

INSPECTION REPORT

**THURSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Thurston, Bury St Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124715

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Winning

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Chesters
23196

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd January 2003

Inspection number: 248620

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Thurston Bury St Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP31 3RY
Telephone number:	01359 230444
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Libby Boor
Date of previous inspection:	17 th November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sue Chesters 23196	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? Characteristics, context and attainment on entry How high are standards? Attainment and achievement How well are pupils and students taught?
Bill Walker 19366	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? Child protection and pupils' welfare. Monitoring pupils' academic performance & personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
Mike Dukes 32197	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Provision of learning opportunities & statutory curriculum Educational & personal support and guidance – assessment
Jenny Stratton 32390	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education	Attitudes, behaviour, personal development relationships & attendance How well does the school cultivate pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thurston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is in the village of Thurston, about six miles to the east of Bury St Edmunds, in the county of Suffolk. It educates pupils aged from four to nine. There are 175 pupils on roll. This is slightly more than at the last inspection. The school serves a mixed area, with most of the pupils coming from the village. Nine pupils claim free school meals. There are five pupils from ethnic-minority groups. No pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. Thirteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is below average but the number is rising steadily. Pupils' difficulties range from moderate learning difficulties and physical disabilities to emotional and behavioural problems. Two pupils have formal statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school is average. At the time of the inspection, the previous long-standing headteacher had just retired and the new headteacher had been in post two weeks.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school of which the community is justifiably proud. It is well led. The very good quality teaching enables pupils to achieve good standards. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- It enables pupils in all year groups, to achieve above average standards in science, geography, history, design and technology, physical education and religious education. Standards in art and design are well above average.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils attain above average standards in English and music, whilst those in Years 1 and 2 attain good standards in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is very good and consequently pupils learn very well.
- It provides very effectively for children in the Foundation Stage.
- It provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of all pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy school, behave well and are eager to take responsibility.
- It involves the community and parents very effectively in the pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment to provide better information for teachers and pupils.
- The long-term planning for the future of the school with links to the budget.

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 good improvement since it was last inspected in 1997. The issue raised then to improve standards in the non-core¹ subjects has been successfully addressed. Standards in art and design have improved significantly and are well above average. They have also risen in design and technology, geography, religious education and physical education and are above average. Teaching was good before, now it is very good. The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and social development was good, it is now very good.

¹ Non-core subjects are: art and design; design and technology; geography; history; information and communication technology; music and physical education.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 4 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key

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

**Similar schools are those with up to 8 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals.*

The above table shows that the results of the 2002 national tests and tasks for pupils, at the end of Year 2, were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were below average when compared with those of similar schools*. In science, teachers' assessments showed that pupils were above average. Inspection evidence shows that, in the current Year 2, standards are in line with the national averages in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards for the seven-year-olds are average in information and communication technology and music and above average in all other National Curriculum subjects, apart from art and design, where standards are well above average.

Standards for the current Year 4 are average in English and information and communication technology. They are above average in all other National Curriculum subjects apart from art and design where they are well above average. Standards, in religious education throughout the school, are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Children achieve well in the reception classes. Most are on target to meet the goals set for the Foundation Stage. About one quarter will exceed the set goals. Pupils with special education needs, including those with specific learning difficulties and physical disabilities, make good progress. Those pupils who have a statement of special educational need make very good progress. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. The school sets itself challenging targets and looks set to achieve them. There has been a dip in standards since 2000. This is largely due to the rising numbers of pupils in each year group, identified as having special educational needs. The overall trend is again upward, with standards steadily rising in most subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils show good attitudes to their work, to members of staff and to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at dinner times and when they are moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils accept responsibility well. They are helpful, courteous and trustworthy. Most are ready to accept more responsibility, particularly with their work in lessons.
Attendance	Very good. The rate of attendance is well above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive punctually.

Pupils take great interest in their lessons. They work hard and are happy. They understand very well the effects of their actions on others and most show great respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very 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, the quality of teaching and learning is very good and has improved since the last inspection. In one out of every two lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was very good or excellent. This results in pupils learning very well and making good progress. In the best lessons, teachers have very high expectations of what it is that the pupils can achieve. They set very good challenge for all pupils and let them explore a variety of options using their own experiences to complete the tasks. Lessons move along at a good pace and have activities which match the needs of the pupils. Literacy and numeracy are taught successfully. High-quality teaching assistants work alongside the teachers. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved, particularly for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They reward good behaviour and good work with praise and encouragement. This effectively enhances pupils' learning and also their enjoyment of lessons. When teaching is less successful, teachers do not accurately match the level of work to the needs of individual pupils, particularly for the more-able pupils. At such times, their expectations of what it is that the pupils can do are too low and, as a result, the pace of learning drops and some pupils do not achieve well enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and is appropriately balanced. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for the pupils identified with special educational needs. It offers pupils very good-quality support and this ensures that pupils achieve the targets set for them on their individual educational plans. In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of pupils entering the school with special educational needs. The school is in the process of reassessing the needs of a number of pupils who have not been previously identified.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very well for all aspects of pupils' personal development. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own cultural heritage is a particular strength.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good systems for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Procedures for monitoring personal development and academic performance are satisfactory. The school has worked hard to develop good procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress. It is now ready to evaluate how best to evaluate the information it gathers.

Teachers know their pupils well and support and guide them with care and sensitivity. The school works hard to develop a good working partnership with parents. The quality of information provided for parents is good. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning. The school involves the community very successfully in the life of the school. This makes a very significant impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good clear leadership continues with the newly-appointed headteacher. She receives good support from members of staff in their various areas of responsibility. The school is well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and the governors support the school well. They have a good knowledge of the school's needs, particularly in relation to the curriculum, and contribute much to the success of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are some good systems in place to monitor the work of the school. Teaching and learning are regularly reviewed. The school's agreed procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have not been fully implemented and this detracts from the quality of information available to teachers and their pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school has a well-focused improvement plan which identifies curricular priorities over the next year. However, the costings do not incorporate the necessary learning resources and there is no longer term development plan setting out educational priorities and budget plans for the longer term.

Accommodation is good and the school makes effective use of it. There is a good number of well qualified and experienced teaching and support staff to cover the needs of the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory overall and used very well to enhance pupils' 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"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • Teaching is good. • Behaviour is good and the school helps children become mature and responsible. • Leadership and management of the school are good. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons.

Five parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection and 91 questionnaires were returned. The inspection judgements agree wholeheartedly with the positive views of parents and finds that the school provides a limited range of activities outside of lessons other than those provided by parents and the community.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation Stage²

1. The majority of children start in the reception class with levels of attainment which are average. They make rapid progress in their first year in school in all areas of learning. This is because of the very good teaching that they receive and because the curriculum is good and relevant to their needs. Most children in this year's reception class are on target to exceed the goals³ set for the end of the Foundation Stage. About one quarter is likely to exceed these goals. This represents good achievement.

Years 1 and 2

2. Results in the Year 2002 national tests and tasks show that standards for the seven-year-olds were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, these results are below average. In science, teachers' assessments showed that pupils were above average. Over the past four years, results in national tests have dipped. The number of pupils entering the school identified with special educational needs has risen steadily. This coincides with the apparent downward trend in standards. After the dip in test results in 2001, standards are now beginning to show an upward trend again. Inspection evidence shows that, in the current Year 2, standards are in line with the national averages in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards for the seven-year-olds are average in information and communication technology and music and above average in all other National Curriculum subjects, apart from art and design, where standards are well above average.

Years 3 - 4

3. Standards for the current Year 4 are average in English and information and communication technology. They are above average in all other National Curriculum subjects, apart from art and design where they are well above average.

Across the school

4. Standards in religious education throughout the school are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs reach good standards in their work across all subjects because they follow programmes of study which match their abilities. Particularly impressive is the progress made by those pupils with statements of special educational needs. All pupils identified as having special education needs regularly meet the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They are supported very effectively in lessons by learning support assistants, who work in very close partnership with class teachers to meet pupils' specific learning needs. This enables all pupils to achieve well. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. The school sets itself challenging targets and it is likely to achieve them.
5. Apart from standards in information and communication technology, which have been maintained at average levels, standards in the non-core subjects have risen steadily since the last inspection. This is good improvement and has addressed the issue raised then. There has been a significant rise in standards in art and design, where standards have moved from average to well above average. Standards have risen from average to above average in all other non-core subjects, apart from history, where they have been maintained at above average levels. These improvements are due to the:-

² Foundations Stage: the new curriculum for children under six, which started in September 2000, which replaces the desirable outcomes.

³ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

- very good-quality teaching, particularly in English and science;
 - successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy;
 - improvements made to the curriculum;
 - subject leaders becoming more involved in monitoring the standards in their subjects.
6. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills, needed for pupils to succeed in the tasks set, ensures that pupils achieve well. The school sets itself realistic targets and regularly meets or exceeds them. It works hard to raise standards in all subjects. This, together with the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils, has a positive effect on raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and they take great interest in their lessons. They clearly enjoy school. Ninety-seven per cent of parents answering the questionnaire agree that their children like coming to school. From reception onwards children are happy, secure and enthusiastic about their learning. The good provision within the curriculum for pupils' personal development has a very positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
8. The behaviour of almost all pupils is good in lessons, at dinner times and when they are moving around the school. There is an effective code of conduct in place and classroom rules, negotiated by pupils, are prominently displayed. Playground rules include the motto, 'Be a friend, not a bully'. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the schools' expectations regarding behaviour and there are very few incidents of oppressive behaviour. Most pupils develop a good sense of self-discipline which helps their powers of concentration and their willingness to complete a task. They work well on their own, in pairs or in small groups. In lessons when expectations are high, pace is brisk and tasks are understood, all pupils behave well. However, when lesson aims are unclear, a significant minority of pupils demonstrate behaviour that has a negative impact on their own learning.
9. Pupils respond well to questions, giving answers that are pertinent to discussions. In one science lesson, Year 4 pupils gave intelligent responses to why temperature readings differ between computer sensors and conventional thermometers. During a Year 1 and 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils were asked to evaluate a 'pencil roll' and they constructively suggested improvements. The few pupils with behaviour difficulties respond well to good management by teaching and non-teaching staff. The school has not excluded any pupils at any time in the recent past. Assemblies and break times are orderly. Pupils welcome visitors with courtesy and friendly smiles.
10. Relationships in the school are good, reflecting its inclusive community ethos. Pupils relate well to all teaching and non-teaching staff and are very comfortable when talking to them. During the inspection week, pupils were frequently observed helping each other successfully in lessons, working in pairs or collaboratively, and around the school. This was particularly well demonstrated by pupils who were eager to talk to members of the inspection team and give their views of school life. They are proud of their school and what they accomplish. They understand very well the effects of their actions on others and most show great respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. In one mathematics lesson, one boy comforted and helped another who was upset and needed consoling. Pupils were eager to discuss how they welcome new pupils to the school and how they would make a refugee feel comfortable. Nearly all pupils treat their own, other people's and the school properties with care.
11. Pupils show good initiative and personal responsibility. Older pupils help and support children in reception at playtimes. They take this responsibility of looking after younger

ones very seriously. Pupils take the register to the office and distribute resources at the start of lessons. Older pupils are given the opportunity to run the school tuck shop and become library monitors. As a result of these responsibilities, children become self-assured and develop a sense of independence and maturity. Pupils are ready to accept more responsibility, particularly for their own learning in lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The overall quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. This results in pupils learning very effectively. During the inspection 25 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. Twelve of these were very good and one was excellent. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, when the overall quality was good. Reasons for the improved quality include:-

- all staff work exceptionally well as a team and support each other most efficiently;
- relationships between staff are very good and all staff are very good role models for the pupils;
- subject leaders have gradually taken on more responsibility in guiding their subjects and have a better understanding of their role; thus they give good support to their colleagues;
- teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have done this effectively and this has sharply focused their teaching.

It has resulted in very good-quality teaching and in very good learning by all groups of pupils. It also contributes very successfully to the personal development of all pupils. Teachers encourage them to take responsibility for the own actions and for some of their learning. Pupils respond well to this approach and are now ready to take more responsibility for their own development.

13. The teaching of literacy in English lessons is very good. Numeracy in mathematics lessons is taught well. Both subjects successfully support learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in science lessons, the pupils have opportunities to record the results of their experiments and explain what the results show in both written and graph forms. Teachers promote good cross-curricular links and, in this way, the pupils see the relevance of their learning and the way it develops. Teachers give pupils more and more opportunities to use information and communication technology effectively as a tool to support all subjects. For example, they encourage pupils to use the computers' microscopes to observe objects more closely when doing observational drawing. This was seen in the reception class when staff gave the children the chance to collect snowflakes on the one day that it snowed. The children then studied them closely, using the microscopes, and painted carefully what they saw. The outcomes were stunning and showed that the children had learned a great deal. However, this type of work is limited because access to computers is not always readily available to every class.

14. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers are well aware of the needs of all pupils. Tasks are frequently adapted to suit the needs of individuals and a variety of learning resources is provided. The specialised support that statemented pupils receive is well planned and focuses on their specific needs. Teaching assistants are very well briefed and their contribution towards lessons is of a very high standard. This makes a significant contribution to the standards that pupils achieve. Teachers are very aware of the need to ensure that all pupils are included and make every effort to ensure that all are fully involved.

15. Teachers, throughout the school, have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. They use the correct technical terms and vocabulary to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where technical language is used accurately, not just in the

teaching but also in the good-quality displays around school. Teachers use their expertise well; for example in English and music.

16. The teachers place a significant level of demand upon individuals, to ensure that all are fully involved. They challenge the more-able pupils with extension work. This is particularly evident in science, where many activities are practical and open-ended. This allows pupils to explore, investigate and put forward their own ideas. However, occasionally, the challenge given to more-able pupils in, for instance, mathematics does not start from a sufficiently advanced level. This sometimes limits the possibility of very high achievement. Similarly, pupils do not have enough opportunities to follow their own interests and take responsibility for extending their own learning.
17. Teachers' planning is good. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan very closely to the structured frameworks. Planning is tailored effectively to include all the levels of attainment and all the backgrounds of the pupils in the class. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and of their work are very high. They question pupils well, to establish what they know and understand and to help them to think for themselves. This makes learning relevant for all. Pupils listen carefully to the very good instructions that they receive and know exactly what they are expected to do. They work very hard and learn very well. This not only results in very good pace in lessons but also in consistently good achievement by all pupils.
18. All staff have extremely high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. The vast majority of pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers consistently and constantly praise and encourage the pupils. Pupils respect this and value their teachers' comments. They feel comfortable as they learn and are not afraid to make mistakes because they know that staff will help them, without criticism.
19. When lessons are less successful, teachers do not manage the pupils consistently. Thus, the pupils receive mixed messages of what is expected of them. A small number of pupils then become confused and lose interest in the tasks set and do not respond helpfully to the teacher. This impacts negatively on their own learning. In most instances, teachers quickly address the situation. However, when not checked, the pace of the lesson dips and not all the aims of the lesson are achieved.
20. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Good examples of its use to adjust planning for the next lesson were seen during the inspection. However, although developing well, assessment is not used sufficiently or consistently across the school to support pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers mark pupils' work in a supportive manner but evidence within the marking, of what the pupils need to do next to improve, is not always clear. Homework is used well to supplement and support work done in class.

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

21. The statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met. The school provides a range of learning opportunities to meet the intellectual, social, physical and personal needs of the pupils. The amount of teaching time devoted to each subject is adequate to provide balance in learning for all pupils. A notable strength is the school's relationship with the community and with neighbouring schools which further enhances provision. Pupils also particularly benefit from the good provision for literacy, numeracy and art.
22. Since the last inspection, the school has worked successfully to improve the curriculum. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are fully implemented. Teachers have revised the schemes of work for other subjects and brought them into line with government

recommendations. Clear learning objectives sharpen short-term planning and improve the focus of teaching. Significant developments to the school library, and in the range and availability of information and communication technology, have improved provision further. Governors make positive contributions, both in their formal governing role and as volunteer helpers in classrooms. Parents too provide good support for pupils' learning, particularly with home reading.

23. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils receive tasks which suit their particular needs. They, and their support staff, work alongside these pupils in lessons, such as mathematics to give a short time of extra support. This initial input enables pupils to tackle their work with confidence, imparting an increasing sense of independence.
24. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It follows the stepping stones that lead to the Early Learning Goals providing children of this age with a firm base for their future learning.
25. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well established and are having positive effects on pupils' learning. Pupils now progress in these subjects at a higher rate than expected nationally and those with special educational needs do particularly well. The school continually reviews and modifies these subjects. Teachers attend further training to improve standards. For example, the school recognises the need to improve writing and spelling across the school and has provided training and support for staff accordingly. The teachers' consistently good planning for literacy and numeracy makes a significant contribution to the good basic skills which most pupils have. Teachers regularly reinforce these skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
26. Pupils in all year groups participate in educational visits, such as to Bury Cathedral, Foxborough Farm, Sutton Hoo, museums and pantomimes. These trips enhance the curriculum and provide the pupils with a wider view of their subjects. Dance workshops and theatre groups visit the school, as do railway police and health professionals.
27. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in out-of-school activities which enrich their learning, though none of these is provided by the school. Parents and community groups have established a selection of clubs, based around the school, which are enjoyed by about 90 pupils. There is a fee-paying French Club, Brownies and an after-school care club. The Saturday Football Club is attended by 36 boys and girls and is a member of the local inter-schools' league. Further positive links with the community include the pupils regularly singing and performing to a club for the elderly, enthusiastic involvement in the public library's summer reading scheme and in charity fund raising. The community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
28. The school has very good links with partner institutions. The school works very closely with the three local first schools and, together, they have successfully bid for additional funding for a shared technician for information and communication technology. They also organise a range of joint curriculum activities for pupils. Good links with the middle school has led to regular liaison between teachers and visits by pupils. This promotes a smooth transfer at the end of Year 4. The school collaborates with local colleges to provide placements for work experience and for initial teacher training.
29. The school provides effectively for personal, social and health education, including citizenship. These aspects are led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and are carefully planned as a separately taught subject, forming an important part of the school's curriculum. The two-year cycle of planning ensures a good coverage of subjects for all pupils. However, the school is in need of adequate policies for the teaching of drugs

awareness and for sex and relationships education. The school also needs to be clear about which aspects they need to cover and which will be taught at middle school.

30. The school provides very well for all aspects of pupils' personal development. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Overall, this is judged to be very good.
31. Collective worship makes a very good contribution to spiritual development. Teachers use music to promote a calm and thoughtful atmosphere. There are quiet moments for prayer and reflection, and pupils have opportunities to be inspired by learning about the lives of special people, such as Saint Francis, Anne Frank and Robert the Bruce. The school has strong links with the local church and the Vicar regularly visits the school to lead assemblies. This provides valuable opportunities for pupils to learn about the work of the church and reflect on values and beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives. In personal, social and health education, pupils are given time to reflect and discuss the themes introduced in assemblies, such as caring for each other and friendship. The support, praise and encouragement which pupils are given help to raise their self-esteem. In lessons, pupils' contributions are listened to and valued by their peers and adults. Pupils' work is valued and very effectively presented in class assemblies for other pupils, parents and visitors to see. During a science lesson about 'forces', Year 1 children were filled with wonder and delight when presented with a toy dog which moved and wagged its tail when squeezed.
32. The schools' provision for moral development is very good and plays a significant part in ensuring that very nearly all pupils behave well most of the time. Relationships in the school are very good and staff set very good role models. There is an effective behaviour policy in place and pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise and stickers. Pupils have helped to write, and are familiar with, their own class rules, which are prominently displayed. During playtime, a group of Year 4 pupils help and support children in reception. They take this responsibility very seriously. There is good encouragement from the school to develop a responsibility for the wider community through fundraising for charities. A recent fundraising day for the homeless charity 'Shelter' helped pupils to appreciate the needs of others.
33. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school promotes social inclusion in every aspect of school life, including the induction of new arrivals. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. There are frequent and well used opportunities for pupils to work together. 'Circle Time'⁴ discussions are used effectively to help pupils learn to respond appropriately to different viewpoints. Social skills are also developed when pupils engage in evaluating each other's work. Pupils are given 'response partner' rules to evaluate each other's work in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide constructive advice. During physical education lessons, pupils show very good spirit of teamwork as they play ball games and negotiate fair rules. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for the day-to-day routines which help lessons run smoothly and efficiently. For instance, they take the register to the office and distribute resources at the start of lessons. Older pupils are given opportunities to run the school tuck shop and become library monitors, enabling them to develop leadership and management skills.
34. Provision for cultural development is very good. The knowledge and understanding that pupils have of their own cultural heritage is a particular strength. Very good use is made of the locality and visits to the village are a regular feature of local studies work completed in history and geography. Similarly, visits further a field enrich pupils' cultural understanding. A visit to Sutton Hoo, a Saxon burial site, gave pupils a great insight into Anglo-Saxon lifestyles. Pupils gain a sense of the past from visits to the Hollytrees

⁴ Circle Time: In these lessons, pupils sit in a circle and, through agreed rules, have the opportunity to speak and listen to each other talking about issues which touch them all.

Museum in Colchester, to examine Victorian Toys, and a steam railway, to consider changes in transport. Religious education provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn about beliefs held and festivals celebrated in Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Cultural understanding is greatly enriched by these lessons. Assemblies are used very well to challenge racism and to value race equality. During 'refugee week', pupils explored the plight of refugees through drama and spoke passionately about how they would make a refugee feel welcome in their school. The school invites theatre groups, who have special contributions to make, to come into school. One such group recently performed 'Elmer the Elephant', a play with the theme of celebrating difference. Pupils learn about other cultures through art, literature, history, geography and music. During the inspection, week pupils performed an African call and response song with great enthusiasm.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school continues to provide a very caring environment where the pupils feel safe and secure. The school has been successful in developing a good sense of community, with shared values and a commitment to the well-being of pupils. The teachers and other members of staff know these pupils very well and work hard to ensure their welfare. Governors have very responsible attitudes towards health and safety. Effective policies are in place to encourage good behaviour and high levels of attendance. Procedures for monitoring personal development and academic performance are satisfactory; the policy has recently been reviewed but has not been fully implemented as yet.
36. The good relationships between pupils, teachers and other members of staff, create an environment of trust and understanding. Pupils find that they are treated with respect and they know that their contributions to lessons are fully valued. This gives them confidence and helps them to share any worries or concerns that they may have. Particular sensitivity is shown to more vulnerable pupils. The school works closely with parents, carers and other responsible agencies to ensure that individual needs are met. Health and safety procedures are good. Individual governors take prominent roles in ensuring the rigour of risk assessments. Regular reports on these matters keep all members of the governing body aware of their responsibilities. Child-protection arrangements comply fully with locally agreed procedures and governors are appropriately informed whenever there is an issue of concern. Teachers make good use of the curriculum for personal, social and health education to help pupils become increasingly confident and knowledgeable about themselves and how they can develop a healthy and safe lifestyle.
37. The school has long recognised the importance of regular and prompt attendance. Frequent reminders on the subject are given to parents. Governors have recently agreed a policy designed to reinforce this message. The school's efforts have proved to be very effective. All members of staff have high expectations of behaviour. The policy is clear and explicit. Its aims are implemented consistently throughout the school. It is seen to be of particular benefit in the classroom where teachers use it very well to establish good learning environments. The school makes very clear its intolerance of any form of oppressive behaviour. Teachers place great emphasis on the respect that pupils should show for beliefs and cultures different from their own.
38. Over the last year, the school has put much effort into reviewing how it monitors and tracks the attainment and progress of its pupils. It has done this with a view to developing a more co-ordinated, whole-school approach. Satisfactory practice is now in place but there are shortcomings. Individual teachers take great care in analysing performance and recording attainment, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science. Procedures are less well developed in the non-core subjects.

39. Teachers are beginning to use the results of assessments satisfactorily to plan for the next stage in pupils' learning on a day-to-day basis. For example, targets are set for individuals, although they are not always shared adequately with the pupils involved. The school has not fully implemented a consistent approach to guide planning. For example, pupils in mixed-age classes are following the same curriculum in some subjects, without proper allowance always being made for their varied abilities or ages. The school has already identified this weakness in its provision. An action plan has been agreed and the school is well equipped to make good progress in this area over the next few months.
40. Pastoral support in the school is strong. All members of staff show much sensitivity to the needs of pupils. Teachers make effective use of the procedures in place to monitor behaviour and attendance and, although monitoring of personal development is informal, they all know their pupils well. Teachers work closely with parents and with the health and educational support agencies to meet the needs of those in their charge. Overall, despite the minor shortcomings in assessment, the educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils have positive effects on their levels of achievement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents have a high regard for their school and continue to enjoy very productive working relationships with the teachers of their children. The good practice that was found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Although few attended the formal meeting for parents before the inspection, there was a very wide response to the questionnaire. The findings from those sources, and from discussions during the inspection, are very largely positive. Parents have expressed nearly unanimous views that their children like school, are well taught by teachers with high expectations and are helped to become mature and responsible. They consider that pupils' behaviour is good, the school is well led and managed and teachers work closely with parents. A small number have reservations about the homework policy, and do not feel that they are well informed on their children's progress. The inspection evidence does not support these concerns. However, the limited range of activities outside of lessons has resulted in less than half of the parents who responded expressing satisfaction with the provision. Whilst such activities are valuable, in that they broaden the school's curriculum, their provision is necessarily dependent on the goodwill of the various members of the school community who are in a position to supervise or support extra-curricular activities. The school liaises well with the community to make the premises available out of school hours. For example, pupils are given opportunities to play football or to learn country dancing. For pupils of this age, limitations in such provision are not unusual.
42. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The prospectus is very well presented. Its loose-leaf format is valuable in that it provides an opportunity to incorporate documentation of particular interest to parents, such as the policies on behaviour, attendance and homework. The governors' annual report to parents is an attractive booklet. It contains several interesting reports and comments from governors and others who help to create the community atmosphere of the school. It complies with legal requirements, although the financial information about the budget is very sparse and does not contain details about sources of income and how delegated funding has been spent. Annual reports on pupils are prepared with much care. They provide parents with a good picture of their children's progress and development. Teachers are very conscious of the important contribution that parents can make to their children's learning and are at pains to ensure that the information that they provide is constructive. A very helpful feature is the inclusion of three areas of learning with targets which parents can help children to meet. This is good practice which parents say that they appreciate.
43. Newsletters to parents about events and developments tend to be sent each half term, but there are many informal links which help to ensure a good flow of information. There is,

for example, a notice board containing current curriculum material. There are dedicated files containing policy documents and minutes of meetings which are readily available, on request, from the secretary. Most importantly, teachers make themselves available on a daily basis, before and after school, to speak with parents. Several parents commented how approachable the teachers are. They feel comfortable to discuss with the teachers any problems or concerns that they may have about their children. There is a strong parental representation on the governing body and several governors can often be found in and about the school premises. They support the teachers or assist parents who may be seeking information. The very successful fundraising association, known as 'Friends', is well supported, both in committee and at events. It also provides a ready forum for parental discussion.

44. Consistent with one of the school's primary aims, the teachers work hard to develop an effective partnership with parents. They pay heed to the importance of 'clear, open and honest communication between school and home'. Very good and consistent use is made of the home-school reading diaries. These record progress and exchange information and views with parents about their children's attitudes and achievements. Good use is made of homework to involve parents in their children's learning and to create opportunities for pupils to acquire independent learning skills. Virtually all parents sign the home-school agreement and the great majority supports the efforts of the school in this regard. There is a much smaller response to the presentations organised by staff to explain how literacy and numeracy is taught. The school is aware of the need to further develop this aspect of their work. A number of parents help in the classrooms. Teachers carefully plan the help parents give and involve them very effectively. Parents also give individual support, particularly with reading. They assist with displays, manage the library and provide valuable extra supervision on school trips.
45. Parents and friends make remarkable contributions to the pupils' education through their fundraising. They have been able to attract support from the wider community and raise substantial sums to supplement the school's resources. In recent years, for example, after consultation with the staff, they have purchased staging for the hall, microphones and computer equipment. They have also paid for playground markings and regularly subsidise school trips. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the diagnosis of problems and the review of education plans. Education is clearly viewed as a shared responsibility. There is scope for development, particularly in the context of sharing the curriculum and keeping parents more up-to-date with the children's current work. Nevertheless, the partnership between school and home is very fruitful and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning at school and in the home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. This is a well organised and orderly community, reflecting a recent history of good management and leadership. The good practice that was the subject of favourable comment in the previous inspection is still much in evidence. The current headteacher is very new to her post. She has quickly established good, working relationships with her professional colleagues and with members of the governing body. She has also demonstrated an ability to identify appropriate educational priorities in order to continue the school's commitment to higher standards and effective teaching.
47. The governors are knowledgeable and supportive and fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities. Financial management is sound but there is a need for governors to formulate a cohesive strategic development plan, identifying educational priorities and budget plans for the longer term. The number and match of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to the demands of the curriculum is good. Resources for teaching mathematics, physical education, art and the Foundation Stage are good and, in all other subject areas, they are at least adequate. In recent years, the school has succeeded in raising standards

in all non-core subjects, thereby contributing to the good improvement made since the previous inspection.

48. At the time of the previous inspection, history was the only non-core subject wherein standards were above the national expectation. The one key issue in the report was to raise standards in other foundation subjects. The school has done this very effectively. Standards now are above average throughout the school in most subjects. This reflects an improvement in planning and in the quality of teaching and learning. Well focused, professional development of staff has helped to develop teachers' confidence and skills, leading to an improvement in pupils' standards of attainment in these areas. All teachers take a variety of responsibilities for managing subjects and areas of school life. These responsibilities are viewed very seriously and staff take every opportunity to develop their own expertise and to keep abreast of new developments. The school's commitment to professional development for all members of staff has recently been recognised by an 'Investor in People' award.
49. The governing body is effective and fulfils its statutory duties fully. It supports the work of the school with much commitment and enthusiasm. Several of the governors are active in the school and know its strengths and weaknesses from their regular contacts with the staff and pupils. Through their working group structure, they help to oversee financial expenditure, review current policies, monitor standards of attainment and help to set clear targets for improvement. They have a very responsible attitude towards their duties. This is particularly manifest in their approach to health and safety matters and in the detail of the school improvement plan for 2002-2004. The latter document is the product of much consultation between the headteacher and class teachers, the subject leaders and governors. It is based on a clear analysis of the school's curricular needs and identifies appropriate priorities. Target deadlines are set and there is provision for regular review and evaluation of progress. It is a useful and effective management tool. However, the link with the budget is more tenuous. There is no overall school development plan to provide detail of projected costs sufficient to inform those responsible for preparing the annual budget of the options available to them, nor is there an outline of the school's educational priorities for the longer term.
50. Procedures for day-to-day financial management are good. The recently appointed financial assistant provides valuable support to the headteacher and the governors in their monitoring of the budget. Proper records are kept of specific grants and the school is able to demonstrate that such funds are used for their allotted purposes. The most recent audit was carried out in July 2000. The principles of control were found to be sound and the operation of controls satisfactory. A number of minor recommendations were made and they were all implemented within weeks. The school secretary works hard and effectively to ensure that daily routines run smoothly. This leaves classroom staff free to focus their attention in lessons. Her cheerful and obliging manner helps to sustain the good relationship which the school has with parents and the community and enhances the happy atmosphere which characterises the school.
51. The governing body applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. The school follows the guidance of the local education authority in its selection of suppliers and contractors and procedures are in place to ensure that all outside suppliers and contractors provide value for money. Teachers are also aware of the importance of comparing the quality of education provided in the school with national standards,
52. Overall, the school is a caring community which provides pupils with security, order and the opportunity to succeed. There are high expectations of the pupils in terms of their personal and academic development. This positive ethos reflects the aims which have been agreed by the governors. These are clearly expressed in the school's documentation and are readily understood by pupils and parents.

53. A system of performance management is well established. The first cycle has been successfully completed for all teachers, including the headteacher, and, in the current year, further objectives have been set which link effectively with the school improvement plan. Plans are in hand to extend this process to include non-teaching members of staff. Induction procedures for those new to the school are good, and the school has recently demonstrated a capacity to be an effective provider of initial teacher training.
54. The accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms are of adequate size and teachers make good use of the additional teaching areas for group work. The premises are clean and well cared for. The stimulating displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment and celebrate their achievements. The hard-surface area for outdoor play is adequate for the numbers on roll. It is significantly enhanced by an imaginatively designed adventure playground provided some years ago by parents and which is still in very good condition. The dedicated secure area for the children in the reception class is somewhat austere in appearance. Its awkward shape creates difficulties for supervisors and the protruding brick corners in the confined space are a hazard.
55. The school provides a good standard of education and it is well placed to move forward and raise standards further. The quality of teaching is very good and this is reflected in pupils' learning. Leadership and management are good. All members of the school community share a commitment to high standards. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The income per pupil is above the national average, but the school has used its resources effectively and it is providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards even higher, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) implement procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress outlined in the school improvement plan to ensure that assessment is used effectively to provide better information for teachers and pupils;
(paragraphs: 11-12, 20, 39, 65, 73, 81, 88, 95, 114)
 - (2) establish a long-term strategic plan for the work of the school linked to financial planning.
(paragraphs: 47, 49)
57. Staff and governors may also like to consider the following less important, but nevertheless significant, points for development:
- (i) review the marking policy to ensure consistency across the curriculum, seeking out the good practice in existence and sharing it throughout the school;
(paragraphs: 20, 39, 72, 78, 88)
 - (ii) ensure the curriculum is planned in such a way as to give parity to pupils of the same age in mixed-age group classes;
(paragraphs: 29, 39, 72-73, 81, 108)
 - (iii) ensure that the challenge given to the more-able pupils stretches them adequately and begins at a high enough starting point.
(paragraphs: 72, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	12	10	2	0	0	0
Percentage	4%	48%	40%	8%	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 one four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	171
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – YR
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	18	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	24
	Girls	15	18	18
	Total	39	43	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (85)	96 (85)	93 (85)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	43	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (85)	93 (88)	96 (90)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
166	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
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	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)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	410,917
Total expenditure	409,146
Expenditure per pupil	2,393
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,224
Balance carried forward to next year	14,995

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 54%

Number of questionnaires sent out	169
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	35	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	43	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	59	12	0	1
The teaching is good.	55	42	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	52	12	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	41	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	48	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	58	5	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	49	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	56	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	32	30	8	16

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

58. Children begin school in the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they are five. Those whose birthdays fall in the spring and summer terms start part-time, until the term in which they are five. Most have received some form of pre-school education. They start school with levels of attainment which are average for their age group. In past years, many year-groups started school with above average attainment levels. However, in the last two to three years, the number of children starting school with identified special educational needs has steadily increased. Thus, the overall attainment at entry is now average. The curriculum for the reception class is very carefully planned and based on the Early Learning Goals for all the children in this age group. The school's strong stance on educational inclusion is very effectively put into practice from the time children start school. Learning is considerably enriched by the inclusion of a very good range of visits and visitors. Staff 'seize the moment' to promote very good learning. For example, the day when it snowed staff quickly improvised opportunities to exploit the event to the full. Children not only enjoy these activities, they learn very rapidly. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. There is a very strong emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development, resulting in very good progress in this aspect of their learning. Consequently, by the time they become five, most children, including those with special educational needs, have reached, and about a quarter exceeded, the required goals. This is an area of strength. All staff establish a purposeful, supportive atmosphere where every child is valued as an individual. Children are eager to come to school. They observe the classroom routines and settle swiftly to their activities. They help to tidy up at the end of their lessons. The children show respect for all adults, in particular those who help them. They appreciate the needs of others in the class, share resources and wait patiently for their turn, for example when using the computer. Their awareness of each other and the wider world is developed very well in 'Candle Time'⁵. For example, during the inspection children discussed, with good understanding, what they like about their friends.

Communication, language and literacy

60. The children make good progress in language and literacy activities, so, by the time they become five, the majority attain standards that meet the set goals. About one quarter exceed the expectations for this area of learning. Many recognise single letter sounds confidently. Most recite the alphabet in a 'rap' form. They enjoy discussion and are keen to contribute their ideas and opinions, using a wide and appropriate vocabulary. They listen quite well to each other and very well to their teachers and other adults. For example, they enjoyed discussing what happened to 'Little Red Riding Hood' in the different versions of the story that they had heard. Most children write their own names correctly using capital letters. A small number write simple sentences independently, working out the spellings such as 'Gran' correctly. They enjoy stories, such as 'Red Riding Hood' and are developing the habit of taking books home to share with adults.

⁵ This is the reception class's version of Circle Time.

Mathematical development

61. In mathematics, children make good progress so that, by the age of five, a small group exceeds expectations and nearly all achieve expected levels. Most readily count up to 10 or beyond. They use mental recall skills to add on or take off numbers in number rhymes and songs. They investigate shape through games and puzzles. Most name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, squares, rectangles and squares, and know their properties. The majority know when their birthdays are and how old they will be next time.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. The provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and of their own cultural heritage, is very good. Consequently, the standards reached by the children reach or exceed expectations. They begin to develop very effectively their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. They regularly use the classroom computers, and already use the mouse and cursor keys successfully to operate a number of programs. They save and print their work independently. They know the names of the resources, such as 'monitor' and 'keyboard'. Their activities in the craft area are varied and they gain an understanding of how different materials can be successfully joined together, such as wood to make a simple bridge. They explore the delights and properties of malleable materials, such as playdough, when making baskets for 'Little Red Riding Hood' to carry the presents for Granny. They develop an understanding of the difference between dry and wet sand. For example, one boy quite clearly understood and explained that wet sand would build things but dry sand wouldn't stick together. He demonstrated this expertly by pouring sand into a wheel and turning it to show that, rather than stick together like 'tomato ketchup', it would flow onto the floor. These experiences bring the Early Learning Goals vividly to life and add meaning to classroom discussions.

Physical development

63. Provision for children's physical development is very good, resulting in all children, including those with special educational needs and poor co-ordination, reaching expected standards. All children have access regularly to a secure outdoor area where they are supervised and use a variety of pedal, 'pushable' and outdoor equipment. In addition, they use the hall for ball skills and use a range of other small apparatus. The children work individually, in pairs and as groups. In class, there is very good provision for children to develop their fine co-ordination skills, when using a wide range of small tools, such as paint brushes of different sizes, pencils and scissors. Staff show their care and knowledge of the children by ensuring that they use these tools carefully and safely. By the time they reach the age of five, most children write their names clearly with increasing control of their pencils and use the computer mouse with developing accuracy, as they click on small icons to print out their work.

Creative development

64. The provision for creative development is very good. Children reach expected standards and about one third exceeds expectations by the time they are five years old. They have many opportunities to practise their previously acquired skills and to develop new ones. They are taught a very good range of basic techniques for mixing and applying paint, employing a range of differently sized brushes with confidence and increasing accuracy; for example, painting pictures onto aluminium foil with a variety of widths of brushes. Staff encourage them to talk and describe what is happening as they paint. This enhances their communication skills very effectively and teaches them the correct words to describe what they do accurately. The children enjoy freely investigating different ways of joining materials together, as they construct monsters and robots using card, glue and paint. The children's individual work shows an increasing awareness of pattern, shape and colour.

Through carefully observing some of Monet's painting, children produced delightful work following his style, using long and short brush strokes. All the children enjoy singing a range of songs. They practice their counting as they sing number rhymes and eagerly join in actions to favourite songs.

65. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good, as is the quality of the support staff. The children gain from being in a supportive, caring environment, which is efficiently run and very well organised. All adults know the children inside out and the liaison between them is very good. Staff have developed a very good system for noting down children's achievements. They use this information very well to start and build up a profile for each child, which will go through the school with them, monitoring their progress. The many rich experiences provided for all the children, both in school and out in the wider community, stand them in very good stead for what lies ahead when they reach the age of five. The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.

ENGLISH

66. Standards in English are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 4. As a result of very good teaching and of the school successfully implementing the National Literacy Strategy, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
67. Speaking and listening are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 4. Younger pupils listen well to stories and show a good understanding. For example, most could re-tell the plot of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. In the role-play which followed, pupils spoke with great enthusiasm and expression. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils listened attentively while their teacher read a shared story and then discussed in a lively and animated way, their ideas on the meanings of the story and possible endings. Pupils listened carefully to each other and spoke with confidence and fluency.
68. Standards in reading are average at Year 2 and above average by Year 4. By the age of seven, most pupils read smoothly and expressively. They follow punctuation and use good strategies to read new or difficult words. The minority of pupils who are at the earlier stages of reading, read books which are matched to their limited sight vocabulary. These pupils are learning common words, such as 'come' and 'said'. Most pupils know the parts of a book well – they know about the author, title, publisher and illustrator and they use index and contents pages. By the age of nine, most pupils read fluently, with good expression and understanding, using the good skills that they have been taught, to deal with difficult words. Some of the least able readers read haltingly and the sense of the text is not fully understood because they are not following the punctuation. Throughout the school, pupils show a love of books which is developed from the earliest years. They regularly read at home and parents provide very good support and encouragement, using the school's home reading scheme. Pupils use the well-stocked school library effectively and a large proportion of the pupils use the public library well. A programme to develop library skills throughout the school has resulted in pupils in Year 4 and Year 2 being able to quickly locate non-fiction books on a given subject, for research purposes.
69. Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 2. However, pupils do not do as well as they should in achieving the higher levels in national tests. By Year 4, standards are above average. Inspection evidence shows some marked weaknesses in handwriting and the school has rightly identified spelling as an area for improvement. By the age of seven, pupils plan a story effectively by placing events in order and organise their writing within a clear structure. They place their own ideas into sentences, for example, placing words with the 'un' prefix into sentences to show the meaning. However, few pupils produce well-formed handwriting which sits on the line and they are not joining their letters. By the age of nine, pupils' handwriting is joined and the work is more neatly presented. Pupils brainstorm words and phrases to be used as a bank of ideas for writing. They plan their

- work effectively and use the drafting process to ensure good-quality writing. For example, following a reading of a shared text, 'Planet of the Robots,' pupils responded well in contributing thoughtful words and ideas, which they later used to plan a 'cliff-hanger' story ending. The most-able pupils used paragraphs correctly. Pupils write effectively for a range of situations and purposes. For example, they write newspapers, leaflets, letters, stories and poetry. In Years 3 and 4, some good poetry writing was inspired by the work of Kit Wright. However, the school recognises the need to further develop this range of writing opportunities for the older pupils to fully meet national expectations.
70. The school effectively plans for the promotion of pupils' literacy skills in all other subjects. For example, in history, when pupils set-up a mini museum of Victorian toys, they used their library and research skills to gather information and wrote letters of invitation to parents and grandparents.
71. The quality of teaching and learning across the whole school are very good. As a result, pupils make good progress. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The teaching is lively and successful in engaging the pupils' interest. Teachers maintain very good relationships with their pupils, which promotes positive attitudes towards learning. Teachers use questioning well to check recall and understanding of previous learning and to promote thoughtful reflective answers. The learning objectives for lessons are always specific and are shared with the pupils. This results in pupils being clear about the purpose of the tasks which they are given. In plenary sessions, pupils are frequently encouraged to evaluate their own progress against the expected learning objective. Teachers show a high standard of organisational and teaching skills. They present material in an attractive and interesting manner, and rouse genuine enthusiasm and motivation in the pupils. In each lesson observed, the teacher moved smoothly from a general explanation of the learning objectives and proposed content of the lesson, through a lively and detailed engagement with word, sentence and text level work, to well planned, purposeful group and individual activities. This led to an interactive plenary session, which gave satisfying shape and purpose to the whole lesson. In content, manner and teaching style, organisation, balance and class involvement and control, these were very effective lessons, providing a rewarding learning experience for the pupils.
72. However, in some lessons, not enough is expected of the more-able pupils and they are insufficiently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons. As a result, these pupils make very good progress. Information and communication technology is used well to support the teaching of English. For example, pupils present final drafts of their work using computers. Teachers' marking is regular but it is often confined to marking for accuracy and praise, and sometimes disregards the school's marking policy. There is also an inconsistency in expectations of neatness in pupils' work between teacher and teacher.
73. The leadership and management in English are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well, and the co-ordinator has organised a good level of resources to support the teachers' work in this area. A well-organised library has been set-up, with computerised retrieval and thumb print recognition of pupils. The co-ordinator is not able to be as effective as she could be because assessment details are not yet used adequately to give sufficient detailed information about the progress and standards of pupils. She has produced a good-quality action plan for her subject. This rightly identifies the need for an up-to-date policy for English, and the need to address the problem of the occasional inconsistency of teaching of pupils of a similar age, in different classes.

MATHEMATICS

74. Standards in mathematics are above national expectations in Year 2 and meet national expectations in Year 4. Since the last inspection the school has effectively implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Over the last five years, results reflect an upward trend.
75. By Year 2, pupils recognise odd and even numbers and multiples of two and five. They add and subtract two digit numbers. They recognise near doubles such as 15 and 14. They use this knowledge to help them calculate mentally. They solve division problems, such as sharing 9 apples equally between 3 people. They find simple fractions of shapes. In work on measures, they solve length problems using addition such as 'three crayons measure 6cm, 8cm and 4cm, how many centimetres altogether?' They estimate the length of classroom objects and measure these using rulers. In work on shape, they complete the challenge of finding examples in their homes of three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and spheres. During a project called 'Smarties', the pupils collected, sorted and organised data, and interpreted charts and tables to answer questions.
76. By Year 4, pupils confidently use the language of estimation and approximation. More-able pupils have a good understanding of place value and recognise the value of digits in numbers, such as 54 and 321. All pupils solve word problems with money, but less-able pupils struggle with understanding the value of digits in money notation. Most pupils use the method of doubling and doubling again to multiply by four. They recognise fractions with equivalent values, for example two tenths and one fifth. In work on measures, more-able and average-attaining pupils convert lengths, such as 527cm to 5.27m. They also understand negative numbers in the context of temperature. In shape, most pupils describe properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles, cylinders and cones. In work on data handling, they collect information about favourite films and reading habits and present results using pictograms.
77. The use of numeracy and mathematics across the curriculum is good. In science, pupils are given opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and use tally charts to record predictions for the best insulating material. They read thermometers accurately to take temperatures at regular time intervals. Pupils present their findings by producing bar charts. Pupils correctly read scales on science equipment to measure water. In investigative work, pupils in Year 4 use information and communication technology to collect temperature data using computer sensors and, in this context, more-able pupils interpret 0.5 as equivalent to a half.
78. The overall quality of teaching is judged to be good. Lessons observed and examination of pupils' books varied from very good to satisfactory. In the best lessons, group activities are interesting and well matched to pupils differing levels of ability, ensuring that all pupils are challenged well. Less successful teaching was characterised by teachers not building on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding to sufficiently stretch more-able pupils. The analysis of work indicates that teachers' marking is inconsistent. It does not indicate to pupils clearly enough how they can improve their work. Teachers were inconsistent in the expectations of how pupils should present their work. This led to varying quality. Opportunities to challenge and extend thinking were missed. Expectations are too low in some lessons.
79. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning and using mathematics are good. They concentrate and co-operate well with others. They listen carefully to the teacher and each other and are eager to answer questions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully build on the positive practical experiences which they have had in the reception class. In all year groups, good homework activities are frequently set to reinforce class work. Teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers and are used well to help pupils with special educational needs

make good learning gains. There is scope for further development of the use of information and communication technology in mathematics.

80. The co-ordinator has a commitment to raising standards and recognises what needs to be done to develop further. Useful work has been done on analysing strengths and weaknesses in pupils' responses to test questions. She has organised some training for staff on information and communication technology and on multiplication and division, which were identified as areas for development. 'Springboard'⁶ catch-up sessions for some Year 3 pupils have been implemented. Time has been scheduled to evaluate the impact of this initiative.
81. The co-ordinator does not have regular time to monitor teaching and learning to help her gain an effective overview of the subject. Planning is not necessarily consistent across Years 3 and 4, so that parity is not secure for pupils in mixed-age classes. The school has identified the need to build on assessment procedures and use the information to move pupils' learning forward, particularly for more-able pupils. The co-ordinator recognises the need to provide pupils with more open-ended problems that allow them to make their own decisions about possible solutions.

SCIENCE

82. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science by the end of Years 2 and 4 are above average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
83. Pupils now achieve well in all aspects of the subject. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, pupils have good knowledge of forces, such as 'push' and 'pull'. They discuss tasks, using correctly associated vocabulary. For example, they talk about 'slippery' and 'friction' when testing to find the 'slippiest' surface. They make sensible predictions and understand that there may be different answers and solutions to problems for a variety of reasons. They demonstrated this very effectively when experimenting to find out whether rough surfaces around school produced more friction than smooth ones.
84. Many Year 4 pupils know a range of scientific facts and have a clear understanding of key principles and ideas, including prediction and fair testing. Pupils are given opportunities to carry out investigations and experiments for themselves. Most Year 4 pupils understand how to make a test fair. For example, in an excellent Year 4 lesson, pupils identified what they needed to do to check which would be the best insulating material to keep their hot potato warm for the longest amount of time. They discussed confidently, and with good understanding, what would make their test fair.
85. Those pupils with learning difficulties achieve well in relation to their individual education programmes. This is because of the good support that they get in class from good-quality teaching assistants who are well briefed and deployed. There is no significant difference in the attainments of boys and girls. Lessons are fully inclusive and teachers encourage pupils to work together in a spirit of helpful harmony.
86. The continuing upward trend in standards throughout the school is closely linked to the very good-quality teaching. In the most productive lessons:
 - teachers explain the scientific ideas well in simple terms, which pupils understand;
 - teachers plan practical tasks which allow pupils to experiment and to test their predictions;
 - they give pupils the independence to tackle the challenge;
 - teachers plan ways for pupils to record their findings, which concentrate on the scientific concept and do not become reading and writing exercises;

⁶ Springboard: A 'booster' mathematics programme designed to help pupils increase their mathematical skills and understanding.

- pupils respond well by trying hard and concentrating;
 - pupils enjoy investigating and use previously gained knowledge effectively to test their theories.
87. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. The majority listens attentively and concentrates well. Collaborative working in pairs or small groups is a positive feature of teaching and learning, and makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. Most sustain interest throughout lessons, and take a pride in their achievements. Pupils' behaviour is good, and they help and support each other.
88. The monitoring of pupils' performance is satisfactory overall. The procedures for assessing pupils' learning and tracking their progress are satisfactory. Some teachers have very good systems of monitoring pupils' work and use the data they collect very well to provide work at suitable levels for individuals. However, between year groups, there are inconsistencies in the way that assessment is used. Similarly, there is no consistently applied system for marking which could help pupils understand what it is they have to do next in order to improve.
89. The curriculum is broad and covers all aspects of the subject satisfactorily. In science, pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well. They are given ample opportunities to use these skills, for example, in reading instructions or when creating graphs of their predictions and results. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to use sensors and microscopes, with supporting computers, to monitor and observe their experiments.
90. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the needs of the pupils. She has spent a considerable amount of time analysing how pupils learn and what are the best ways to challenge and extend all pupils. The impact of this is seen in the continuing improvement in standards throughout the school. The co-ordinator is very clear about the need to sustain the recent good developments in pupils' enquiry skills across the school, and is determined to pursue higher standards throughout the school. Resources are satisfactory and used well.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Standards, throughout the school, are very good and well above the levels found nationally. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were in line with national levels. Art is now a strength of the school, of which the staff is justifiably proud. This achievement is due to the high level of skills and enthusiasm of staff, the very strong leadership of the art co-ordinator and the good quality of teachers' planning, assessment and resources.
92. Pupils in all classes have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and they know how to evaluate and develop their work. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils built upon their very good knowledge and understanding of chair design and construction, to use ideas from artists and craftspeople to evaluate their own designs. Pupils across the school demonstrate a very good ability in investigating materials and in making. In Years 1 and 2, they investigated the construction of a range of fabrics using normal vision, magnifying glasses and computerised microscopes. They showed perception in identifying the patterns of warp and weft. This led to the children producing some very good weaving, using a range of looms and materials. Pupils of all ages show a high ability to explore and use the ideas of famous artists. Younger pupils studied the Impressionist style of painting of Monet and used similar, small dabbing brush strokes to create atmospheric, high quality snow paintings. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 painted rural scenes, inspired by Constable, successfully conveying tranquillity through a skilful use of colour and composition.

93. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good and the progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good also. The teaching is so successful because the teachers: -
- use their strong knowledge of the subject to teach the basic skills very well;
 - have very good relationships with pupils, conveying a love of the subject;
 - have a good range of teaching resources;
 - their good planning makes sure that pupils are challenged and interested.
94. As a group of Year 4 pupils reported to inspectors, ‘Art is fun – but teachers make you think and work hard as well.’ In a very good lesson on weaving seen with Years 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher referred to previous lessons to remind the children what they had learned about the properties of different materials, such as tin foil, bubble wrap, cotton and various fabrics. She skilfully used pictures, models and hand movements to successfully convey an understanding of warp and weft, before setting the pupils their weaving tasks. She organised for a wide variety of natural and manufactured materials to provide a very good range of experiences for the pupils. The teacher ensured that pupils were clear about the learning objective at the start of the lesson and that they evaluated their progress at the end. As a result of this very good teaching, the pupils made very rapid progress in their learning.
95. The co-ordinator for art and design provides very good leadership and management of the subject. Her extensive knowledge and passion for the subject have inspired other teachers in the school. High-quality and up-to-date policy documents are in place, including plans for teaching, which ensure that pupils of all ages receive a proper amount and type of teaching. There are appropriate arrangements for teachers to assess their pupils’ progress in art and design, and the co-ordinator is very effective in monitoring the subject as a whole.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. The pattern of teaching design and technology is such that there were no lessons during the time of the inspection. However, from discussions with teachers and pupils, teachers’ planning and pupils’ work, it can be seen that the school provides good opportunities for design and technology for its pupils. All learning opportunities are accessible to all pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress.
97. Standards in design and technology are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils design and make glove puppets. They carefully examine a range of different types of glove puppets and disassemble them to discover their different parts. They demonstrate a good level of sewing and cutting skills and make a puppet for a particular role. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils design and make books with moving parts. They study a selection of pop-up and slider books to learn how the moving parts work. They use the knowledge to design their own books. They carefully evaluate each other’s work and state how well the parts move. These examples illustrate that the pupils have good levels of skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. They plan and develop their own design ideas competently, have a good knowledge of working with tools, equipment and materials and evaluate their work very well.
98. Although no design and technology lessons were seen, it is clear that the teaching in this subject is of a good quality. Teachers’ plans are based on government guidelines to ensure that pupils of all ages receive suitable teaching and that the progression of difficulty from one year to the next is as it should be. Evidence from pupils’ work shows that good teaching leads to the pupils in Year 2 developing good skills in designing and making pop-up cards and teddies with movable limbs. In Year 4 work, there was evidence of good teaching of food technology. Pupils designed, made, tested and evaluated a range of

different sandwiches very well. Although there is a wide variety of materials used in the teaching of design and technology, throughout the school, the use of a range of tools is limited.

99. The co-ordinator for design and technology is new to the post. However, her enthusiasm, combined with her action plan for the subject, is likely to provide good leadership and management in the future. Resources are adequate for the school's requirements but there is currently no satisfactory storage for them. The co-ordinator recognises that the policy and the long-term plans for the subject are in need of updating and she has included these items in her action plan.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Standards for pupils in Years 2 and 4 have improved since the last inspection when they were in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum. They are currently above average in Years 2 and 4. All pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, learn very well in lessons and achieve well over time. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection because geography and history are taught at alternate times of the school year. For this term, history is the focus. Judgements are made on the quality of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and staff and from the work that pupils have recorded in their books.
101. Year 2 pupils learn how to make basic maps and plans. They learn about changes around school and compare environments near to, and far from, school. Teachers build on these skills and, by Year 4, pupils have a good understanding of mapping techniques. They compare their village with that of one in India. As a result, the pupils have a very good idea of the school's place in the wider world and a good understanding of the local culture, set in terms of Suffolk, and where that fits in the diverse culture of Britain.
102. Teachers plan many practical opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. They use the local area to good advantage as a resource to enhance the curriculum. The school organises regular visits to provide opportunities to expand the pupils' knowledge of the world around them. Visits are often linked with history topics. Thus pupils study the rich historic environment around them from the angle of the changes in landscape and land use, now and over time. For example, visits to Sutton Hoo, a site of great archaeological value, also give pupils an opportunity to compare the environment at a little distance with those of the village of Thurston and the nearby town of Bury St Edmunds. These opportunities also enhance pupils' social and cultural development. It was very clear, when talking to pupils, that they are knowledgeable about, and proud of, their cultural heritage. They enjoy their work and speak enthusiastically about their visits. Teachers make good links with other subjects, so that pupils learn in a 'joined up' and meaningful way. Consequently, pupils relate their work in history or religious education to their work in geography and make sense of their learning. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively to help their learning. For example, following recent power cuts during heavy storms and flooding, they wrote newspaper reports on the events.

HISTORY

103. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. They are above average by Years 2 and 4. The school places a great deal of emphasis on history and uses the local area particularly well to promote the pupils' good achievement.
104. Through this work, younger pupils gain very good understanding of 'now' and 'then' and how life used to be. For example, they study how swimming clothes have changed since 1900. They learn about how some people lived long ago, through comparing castles from different periods of history. They relate this effectively to the places that they know. For

example, Year 2 pupils learn about the King Edmund's life and the impact it had on the local area. This work strongly supports their social and cultural understanding of their own background and heritage. Pupils begin to develop the concept of chronology. Teachers help them do this by activities, such as getting them to close their eyes, 'climb into a time machine and wind back through the centuries'.

105. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 extend their knowledge and understanding of the past. They learn about the daily life of children in Ancient Greek times. Teachers bring the past alive. They use techniques, such as sand-tray archaeology. This gives pupils the experience of what it is like to find artifacts from the past and interpret what they would have been used for. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss the different kinds of sources that they can use to find out about the past. In this way, pupils begin to identify some of the differences in the ways in which the past is represented and interpreted.
106. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons very well and make the subject come alive. Consequently, pupils are interested and want to learn about the past and to relate it to life today. They say that they enjoy their lessons and are eager to discuss what they have learned. Teachers give pupils plenty of very good opportunities to use their literacy skills well. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 write persuasively about the past and explore the differences between fact and fiction.
107. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by visits to historic sites of interest, such as Sutton Hoo and the ruins of the abbey in Bury St Edmunds. The co-ordinator organises events in school, such as the 'mini-museum' week. For this event, pupils, with the help of parents and friends, established a museum of old artifacts, such as toys, in school. It was a great success and much enjoyed by the whole community. This had a very good impact on pupils' learning.
108. The curriculum is planned effectively through a two-year topic cycle. This enables teachers to ensure that pupils, in classes of more than one year group, avoid unnecessary repetition but cover all of the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator has succeeded in raising the focus of history in school. She monitors planning and supports colleagues well. An impact of this is seen in the continuing upward trend in standards. Resources are adequate and staff use them well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4. Since the last inspection, the school has done well to maintain standards in this fast moving subject.
110. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence of what pupils have done, and can do, was drawn from displays of work, teachers planning, observations of pairs and groups of pupils working independently and conversations with pupils, teachers and the subject leader. New computerised library systems are in place. Pupils, particularly in Year 4, now use this efficiently to support their library and research skills. Although there has been significant investment in computer hardware and in a specialist teacher, the layout of the school and timetabling issues inhibit the full and natural integration of information and communication technology into the curriculum.
111. By Year 2, all pupils log on and off independently. They confidently use the 'return', 'shift' and 'space' keys. They understand how to programme a floor robot to follow directions. They use the Internet and CD-ROMs to carry out research. For example, pupils recently used a CD-ROM on toys to aid their understanding of forces. They used data that they had collected in mathematics to generate graphs. Pupils were shown how to use a microscope linked to the computer to look closely at the weave of different fabrics. This

supported work in art and design. They also use tape recorders to listen to story tapes to develop their skills in literacy.

112. By Year 4, pupils show increased competence using web-sites and CD-ROMs to research information for topics on the Ancient Greeks and Victorians. They have experienced using e-mail to correspond with pupils at another local primary school. This project involved adding and opening e-mail attachments. Pupils know how to use digital cameras and have taken photographs of sculptures, created in art and design lessons. In science, they have used sensors to take temperature readings and they recognise the accuracy that this technology enabled.
113. The limitation of having few computers, and their location away from many classrooms, results in pupils having restricted access to this teaching resource. The school shares a specialist information and communication technology teacher with a group of local schools. She regularly visits to support both teachers and pupils. Parent helpers also work closely with teachers, to ensure that groups of pupils are taught the skills that they need. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to this subject and speak enthusiastically about their knowledge and experience. Many use the skills that they have been taught at home and use the Internet to do extra homework. This results in them learning rapidly. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the skilful support of teaching assistants and the provision of laptops designed to meet individual needs.
114. The subject is well led and managed. All staff have completed a training programme and the co-ordinator has identified future training needs. As a result, further staff training on controlling and modelling is planned for later this term. The co-ordinator recognises the need to streamline assessment procedures and is currently piloting an assessment skills checklist. A future goal of purchasing a data projector would enable whole-class teaching and further the opportunities for cross-curricular links.

MUSIC

115. Staff and pupils enjoy their music in this school. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection. They meet expectations for seven-year-olds and above average for nine-year-olds. Teachers plan a good range of opportunities for pupils to compose and to experiment with musical ideas. All pupils, whatever their ability or need, are included in lessons. They achieve well.
116. Music plays an increasingly significant part in the life of the school, for instance in setting the mood for assemblies. It is used well to enhance the spiritual and cultural life of the school. For example, pupils are encouraged to listen to music from a variety of cultures and play instruments from around the world. Pupils learn songs from other countries and cultures. For example, Year 3 mastered an African song in two parts, one setting the pattern and the other echoing.
117. Pupils sing tunefully. They enjoy performing. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use correct technical terms, such as 'notation' and 'rhythm'. Pupils recognise repeated rhythmic patterns and use notation symbols to clap out rhythms using body percussion. For example, Year 3 practised changing the sequence of rhythms following a conductor. They explored this using backing music and were delighted with the sequence that they composed. Pupils begin to appraise and evaluate their own and others' work, using accurate vocabulary such as 'beat', 'pulse' and 'ostinato'.
118. The subject leader works hard to ensure that standards rise. She has prepared a good action plan which involves further training for all staff, in an attempt to raise the profile of music in school. She has developed a comprehensive scheme of work which ensures that all pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is based on a published

scheme and gives useful guidance and support to colleagues. Resources are adequate for the current curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Inspection findings indicate that the subject has improved since the last inspection. Overall, standards are above national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4.
120. This improvement is due to several factors, including good planning, teaching based on local guidelines and training for staff provided by the subject leader. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. They make good progress that is in line with their abilities.
121. By Year 2, pupils use space efficiently to move at different speeds and levels. They are confident in their approach to the subject and show control of balance. During one lesson, pupils displayed good knowledge and understanding of twists and rolls. They responded enthusiastically to challenges set by the teacher. Pupils co-operated well in pairs, to develop and perform a short sequence. They then used appropriate language to evaluate work and help others to improve. The use of correct vocabulary is supported by a prominent display in the gym. Pupils put physical effort into their work and, as a result, show improvement.
122. By Year 4, pupils use and develop the skills learned in the lower classes to good advantage. They know the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after physical exercise. They demonstrate fluently moving with 'body parts high' and show a good level of control. During one lesson, pupils developed good co-ordination in football skills by taking part in a dribbling relay. Pupils practised throwing and catching, both standing still and moving under pressure, in small-sided games. All pupils have a strong sense of fair play and demonstrate good team spirit.
123. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers change into appropriate clothing and footwear as a good model to pupils, who themselves are consistently well prepared for physical activity. All teachers pay due attention to safety issues, particularly in the safe use of available space. Teachers have high expectations and pupils show good levels of interest and concentration. A 'step by step' approach to basic skills enables all pupils to succeed in their work. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Good planning ensures that pupils with special educational needs are able to make good progress. In the best lessons, teachers enabled pupils to think for themselves, and to share good practice, to help improve their learning. During the inspection, there were no opportunities to observe dance, athletics or striking and fielding games, but these activities are included in the school scheme of work.
124. The co-ordinator has ensured that the school has an up-to-date programme of work by introducing a locally produced scheme with detailed lesson notes for teachers. Teachers are committed to increasing their own skills. Staff training on planning, gymnastics and dance has taken place, with the result that staff have increased confidence. Resources are well organised by the subject leader and are good. A Saturday football club is run by the Friends of the School and this has a positive impact on motivation and learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Years 2 and 4, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
126. Evidence of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding was drawn from teachers' planning, pupils' work, displays and photographs and from conversations with pupils, teachers and the subject leader. The teaching of religious education is based on local guidelines and provides teachers with a secure framework in which to work.
127. By Year 2, most pupils know the key features of religious festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Divali. They know about the similarities and differences of the Anglican, Methodist and Catholic Churches. Pupils acquire knowledge from the first-hand experience of visiting the local cathedral and discussing the religious significance of the building and artefacts with cathedral staff.
128. By Year 4, pupils increase their knowledge of other faiths, such as Hinduism and Islam. They make comparisons between the key beliefs and teachings of Christianity and Judaism. They learn about holy days, customs, places and books. They make links between religious symbols, language and stories and between the beliefs and ideas that underlie them. In one lesson on signs and symbols, pupils thoughtfully discussed their understanding of the religious significance of the cross and halos in Christianity.
129. Evidence, gathered from lessons, pupils' work and from discussions with them and with staff, shows that the overall teaching of religious education is good. Good-quality displays enhance pupils' learning and understanding very effectively. Such as a display about 'Andy, Mark and Claire', which explains the experiences of children who are members of the Anglican, Methodist and Catholic Church. Role play is used effectively in some lessons to reinforce learning. For example, in Year 1, pupils were provided with costumes and props and benefited from independently dramatising the Christmas story. Behaviour management is usually good and, as a result, in most lessons pupils listen attentively and are enthusiastic about their work. In the most successful lessons, planning is very thorough and the learning aims are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. When lessons have most impact on learning, teachers draw skilfully on pupils' prior knowledge and experiences. They choose resources carefully and provide opportunities for collaborative working. Pupils, including those with special educational need, achieve well in their understanding and they reach good standards in recognising the important part that religion plays in the lives of believers. They relate their knowledge and understanding to their own lives and, as a result, this subject is supporting pupils' personal development well.
130. The subject leader has a clear view of the development of religious education. She plans to incorporate additional material into the agreed syllabus as added support and hopes to organise more visits to Muslim and Jewish places of worship to enrich pupils' experience.