lessons and through displays of art work for example, pupils are encouraged to think about their feelings and emotions. Pupils are asked what they feel about a picture or piece of music. Sometimes they express their own feelings in writing, as in Year 3 when pupils shared with each other what makes them happy or worried. A further example was seen during a class discussion about fair play and the need for rules. Pupils shared their feelings with the class about what it feels like to be left out. Teachers encourage respect and tolerance, and demonstrate both in the way in which they respond sensitively and equally to pupils' needs. The celebration of achievements and just praise, help to increase pupils' self esteem, encouraging them to value their own qualities and those of others.
29. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Morality is firmly rooted in the ethos and expectations of the school, and fully reflects the school's success in establishing a climate in which pupils respect the differences in individuals. Pupils have clear understanding of what is right and wrong and behave consistently in accordance with the agreed code of conduct. Pupils have opportunities to express their views about moral issues as in Year 2, for example when discussing how best to respond to others who may be annoyed. Very good provision for moral development was seen in a Year 4 history lesson during which a visitor to the school, in the role of a medieval monk, talked to pupils about the importance of prayer, responsibility and tolerance within the strict daily order of monastic life.
30. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Teachers and support staff openly demonstrate the importance of teamwork and mutual support, and are excellent role models for the pupils. Many initiatives are planned whereby pupils have the opportunity to mix with different groups. For example there is an annual summer visit of pupils from another school to play chess, soccer, swim and share a picnic on the school field. Shared curriculum time in school when older pupils read or write stories with younger ones and discussion in class or assemblies highlight achievements to make a further contribution to pupils' social development. A sense of community is fostered through school outings, fund raising activities and by organising community assemblies for pupils and village residents. Pupils are required to make choices in lessons or to use the telephone or photocopying machine independently, when involved in projects. Recently pupils demonstrated their strong community spirit by drawing the attention of the local parish council to the need to clean up areas of the village. The school's action had a significant impact on the environment around the school.
31. Overall, the provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils gain a very good understanding of their own local cultural heritage. Visits to West Stow to study



Anglo-Saxon influences, local village studies and talking to older residents provide insights into changes over time. Pupils also learn traditional country dancing and have enjoyed performances from local dance troupes. The study of Judaism and Hinduism help pupils recognise the values of different faith cultures. The school also organises special Indian and Chinese food days for the pupils. Visitors are invited to school whenever possible to promote a better understanding of ethnic culture and traditions. For example, a parent came into school to teach pupils a Chinese song. On another occasion a visitor from Tanzania talked to pupils and showed some traditional African musical instruments. Pupils, staff and parents responded to this by organising class fund-raising events in order to help build a school in a Tanzanian village.

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

32. The pupils are well cared for and the arrangements for ensuring their health and safety and protection are good. However, there are issues pertaining to health and safety which have been brought to the attention of the headteacher and governors. There is a designated person responsible for child protection who has had the appropriate training and staff are well briefed as to the procedures to be followed. Pupils receive guidance from a police liaison officer and shown how to take care of themselves. The school liaises with other professionals to enable pupils to receive the support and help needed. The school ensures that it is a pleasant place for the children to attend and that they feel safe and secure. Health and Safety policies are in place as are fire regulations and safety audits, and risk assessments are carried out. A Governor has responsibility for regularly inspecting the premises. Fire drills take place regularly and are monitored. Teachers are aware of safety issues and this is explained where appropriate at the beginning of a lesson as for example in a physical education lesson, which was taking place in a classroom. Relationships are very good throughout the school, enabling pupils to develop confidence and independence.
33. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed regularly to make sure learning targets are relevant. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor pupils' daily progress. Teachers help build pupils confidence and self-esteem by ensuring that pupils are fully included in lessons.
34. The school has effective systems to promote good attendance and for monitoring pupils' absences. Registration is quick and efficient and complies with requirements. Behaviour is effectively monitored regularly. Staff work well with visiting specialists and use the expertise of other people to broaden their knowledge of the pupils.
35. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' levels of attainment as they progress through the school. These have been improved since the previous inspection. A range of tests in reading, spelling and mathematics as well as National Curriculum tests for seven year olds provide a clear profile of pupils' achievements. The data gathered is used appropriately:
  - to identify individual requirements, such as the need for early intervention to boost reading skills;
  - to set group targets, for example in mathematics to improve identified areas of weakness.Teachers give good support within the classroom by ensuring that work is matched accurately to pupils' different abilities. This is mainly achieved by using judgements of pupils' levels of attainment to set individual targets. Pupils on the school's register for special educational needs are supported well. Daily monitoring of progress by

teachers and learning support assistants enable appropriate learning objectives to be set for them. This helps them to progress well.

36. The arrangements to familiarise parents and children with the school before admission are very good and enables the school to visit the home as well as the children and parents visiting the school. Many transfer from nursery groups with which the school has good links. Arrangements when pupils transfer to middle school are effective and close co-operation with the Middle School enables continuous links to be maintained on curriculum matters. Overall procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and care are good.

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

37. The school maintains good links with parents and the views expressed both in the questionnaire and in discussions in the playground are very positive. The majority of parents were very pleased with the standards achieved together with the attitude of the staff and the values the school sets. The quality of reports from both the Governors and the school are good. Parents have the opportunity to meet with staff each term to discuss their children's progress and the school are always willing to discuss any difficulties. A small minority of parents expressed concern over homework. Inspectors judge that the arrangements for homework are satisfactory and that parents are adequately informed about this through homework diaries, thus enabling a two-way dialogue.
38. The Parent/Teachers Association raises significant amounts of money for the school and contributes well to pupils' learning, for instance by funding the covered teaching area adjacent to the Foundation Stage classroom. There are social events which may include the whole family, or individual people. There is a very strong community feeling in the school that is promoted by regular newsletters and the involvement in local issues such as road calming and the clearing of dog fouling.
39. Parents make an effective contribution to their children's education by helping in school with reading or going out with school visits. Parents are contacted as soon as there is cause for concern, and are kept fully informed about all appropriate procedures and their children's progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend reviews and contribute to the individual education plans.

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

40. Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection, but there have been improvements that have developed positively the effectiveness of the school. A key factor in this has been the reduction in the headteacher's teaching commitment.
41. The headteacher is able and experienced. He is a good leader for the school and promotes generally good standards of work and very good development of personality, both in the pupils and staff. He does this through fostering a supportive and happy environment and encouraging all to see themselves as part of a wider community. He provides an impressive example as a class teacher. His management skills are satisfactory and improving. Monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory and better than they were, particularly the observation of teaching in English and mathematics, and the analysis of standards. However, progress at involving co-ordinators in the wider aspects of managing resources and the monitoring are unsatisfactory. This is due to:
- the majority of co-ordinators not having time to observe teaching;

- most co-ordinators not having a budget to fund identified priorities;
  - there being no job descriptions in place for co-ordinators.
42. Development planning is detailed and most of the school's priorities are appropriately targeted. However, there are insufficient links between the school's aim to achieve high standards and the setting of carefully worked out targets for attainment. The overall plan benefits from a wide range of objectives and this has meant that the school has been able to progress on a satisfactory range of fronts.
43. Governors have developed well since the last inspection and their impact on the school is now satisfactory. The main improvements are:
- good involvement in and monitoring of financial matters;
  - satisfactory involvement in school development planning and monitoring of the curriculum;
  - a clear committee structure with well recorded meetings.
- Statutory responsibilities are met well and the Governing Body is well placed to increase its effectiveness further as relatively inexperienced members learn their roles fully.
44. Staffing levels in the school are good and this means that each class has a single age group. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by dedicated and trained staff. Although many of the important aspects of performance management are firmly in place, such as lesson observations, target setting and reviews; a significant weakness is the absence of job descriptions for teachers. It is difficult to see how a co-ordinator's performance can be measured, if their post is not clearly set out. Induction processes are adequate and the headteacher acts as mentor for new staff.
45. Financial management is good, the most recent local education authority audit report commends the progress made by the school. Day-to-day management of finances, longer term monitoring and strategic use of grants are effective. It is also worth noting that the parents have provided considerable extra resources that have helped to improve teaching and learning, most particularly the outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage.
46. The school has prudently budgeted over several years and this has meant that difficult financial decisions have been implemented and the state of the budget has generally improved. The school has sound principles for ensuring that value for money is achieved in its purchasing of supplies and services. However, previous difficulties have meant that there are inadequacies in the resources of several areas of the curriculum. For example:
- insufficient software for information and communication technology, most particularly to support mathematics;
  - a lack of up-to-date maps in geography and artefacts in history;
  - the library stock is too small for a school of this size.
47. The school benefits from good accommodation. The main advantage relates to the external green areas, which support the teaching of physical education and science. Plans are in place to build a new hall and this will alleviate the difficulties presented by a class being taught in the present hall. However, the improvements to the accommodation have also meant that the hard play area has been diminished to the point where it will soon become inadequate.

48. Management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator uses effectively the time when she is freed from her class to make sure documentation is kept up to date, consult parents and outside agencies, and monitor progress. Resources for special educational needs are satisfactory overall, but more use of computer programs to help pupils learn requires some development.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. Governors, headteacher and staff should:

- a) improve standards in writing for seven year olds by:
  - having higher expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar;
  - providing many more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.(paragraphs: 2, 5, 15, 19, 24, 71, 75 and 78)
- b) increase the opportunities to use information and communication technology skills in other subjects.  
(paragraphs: 80, 89, 95, 103 and 123)
- c) improve subject co-ordination by:
  - making responsibilities clear through the devising and writing of individual job descriptions;
  - providing all co-ordinators with time to observe teaching and analyse pupils' work;
  - giving co-ordinators a budget to fund identified priorities.(paragraphs: 41, 95, 99, 109 and 123)
- d) increase the level of resources in information and communication technology, history, geography and the library  
(paragraphs: 45, 80, 89, 109 and 114)

In the current school development plan, the school has appropriately identified the development of writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology as priorities and these are further supported by the detailed action plans drawn up by co-ordinators. Furthermore, job descriptions and the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum are also identified.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	20	7	0	0	0
Percentage	3	13	63	22	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	116
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	17

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	12	20

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	19	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (86)	95 (81)	85 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	8
	Girls	12	9	12
	Total	19	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (86)	75 (86)	100 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
86	1	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	23.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	253,069
Total expenditure	256,936
Expenditure per pupil	2,358
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,553
Balance carried forward to next year	14,686

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0

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	116
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	92	8	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	85	12	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	38	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	35	19	0	0
The teaching is good.	85	12	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	35	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	50	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	38	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	31	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	31	4	0	8

### Other issues raised by parents

Several comments about the good work that the school is doing and the effectiveness and approachability of the headteacher.

## **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 school has maintained the good provision for children in the Reception class. The recent national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum is well established, consequently children are provided with a good range of worthwhile activities across all recommended areas of learning. The school has improved significantly the facilities for outdoor activities. They are used well to support activities in all of the areas of learning.
51. The school's early judgements indicate that children's levels of attainment are about average for their age when they start school. Owing to good teaching and well planned activities they make steady progress overall and nearly all attain the targets expected of them by the end of Reception Year.
52. Overall, the teaching and learning in the Reception Year are good. The significant strengths are the teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and young children. This leads to the children acquiring the necessary basic skills, knowledge and understanding, most particularly in early literacy and numeracy. In the best lessons, there is good partnership between teacher and nursery nurse. All children are helped to understanding the importance of letter sounds when reading and the individual shape of letters. Furthermore, staff focus on the pupils accurately counting up to ten and ordering numbers. Teachers' expectations are high and this promotes children's gaining and maintaining very good levels of concentration, interest, independence and behaviour. In a good knowledge and understanding of the world session, the children used magnifiers to examine the surface of shells and were then asked to draw their findings. These strengths would not be possible without the framework of good, informed planning that exists.

#### **Personal, social, and emotional development.**

53. Overall, standards are at the expected level for their age. Many of the children come to school having had some pre-school experience, and are beginning to develop many of the expected social skills. They listen well and follow simple instructions and begin to show independence in their ability to carry out tasks. Most children are confident about leaving their carers and parents at the beginning of the day.
54. Children behave very well and work co-operatively because teachers expect it of them. Consistently high expectations, particularly when listening, are a strong feature of the effective teaching and a good basis for learning. Teachers make materials available to children, and teach them how to use scissors and other implements in order to encourage their independence. Adults are good role models, always treating the children and one another courteously. This helps children to develop their own trusting relationships. Children are encouraged to express a wider range of feelings or concerns for example when the local veterinary nurse shows them how to care for animals, or when caring for the flowers they grow in their garden. Children show an increasing willingness to take on responsibility because teachers encourage them to tidy up after activities and occasionally some do so without being asked. They learn to undress and dress themselves for physical education and follow daily routines well. Activities are planned in a climate of openness where children can share and learn from their similarities and differences. This is strengthened by stories and activities related to special festivals and celebrations such as the Chinese New Year.

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

55. Overall, standards of attainment are at the expected level. Children in the Reception class enjoy stories. They listen well when adults read to them and share story books with others at special times during the day. Overall, teaching is effective. Teacher and nursery assistants are good at encouraging children to talk about books, in order to improve their understanding and their communication skills. Traditional stories such as 'The Three Bears' are sometimes used to link areas of learning, giving reading more purpose. There is a good daily focus on the teaching of letter sounds, and teachers help children to think as writers by providing an area in the classroom with a range of pencils and paper where they can practise. Although many are still at the very early stages of writing when they start school, by the end of reception year they are able to write their names clearly and attempt simple statements such as 'I like a monkey'.
56. Some children are reluctant to speak aloud when they first start school. However, teachers provide good opportunities for speaking and work hard at building up children's confidence. When learning about loud and quiet voices for example, some children were able to overcome their inhibitions and recite 'Humpty Dumpty' quietly to the class. One boy showed remarkable confidence by going outside to shout the rhyme in a loud voice through the classroom window.

### **Mathematical Development**

57. This area of learning is taught well and all pupils achieve their learning goals by the end of the reception year. A few exceed their targets and begin to do work related to the National Curriculum. All can count reliably to at least 10 and recognise regular shapes. They understand mathematical terms such as lighter, heavier or bigger and smaller.
58. Teachers make mathematics interesting for children by linking it to everyday things. For example they talk about which day it is, and about which days come 'before' and 'after'. Learning to count is made meaningful when children make birthday cakes from dough and count the number of candles. There is a good selection of counting games and puzzles for children to play with. Teachers are good at finding mathematical opportunities in other areas of learning, for example talking about how much of each ingredient they need for baking or counting how many times they clap their hands when performing actions to a song.

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

59. Children have a sound general knowledge of the world around them when they start school. Teachers build successfully on those early experiences so that by the end of the reception children reach the levels of knowledge and understanding expected for their age.
60. Children learn to recognise and taste a variety of vegetables. Some show a developing awareness of different foods. A child sharing out a toy pizza in the role play area said he did not make pizza at home but, 'Dad makes a lovely pasta'. They learn the countries where different fruits come from, and grow their own plants in the garden during spring and summer.
61. Children are encouraged to explore the world through their senses. In a science activity children were blindfolded by the teacher and challenged to name the objects they could feel inside a bag and the pieces of fruit or vegetable which they tasted. Children enjoyed this activity, excited by the 'mystery' surrounding the task.

62. Children are beginning to approach computers and construction sets more confidently. They show increasing control of the mouse in selecting a colour from the icon bar to create pictures and join pieces of construction skilfully when building. Small toys are limited, however, so children do not have sufficient opportunities to use their imagination and make sense of everyday life. Their horizons are broadened when they talk about journeys, walk around the extensive school grounds to collect natural objects for a display and take part in enriching activities such as the visit to Banham Zoo.
63. Teaching in this area of learning is good because adults continually question children about what they are doing, encouraging them to work out what will happen next. Children are taught to select and use the tools they need safely.

#### **Physical Development**

64. Attainment is at the expected level and provision for children's physical development is satisfactory. There is now a partially covered, spacious outside area which allows a free-flow of activities from the classroom. Although there is a reasonable variety of wheeled toys which help children to develop the expected levels of co-ordination, there is lack of suitable climbing and large construction equipment readily accessible to the children.
65. Despite limited resources teachers work imaginatively and effectively with those available. There are opportunities for children to jump and balance during indoor dance lessons and they show appropriate awareness of others working in the space around them. Children handle a variety of moulding materials such as wet sand and dough and are taught to use a wide range of cutting and shaping tools to improve their manipulative skills and control.

#### **Creative Development**

66. Children progress steadily in this area of learning to reach their expected level by the time they leave reception. Teachers provide a good range of interesting experiences to help children's creativity. For example after talking about Robert Lang's 'Mud Hand Circle', they created large-scale patterns using their own foot prints.
67. Teachers set up role play areas where children can dress up or act out real life situations. Although children are seen enjoying the make-believe of 'looking after the baby' or 'making the tea', sometimes there are not enough adults available to model activities in order to stimulate children's thinking. As a result they do not gain as much as they can from the experience.
68. Children enjoy singing and gather an increasing repertoire of songs and rhymes, often recalling the words from memory. They join enthusiastically in singing games such as 'ring-a-ring of roses'.

## ENGLISH

69. Overall, attainment at the age of seven is at the nationally expected level and above expectations at the age of nine. These findings broadly reflect the results gained by pupils in the 2001 and 2002 national tests, and those reported at the last inspection. The main reason that attainment is not as high for seven year olds is the quality of writing, most particularly for higher attainers. Although the vast majority of pupils achieve the expected Level 2, too few have the higher skills of joined handwriting and accurate spelling of more complex words. Furthermore, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to write lengthy pieces in other subjects. Early indications of the 2002 national test results show that no pupils achieved the higher Level 3.
70. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs progress at rates similar to their peers. This is because pupils receive effective support from teachers and learning support assistants, most particularly in the development of basic skills.
71. Attainment in speaking and listening is above national expectations at ages seven and nine. Throughout the school, the vast majority of pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to each other in the classroom, in assemblies and, notably, in the playground. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, higher attaining pupils spoke confidently and provided reasons for their choices of high frequency words in the sentences they were constructing. Older pupils converse easily and confidently and read aloud with clarity and expression. In the whole class part of the Literacy Hour, all pupils listen well and offer opinions on a range of topics.
72. Attainment in reading is above expectations by the age of seven and nine. Pupils in Year 2 recognise many words on sight and competently use letter sounds to read a word that is proving difficult, usually because it has not been seen before. Most pupils are fluent and accurate readers who are developing expression and provide interesting commentaries on the books they are reading. Higher attaining pupils have adequate library skills and are beginning to recognise the uses of the Dewey system of classification. By the age of nine, pupils have continued to develop, and build on, their skills. The majority of pupils read challenging texts well. They have a wide range of words that they recognise and effective skills that help them read those words that are new to them. Many provide interesting detail about plot and characters, and their predictions about forthcoming events are often imaginative and always appear to be plausible. All pupils have favourite authors and explain in some detail why they like them, often by referring closely to the text of books. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to reading. Although library skills are generally adequate, pupils' achievements are slower than in other areas. This is mainly due to the limited scope of the school's library provision, particularly the range of available stock.
73. By the age of seven, attainment in writing is in line with national expectations. However, the standards for higher attaining pupils are not high enough owing to:
- basic skills, such as handwriting, spelling and grammar, not being of sufficiently high quality;
  - insufficient opportunities to write at length in other areas of the curriculum.
- Most pupils write in organised and clear styles that interest the reader. Simple spellings, punctuation and grammar are accurate. Handwriting is legible, printed and consistent in its size. However, the higher attaining pupils have not moved on to joined handwriting, nor do they write at sufficient length to use more complex spellings and grammatical structures.

74. By the age of nine, standards have risen to above expectations. The range of writing has improved and pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are much greater. The majority of pupils write well for a variety of audiences, have a good command of punctuation and a sufficiently broad range of vocabulary. Handwriting is mainly joined, legible and fairly fluent. Spelling is generally accurate and higher attaining pupils make occasional errors that are justifiable, such as "fertilizer" for 'fertilizer'. Punctuation is generally accurate and some pupils are developing well their use of direct speech.
75. Pupils' literacy skills are developing soundly in Years 1 and 2. The school places appropriate emphasis on pupils gaining good reading skills, particularly their ability to use letter sounds when working out words they do not know. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills to find and recall their information across a range of subjects. In Years 3 and 4, literacy skills are developed well. For example, writing is good and detailed in religious education, where higher attainers are encouraged to experiment with language. One pupil writing about the harvest wrote:  
"Prickly conkers looking like cactus."  
Some good examples of reading and writing are found in history, about the story of St. Edmund, and in geography about the Inuits.
76. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. These are similar findings to those of the last inspection, however, there is no unsatisfactory teaching in the younger classes. Throughout the school, the Literacy Hour is taught effectively, with planning and use of resources being particularly strong. Furthermore, the teaching of basic reading skills is strong. In the younger classes, lessons often begin with the good teaching of letter sounds and how they blend to make up a word. In Years 1 and 2, writing skills are taught adequately, but the expectations placed on the highest attainers are too low, most particularly in:
- handwriting and general presentation;
  - writing longer pieces that have a good structure and incorporate good basic skills;
  - the development of library skills.
77. Teaching is better in Years 3 and 4 because the programme has greater breadth, expectations are higher and work is linked together well. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils examine a text with the teacher and analyse the characters' traits. The teacher enabled the pupils to establish the meaning of the text quickly and made clear the goals for individual writing. As a result, pupils examined the individual characters closely and wrote about their preferences and particularly their least favourite. The reasons they gave were clear: "cruelty", "slyness" and the higher attaining pupils offered "self-centred".
78. Management of the subject is satisfactory. There are significant strengths in the monitoring of teaching and the effective implementation of the Literacy Hour. The co-ordinator recognises that the library provision is weaker than it ought to be, and he has made a good interim arrangement for having what stock they have in bookcases on the corridor. However, development planning does not fully pick up the need to improve writing skills, particularly for the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. Overall, the judging of pupils' levels of attainment is sound, but there is insufficient attention paid to the standards being achieved by higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is partly due to the marking being overly positive and lacking in useful analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Information and communication technology is



used satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4. However, there is little evidence of its gainful use in Years 1 and 2, even though there is some word-processing.

## MATHEMATICS

79. Standards in mathematics show an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 attainment is likely to be slightly higher than that expected for their age. This is supported by the above average attainment seen in the 2001 national tests. The school's unvalidated test results for 2002 confirm the sustained improvement overall. The school is aware of the difference in performance between girls and boys in 2001, and closer tracking and target setting in the last year has begun to eliminate that.
80. By the age of nine, attainment is likely to be slightly above expectations for that age. Standardised judgements of pupils' levels of attainment and achievement show that the school is beginning to sustain a rising trend in standards.
81. The school has worked hard to bring about these improvements. Planning and classroom practice is now embedded in the National Numeracy Strategy giving teachers a clearer 'whole school' view of expected achievements. Pupils' attainment is judged regularly, and their performance is analysed:
- to identify common strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum;
  - to set individual targets to raise pupils' achievements.
- The clear and well structured objectives set out in the national numeracy framework has enabled more effective teaching, particularly of basic numeracy skills.
82. Most pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of numbers to 100. They recognise the value of numbers and solve addition and subtraction problems involving two-digit numbers. They recognise sequences of odd and even numbers as well as multiples of 2, 5 and 10 using their understanding of number to solve problems such as rounding up or down to the nearest 10. Pupils recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and explore lines of reflective symmetry.
83. By the age of nine, most pupils have a secure grasp of number values to 1000 and use a variety of methods to solve addition, subtraction and multiplication problems. Pupils find the perimeters and areas of shapes either by counting squares, or by using simple formulae and take accurate readings from different scales of measure such as temperature, sometimes including negative numbers.
84. Pupils who are on the school's list of special educational needs make good progress. Learning support assistants and teachers ensure that work is set at the right level. Good progress was made by a Year 4 group, for example where pupils improved their mental recall of number bonds because of the brisk, well focused teaching by the learning support assistant. Given the levels of attainment when first starting school, pupils achieve well overall.
85. The quality of teaching is good overall. The absence of unsatisfactory teaching and a slightly higher proportion of teaching which is very good, indicates an improved picture since the previous inspection, and is reflected in the improving standards. In most lessons the good quality of learning is underpinned by the quality of relationships in the classroom. Teachers foster an ethos of respect and co-operation, consequently pupils are courteous and well motivated. Lessons are planned well, clearly indicating what pupils are to learn. This is shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. In the most effective lessons the brisk start tests the pupils' mental

agility and is a good 'warm up' for the main activity. Teachers clearly identify the different levels of ability within their planning and ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Sometimes the oral and mental session is not rigorous enough in helping pupils to recall number facts and practise mental strategies. Occasionally time at the end of lessons is used only to go over what pupils already know and opportunities to move pupils on to the next steps of learning are missed. The best marking challenges pupils' thinking as well as the presentation of their work, but expectations of neat work are not consistent throughout the school. Pupils' recording skills are not developed well. This is exacerbated by the over-use of prepared worksheets in Year 2. Consequently, there is insufficient modelling of good presentation and pupils are unable to review their own work to see where it might be improved.

86. The two subject leaders work effectively to raise standards. They share a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. Monitoring of teaching is leading to more consistent standards. Evaluation of attainment and progress is helping to sustain the rising trend. Resources are generally good and used well, the exception being computers. Currently there is not enough software to support pupils' learning in mathematics, and this means that there is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

## **SCIENCE**

87. By the age of seven and nine, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and make satisfactory progress in relation to prior levels of attainment. In general, these findings reflect the teachers' assessments of 2001 and 2002.
88. By the age of seven, pupils know that living things need food and drink to stay alive, and that some foods are healthier than others. They know that they have senses that provide them with information about a range of stimuli. Their responses to all of these stimuli are developed well through a wide range of investigations and they are becoming used to the notion of testing things fairly. The majority of pupils know and understand that materials have similarities and differences, for instance in the way that "Blutack", plasticine and paper can be manipulated.
89. By the age of nine, pupils predict, carry out investigations, record their findings, and interpret the results. They understand what a fair test needs. For example, in Year 3, pupils tested a variety of paper towels to find the most absorbent, and in Year 4, pupils used thermometers accurately to measure air temperature in various areas of the school. The majority of pupils know many parts of the human body and have a clear view of how teeth develop and how to look after them. Pupils are interested in keeping warm and know which materials are best in keeping them warm, because they are good insulators.
90. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They respond particularly well to good questioning. However, on a very few occasions, particularly Year 2, behaviour worsens towards the end of a lesson as pupils become bored, restless and loud.
91. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The planning for lessons, and particularly groups of lessons, is strong. This means that pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed over a series of lessons and built on successfully. For example, in Year 2, pupils' learning about the forces associated with pushing and pulling was used to predict how these forces would react on "Blutack". In the best

lessons, the use of resources and adult support is effective. For instance, in Year 1, pupils learned about the senses, how they provide information and which organs support these senses. All pupils confidently described a range of experiences, found appropriate descriptive language and responded well to a variety of stimuli. These strengths were supported by:

- a good range of resources that fostered learning about all the senses through a wide range of simple, but effective, investigations;
- effective adult support, that was well managed to maximise the learning of all pupils, most particularly through the strong briefing about how to use questions.

Throughout the classes there are good opportunities for discussion, and pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and accurate in what they say. Consequently, pupils are developing a good working vocabulary and their explanations for what they see have insight and are mainly correct.

92. Overall, the quality of management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The main reason for this is that the co-ordinators have no time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by direct observations in the classroom. Furthermore, although these teachers are keen to develop the subject by implementing action plans, they do not receive an annual budget that would support the priorities. Resources are good, most particularly the external grounds that support learning about various forms of life. These, and other, resources, are used well to foster an interest in nature and provide good opportunities for investigation. There has been an encouraging start to the use of information and communication technology, but there is still a long way to go to make this part of the provision strong. Improvements since the last inspection include the drawing up of helpful documents such as a policy and scheme of work.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. Standards are better than those typically seen at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave school aged nine. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are given a good range of creative opportunities through observational drawing and painting, printing and design and three-dimensional work. The use of computers to generate art work is developing, but is not yet well established. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen during the inspection. Pupils in Year 4 were able to discuss the features of Elizabeth Frinks' work, before beginning work on their own clay models of heads. Pupils were motivated by the challenge of the work and benefited during the lesson from the opportunity to practise moulding features of their head from dough, prior to moving to the next stage of their sculpture.
94. Samples of pupils' work, and photographic evidence demonstrate the variety and extent of pupils' work. Three-dimensional work also featured in Year 1, for example when pupils made a large dragon's head for the Chinese New Year. Some exciting and imaginative work was also done in the school grounds when pupils used materials available in the hedgerows to create sculptures in their natural setting. Pupils in Year 2 used the experience of their visit to Hunstanton to create a textures collage of the shoreline. The work demonstrated good observation skills and some thoughtful use of tone in the materials used. Another good example of mixed media collage is the banners made by pupils in Year 3 where paper, string and fabric make an interesting design between sheets of transparent plastic. These are both attractive and functional as they deflect the sunlight coming through the classroom window. Leaf print designs using colours effectively to produce an autumnal impression, and rectangular prints to produce a 'Mondrian' style design contribute to the range of work. Observational drawing and painting skills are developed well throughout the school so

that by Year 4 pupils' drawings are detailed and accurate as seen in their display of carefully drawn hedgerow flowers.

95. The co-ordinator has managed the subject satisfactorily during her year in post. Art and design retains its high profile in the school. A new scheme is currently being adopted which reflects more directly the aims of the school and pupils' needs. Termly 'art days' make a good contribution to the curriculum by drawing pupils of different ages and adults together to work with a wide range of media. The co-ordinator has developed a sound action plan, which includes links with a local arts centre. Professional development in the subject is already planned. However, there is no time available to monitor teaching and the co-ordinator does not receive a budget to fund priorities.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

96. Standards are in line with expectations at the ages of seven and nine. These expected standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
97. Design and technology has been the focus for improvement over the last year. During that time the subject leader has re-written the policy, organised and improved resources, and thoughtfully adapted recent national subject guidance as the basis for a progressive scheme of work. Although pupils are beginning to benefit from these measures, it is too soon to see the full impact on overall standards.
98. Teaching was good in the lessons seen. The revised scheme of work gives teachers clearer direction about the level of skills expected so they are able to set suitable objectives for their lessons. Pupils' independence is strongly encouraged. For example, pupils in Year 2, after designing their puppets, had to select materials they wanted and cut out the shapes themselves. This 'have a go' ethos was also seen in Year 3 when pupils had to solve the problem of how to construct a 'strong and durable' chair using paper tubes for the frame. Pupils were motivated well and worked hard to make their models look like the original designs.
99. The subject is led and managed effectively. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards and progress in the school. Resources are adequate and meet the demands of the curriculum. Due to the energetic approach shown by the co-ordinator, the school is well placed to move the subject forward. There is little evidence of information and communication technology playing a large part in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

100. Owing to timetable restrictions, it was only possible to see lessons in Years 3 and 4 history and no geography at all. Judgements are made on the basis of these lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils.
101. Attainment in geography and history is in line with national expectations at ages seven and nine. Achievement in both subjects is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
102. In geography, seven year olds learn adequate mapping skills and knowledge about their own locality. They draw simple maps and plans and know about the functions of different types of buildings, for example, shops, factories, and civic amenities. Nine year olds explore and understand local issues, such as recycling waste. They

compare and contrast the key factors in local features and those in a distant locality: Kenya. Adequate areas of knowledge include:

- weather and climate;
- their effects on the everyday life of people, most particularly, food and clothing;
- language;
- types of housing.

103. In history, seven year old pupils know about living in the past, particularly the toys young children had and the houses they lived in. Particular attention is paid to the Victorians and most notably how things change over time. They know, for instance, that people rode horses or walked to places, rather than using motorised transport. By the age of nine, pupils know a great deal about the history of Bury St. Edmunds, and about the Abbey in particular. In the Year 4 lesson, an actor played the part of a monk and he successfully promoted a view of similarities and differences in the contrasting times and ways of life. Pupils know and understand how important the mythical Gods were to the Greeks. They know what archaeologists do and the importance of their finds. Most higher attaining pupils discuss the differences between the lives of people in ancient Greece and the present day.

104. The quality of teaching in Year 3 and 4 history is generally good. In the two lessons seen, the overall planning was strong, most particularly the Year 4 lesson about Brother Joseline. In this lesson, the planning included bringing in a visitor, preparation of questions and clear objectives for learning. Owing to this very good practice, expectations were high and pupils learned about medieval times and developed appropriate study skills, for instance note taking. Every opportunity was used to introduce relevant vocabulary and emphasise details, such as working by candlelight and how poor people waiting at the gate fed on bread soaked with gravy from a 'trencher'. In the satisfactory Year 3 lesson, the key language of "invade" and "settle" were explored properly and pupils developed an understanding of this all happening a long time ago. Appropriate comparisons were made with the present day. Pupils in both lessons were highly enthusiastic throughout and wanted more.

105. Management of the subjects is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because there has not been opportunities to:

- observe teaching;
- analyse pupils' work;
- develop a method of monitoring;
- frame a job description
- manage a budget for the subjects.

However, progress has been made in reviewing the programme of study; developing useful visits to places of interest and links with information and communication technology. Since the last inspection, improvements have included a scheme of work, a policy and the setting up of resources in a central place. Although information and communication technology is used soundly in the work of the subjects, there is much greater scope, mainly in relation to using the Internet and acquiring software that will illustrate topics. Resources are generally inadequate and there is a need to acquire a wider range of maps for geography and artefacts for history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. Pupils reach the standards expected of them by the age of seven. The school has made good use of national subject guidance and successfully kept pace with new developments.

107. Teaching has improved because all teachers have undergone appropriate training to boost their skills. The depth of the subject leader's knowledge and expertise enables her to support staff very well and sustain the good quality of teaching and learning in the school.
108. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop sound basic skills. Pupils in Year 1, for example learned how to type in their names, change the size and colour of the text and use the delete key to clear the screen. There was a great deal of excitement at being able to change the colour of the writing at the touch of a key. Good learning was seen in Year 2 when pupils searched the Internet for information about the Scottish island of Colonsay. This activity was linked directly to their geography lesson and is a good example of how information and communication technology can be used to support pupils' learning.
109. Displays of pupils' work show that the early progress is continued in Years 3 and 4. Pupils improve their word-processing skills, combine graphics and text in multi-media presentations and send and receive e-mails. There are good links with mathematics in Year 4 when pupils use data sensors, for example to record the length of the sound made by a percussion instrument. Pupils are also given opportunity to use other equipment such as programmable toys, electronic keyboards and cassette recorders. The school's digital camera is used effectively to record information for project work. Pupils' skills are further challenged in the weekly 'newspaper club' whose aim is to produce the school news sheet.
110. The subject is managed well. Pupils' skills are improving, despite the limited hardware, because of committed leadership by the co-ordinator. The proposed new building work in the school is to create an area which has been earmarked as a computer suite. More immediate priorities however are to establish a system for judging pupils' levels of attainment linked to a portfolio of their work.

## **MUSIC**

111. Attainment in music is in line with expectations at the age of seven and nine. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy music and sing well in assemblies, for example, especially when there is an accompaniment. Their knowledge and appreciation of music is enhanced by the wide selection of music, including some from non-European cultures, which is played before and after the daily assembly. During one assembly, pupils had the opportunity to perform on musical instruments, adding sounds to represent the sun, rain and stars as the others sang.
112. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good overall. Lessons are characterised by their brisk pace, and variety of activities, which hold the pupils' interest. Pupils in Year 1 learned about the range of sounds they can make using parts of their bodies. During the lesson pupils worked excitedly in pairs to explore 'body percussion'. Afterwards they used their ideas well to compose and perform simple rhythmic patterns. There was good progress also in year 2 when pupils learned to recognise the pulse of a piece of music. They demonstrated their understanding clearly by picking up the pulse of a second piece using percussion instruments. By the end of the lesson all could recognise and maintain a steady beat.
113. The school has very recently begun to use a published scheme of work which offers very good guidance on the teaching of music skills. However, the subject co-

ordinator is aware that teachers' confidence needs to be raised. There is a newly-formed singing club, but not enough opportunities exist for pupils to perform on tuned instruments or for individual pupils who are able to progress to higher levels.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Owing to timetable restrictions, it was only possible to see a small part of the full curriculum, for example, dance and games. Consequently, it is not possible to make secure judgements about overall attainment and achievement.
115. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have good co-ordination and control in their dance and gymnastics lessons. In dance, they interpret music well when devising short dances to differing music and other sounds. They are generally less successful at describing and discussing their feelings once they have completed their movements. In gymnastics, pupils have a good awareness of space and move with, at least, adequate balance and agility. Higher attaining pupils move smoothly in a variety of fashions, for instance, hopping and skipping. Lower attaining pupils have difficulties co-ordinating the various movements, but they report that they are improving. They balance on various body parts for short spells.
116. By the age of nine, the majority of pupils balance skilfully and imaginatively when developing body shapes. Pupils judge each others' work sensitively and support each other well. Higher attaining pupils combine balances successfully to form a brief sequence. In swimming, the vast majority of pupils swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school at the age of nine.
117. An area of improvement since the last inspection is the overall behaviour and attitudes shown by the majority of pupils. They are well behaved, work well together and strive to improve performance.
118. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, the teacher is clear about the learning objectives and knows how to achieve them. For example, in the Year 4 gymnastics lesson, the teacher developed pupils' learning and readiness by keeping to a well thought out pattern, such as warm up, activity and cool down. She constantly challenged pupils to improve performance, notably the highest attainers. She also provided the majority with inspiration by asking some pupils to act as exemplars. Where teaching is less successful the emphasis on improving pupils skills are less effective because:
- the warm up was insufficiently vigorous and important body parts, such as the ankle, were not fully ready for hopping and skipping;
  - exemplars by skilful pupils were introduced too late and lower attainers lacked a useful model.
119. Overall, management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and monitors teachers' planning. At present there is little evidence of monitoring teaching, but the co-ordinator promotes improvements in teachers' practice by giving "object lessons" that staff observe. The school plays matches against other schools and has been highly successful. The school benefits greatly from excellent grounds and its own swimming pool. There is little evidence of the impact of information and communication technology on the pupils' attainment in this subject.