

INSPECTION REPORT

WALSHAM-LE-WILLOWS CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124717

Headteacher: Mrs J Johnson

Reporting inspector: Julie Moore
8710

Dates of inspection: 28th – 30th October 2002

Inspection number: 248622

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wattisfield Road Walsham-le-Willows Bury St Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP31 3BD
Telephone number:	01359 259319
Fax number:	01359 259319
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Newton
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd October 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Religious education Educational Inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
19765	Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	English Art and design Design technology History Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Arden Inspections

University of Warwick Science Park
Unit 2, Barclays Venture Centre
Sir William Lyons Road
Coventry
CV4 7EZ

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Walsham-le-Willows is a small Church of England school, situated in the village of Walsham-le-Willows, near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk. It is smaller than most other schools with 67 pupils on roll, 36 boys and 31 girls, aged between four and nine. Many of the pupils live in the village, others live further afield. Children start school in the reception class at the beginning of the term they are five. When they join the reception class their standards are broadly average for their age, but this varies from year to year. Six per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals, and this is below average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language, and all the pupils are white European. Twenty four per cent of pupils have special educational needs and this is average. Most of this group of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and two pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Walsham-le-Willows is a good school that is moving forward positively. It is well managed, and the staff and governors make sure that every pupil is fully included in all aspects of the day-to-day life of the school. The leadership is significantly better than it was, and the staff and governors work together very well. They are firmly led by the headteacher. Everyone connected with the school wants its pupils to do well and to achieve highly, and they are on the way to achieving this goal. Teaching is good overall. The school has worked hard to improve standards across the board, with particular success in English, mathematics, history and information and communication technology (ICT), where standards are above average for the nine year olds. Some of the new initiatives have not had much time to bed in, but the outlook is promising and the school is moving forward well. The school no longer has the serious weaknesses that were identified at the last inspection. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children get a good start in the reception class.
- Pupils are challenged by their work in English, mathematics, history and ICT. Standards are above average by the time the pupils leave Walsham at the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good, and the pupils make good progress.
- The headteacher, staff, governors and parents work together as an effective team. They are successfully moving the school forward.

What could be improved

- The science curriculum is weak. Pupils do not spend enough time investigating and finding things out for themselves. Standards are satisfactory but they could be better.
- There is not enough time to fully deliver the curriculum across all the subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) in March of this year. At that time it was judged to have made good progress since the last full inspection, which took place two years ago. The current inspection team found that good progress has been made in tackling the issues, with very good progress over the last six months. The main two issues in the 2000 inspection focused on:-

- Improving standards and accelerating the rate of progress for the pupils.
- Improving the leadership and the management.

There were three less significant issues covering the Foundation Stage, marking pupils' work and improving the effectiveness of the subject co-ordinators. Very good progress has been made in tackling

these issues as well. The school has demonstrated that it has the ability to maintain and sustain improvements successfully.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar ¹ schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	C	C	E
writing	B	A	B	C
mathematics	B	C	B	C

Key

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

This is a small school and care must be taken when comparing grades. One pupil can make a significant difference to overall grades.

When children start school in the reception class their standards are broadly average for their age. They make good progress, and many of them are on course to exceed their targets in the Early Learning Goals² by the time they join Year 1. Some younger children do less well because they have only one term in the reception class, and this is not enough time for them to achieve highly.

In the rest of the school standards are improving year-on-year as more pupils are achieving higher levels, not only in their tests at the age of seven, but in Year 3 and 4 as well. Progress is good, and sometimes very good where the teaching is strongest. This year, (2002), significantly more seven-year-olds achieved level 3 (the higher level) in their tests, than they did in previous years. Inspectors found that at this early stage in the school year the seven-year-olds are achieving average standards in English and mathematics and in all their other subjects. The nine-year-olds are doing better, and they achieve above average standards in English, mathematics, history and ICT. Their standards are average in the other subjects. Standards are satisfactory in science, but could be higher as the pupils have few opportunities to take part in practical investigations. This holds them back.

The school's targets are challenging in that they reflect the changing nature of small year groups. Targets were met successfully last year. Pupils with special educational needs, and those that are gifted and talented, make good progress like their classmates

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They work hard and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Rules are known and understood by everyone, and the pupils always behave well. No pupils have been excluded from school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Staff and pupils get on well together. This has a positive impact on standards and behaviour. Pupils enjoy helping and supporting each other during the school day, and they are good at it.

¹ Schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

² Targets for nursery and reception children to achieve by the end of the reception year.

Attendance	Unsatisfactory when compared with national standards for schools of this size and type. Below the national average.
------------	---

So far there has been limited success in pushing up the attendance rate, nevertheless the school is trying hard to improve it. Because of the small size of the school, one pupil can make a significant difference to overall percentages of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection when one in every five lessons was unsatisfactory. This time around four out of five lessons were good or better and the rest were satisfactory. Teaching is good overall. The strongest teaching is in the reception class, and in Year 3 and 4. Almost every teacher taught at least one lesson that was very good. Weaknesses cropped up occasionally and learning slowed down when the teacher was working with one group of pupils and another group needed help. When this was spotted, it was dealt with soundly and the pupils were soon back at their tasks. Other weaknesses occurred in the afternoons when some lessons were very long. Pupils' learning slowed down towards the end of the lesson.

In the most successful lessons learning is effective because lessons are planned very well. This is especially so in English and mathematics. Work is pitched at the right levels, and teachers know their subjects well. Pupils are keen and eager to learn because they are well taught. They behave well and this helps them to make good progress, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants are adept at teaching the skills that pupils need if they are to become good readers and writers, as well as understanding numbers.

This small village school meets the needs of all its pupils successfully, and they are fully included in every aspect of learning. No one is left out. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for, as are those pupils who are gifted and talented. Very capable pupils work with older pupils if their work is at the right standard. This means that all pupils are achieving well, to the best of their capabilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broadly satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum that lacks balance in some curriculum areas, especially science. There is not enough time to deliver all aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth because of the shorter working week, and the way that the curriculum timetable has been planned. Some lessons are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets for learning are in place, and this group is fully included in school life. They make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils grow into well-mannered and confident young people. They know about right and wrong, they are considerate for the needs of others, and they know how other cultures differ from their own.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are looked after in a caring environment. Their progress is carefully tracked and their teachers know them well. This creates a positive and caring ethos that works well for all the pupils at Walsham.

Parents are very supportive of the school and they value what it does for their children. There is a strong partnership between school and home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Staff work together effectively and they are well led by the headteacher. In this small school everyone has a range of responsibilities, which they carry out successfully.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. Governors are really involved in shaping the way forward for the school. They know where the strengths and weaknesses are and everyone is an active member of the school team.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is much better than it was at monitoring and evaluating its performance. Support from the Local Education Authority has helped to improve this aspect of the school's work significantly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All additional funds are well managed in ways that push up standards and speed up progress.

There are enough teachers and classroom assistants for a school of this size. The new building has improved the accommodation significantly, but the headteacher still does not have an office. This is a limitation. Resources are adequate. The school's leadership is much better than it was. Staff, governors, parents and children now work together effectively to create a good school that does well for all its pupils. Everyone is determined to do even better, and they are on course to succeed. Governors take into account the principles of best value when they are determining spending priorities.

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 make good progress. • Teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. • Behaviour is good. • Children are helped to become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities. • A few parents feel that the school doesn't always work closely with them

The inspection team agree with parents' positive views. They do not agree with parents' other comments. They judge that the school provides an interesting range of out-of-school activities that are suitable for a school of this size and type. The inspection team found no evidence to support the view that the school does not work closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Walsham has made good progress since the last inspection in October 2000 when one of the key issues was to raise standards and to increase the rate of progress made by the pupils. The visit earlier this year by one of HMI, also judged that the school has made good progress in tackling the issues. Since this visit the school's progress has speeded up, and it is now making very good progress overall. The next issue to be tackled is science, where standards are satisfactory but they could be better. There are some weaknesses in the science curriculum. A new co-ordinator is in place, she has clear views about what has to be done and the school is set to move forward positively.
2. This is a small school, with small numbers in each year group. This means that one pupil may make a significant difference to the school's overall grades. Caution needs to be used when making comparisons between Walsham and other schools. However, there are a number of reasons why the school is doing well and standards are improving:-

Main strengths

- ❑ The literacy and numeracy strategies have created a unified approach to teaching and learning, and this means that pupils' progress and attainment are pushed up successfully.
- ❑ Teachers make much better use of all the information they get about pupils' standards and progress. They are good at assessing what their pupils have learnt and then setting targets for them to achieve even more.
- ❑ Tasks are pitched at the right levels so the higher, average and lower attaining pupils are challenged and extended by their work.
- ❑ Data is collected systematically and analysed effectively so that the headteacher, staff and governors know where the pupils' strengths and weaknesses lie. They are then in a strong position to tackle the issues successfully.

Points for development

- ❑ Standards in science are satisfactory, but they could be better. The pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate and to find things out for themselves.
3. The most recent test results in English and mathematics show that a greater percentage of pupils are achieving the higher level 3 in English and mathematics than they did in the previous year (2001). Reading results have improved significantly, with every pupil achieving the expected level, with a significant amount of higher achievement. Writing standards remain above the expected standard. Pupils have done much better in mathematics than they did in previous years. Two out of every five pupils achieved level 3, and most of the remainder achieved higher grades within level 2 (the expected level). These results auger well for the future, as the school is starting to get the best from its children in English and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards are well below average in reading, and about average in writing and mathematics.
 4. Inspectors found that, at this time in the school year, standards are average for the seven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science. They are average in all the other subjects as well. Standards are above average for the nine-year-olds in English, mathematics, ICT and history. ICT was an area of significant weakness at the last inspection. It is no longer a weakness and is now a strength. Standards in science are average, as they are in most of the other subjects for the nine-year-olds. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in design technology, geography and physical education (PE). The school is much better than it was at setting targets for improvement. Its targets are challenging, reflecting the changing nature of the small year groups. Targets were met successfully last year.

5. When the pupils start at Walsham their standards are broadly average. When they leave, aged nine, their standards are above average and now a number of them are on course to achieve even higher standards. Science is the weakest subject. Standards are satisfactory, but they could be better. There are gaps in the science curriculum because the pupils do not get enough opportunities to investigate and to find things out for themselves. This holds them back. Across the board boys do better than girls. The school is aware of this and it makes sure that the girls have extra support where it is needed. Variations in the boy/girl balance in each small year group can make significant differences as well. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of daily life at Walsham. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, like their classmates. Higher attaining pupils, as well as those that are gifted and talented, make good progress like all the others.
6. When the children join the reception class, their standards are broadly average, but there can be significant variations year-on-year. Many children are familiar with the conventions of reading, writing and numbers, but others are not. Most children are independent, they can put on their coat and share their toys and games. Good progress is made, and this is due to the good teaching, effective planning, and good assessments, which enable the teacher to plan tasks that are at the right level straight away. By the end of the reception year, most children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals for their age. The youngest children frequently do not achieve all their targets because they only have one term in the reception year.
7. Standards are being pushed up by the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. By the time they are seven, many pupils are reading suitable books with a good level of understanding. They read fluently and well, and they successfully use a range of strategies to work out what the words and phrases mean. Very good use is made of ICT to support work in literacy and pupils are confident when working on the computer. Writing is interesting and well developed, with pupils using full stops and capital letters with confidence. Spelling is accurate and letters are formed correctly. In mathematics, most pupils have an understanding of number facts to 20 and above. The higher attainers are familiar with larger numbers, and they work confidently. The brisk oral start to the lessons gets the pupils' attention straight away, and is a good lead-in to the lesson.
8. This work is successfully built on and developed in Year 3 and 4. In Year 4, the pupils' reading is accurate and fluent. They talk feelingly about the characters and the plot in their reading books. Roald Dahl is a real favourite and the pupils really enjoy his humour. Pupils' pieces of extended writing are well structured, and they are familiar with writing for a range of different reasons, e.g. invitations, letters, and factual accounts. Grammar and spellings are usually accurate, even when writing notes on the computer. Work is well presented.
9. Standards in mathematics are above average. Higher attaining pupils understand place value in four digit numbers, with good levels of mental recall. Average attaining pupils can recognise and use negative numbers; they can also count in tens very speedily indeed. Lower attainers work with numbers to 100. They are adept at using their number line to help them achieve the correct answer.
10. Pupils have made speedy progress over the Summer Term, but the most rapid progress is with the Year 3 and 4 groups. Progress is good, and frequently very good for the reception pupils. It is satisfactory for Year 1 and 2, speeding up again in Year 3 and 4. There is a large group of lower attaining pupils in Year 1 and 2. This group need much help to keep up, especially when their teacher is working with another group.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Main strengths

- Pupils really like coming to school.
- They enjoy their work and work well both on their own and together.
- Behaviour is good.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and all the adults who work with them.
- They care for each other.

Points for development

- Attendance is unsatisfactory

12. Walsham-le-Willows' pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, have good attitudes to their school. They are very enthusiastic about it because it is "a nice place" in which they feel safe and happy. They also enjoy learning and playing with their friends and all the adults who look after them. Almost all the parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting, support this judgement.
13. Pupils get on very well with each other and all the adults who work with them. They are polite, friendly and respectful. They work very well, both together and independently. In an excellent reception lesson on knowledge and understanding of the world, for example, there was intense and sustained concentration as pupils searched, in pairs, for light sources in the school hall. Later, they happily and conscientiously worked on their own as they completed their worksheets. Pupils also delight in each other's success and expertise. In a Year 4 lesson about newspapers, for example, pupils really enjoyed hearing each other read out "punchy" news reports which they had written about recent storms.
14. Behaviour in and around the school is good because everyone understands and supports the "whole school" approach to discipline. They like the "marble jar system" and the way that it rewards their successes. In lessons, good behaviour is the norm and teachers and pupils are able to get on with the enjoyable business of teaching and learning. Play times are a happy mixture of well-behaved chasing, running and ball games with pupils chatting, sharing toys and generally looking after each other. No one is left out and pupils know what to do if they are worried, upset or feel they are being bullied. None of the last of these was seen during the course of the inspection. The school's policy for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a positive impact on all aspects of its day-to-day life and work.
15. Pupils really care for each other. In a Year 4 English lesson, for example, a pupil who was upset and struggling to complete his work, was comforted by a classmate. In a Year 2 English lesson, a pupil discretely reminded the teacher to close the blinds so that a visually impaired pupil could see more clearly. At playtimes anyone who is upset because, for example, they have fallen over, is surrounded by concerned friends and taken to a supervisor.
16. Pupils respond very well to responsibility. They help their teachers prepare and clear up after lessons. They proudly and conscientiously take turns to deliver dinner registers to the school office. Older pupils help out with assemblies operating, for example, lights and the overhead projector. They also fetch and carry lunchtime games. Year 4 pupils take responsibility for their own learning as, for example, they conscientiously settle down to work at their computers.
17. Attendance is unsatisfactory because it is lower than the national averages. The principal reasons for this during the last school year were illness and the in-term holidays of a small number of pupils. Punctuality is good. Lessons start and finish on time. There have been no exclusions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 19 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. This time there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching was good overall, and almost every teacher taught at least one lesson that was very good. The strongest teaching is with the youngest and oldest pupils. Four out of five lessons were good or better, and the rest were satisfactory. Weaknesses occurred when learning slowed down. This was usually in Year 1 and 2 when the teacher was working with a group of pupils and one of the other groups needed help. This was always spotted and it was dealt with, but pupils' learning slowed down in the meantime.

19. Main strengths

- Lesson planning is very good. Tasks are pitched at the right levels because assessments are accurate, and teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach.
- The literacy and numeracy strategies have developed a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the entire school.
- Teachers are much better than they were at assessing what their pupils have learnt in a lesson. They use this information well to plan the next stages in learning.
- Teaching and learning are monitored effectively so that any gaps are speedily identified and dealt with.
- Marking is consistent, giving clear pointers about what has to be done in order to improve.

Points for development

- Learning slows for the Year 1 and 2 group from time-to-time, and this needs to be checked out.
- Pupils need more time to work at practical investigations in their science activities.
- Some lessons are too long in the afternoon and a significant minority of pupils tend to lose interest before the end.

20. Children in the reception class – the Foundation Stage³ – progress well. This is because they are well taught. When they join the reception class their attainment is broadly average in all areas of learning⁴ and when they leave, at the end of the reception year, they are on course to exceed their targets in the Early Learning Goals. Staff are good at assessing what the children can do initially, when they start school. This enables them to plan a wide range of activities that are specially designed to cover the children's all-round development. There are good systems for checking how well the children are progressing. Gaps are soon identified and extra help provided so that learning does not slip. There is a good balance between the teacher-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. This helps the children to develop their independence as well as their personal and social skills.

21. Throughout the rest of the school learning is effective, except in those instances outlined above. For instance, in a science lesson in Year 3 and 4, pupils had a very short amount of time to investigate the properties of light despite the lesson being two hours long. Otherwise, tasks are pitched at the right levels, and learning moves forward smoothly when there is enough time. Pupils are challenged and extended in their learning, and teachers are much better at assessing what has been learnt in a lesson. They do this by asking questions, planning work at different levels, providing different levels of support, marking work, and checking out knowledge and understanding. In one example with the Year 1 group, the teacher asked a pupil "Show me how to make two equal towers with four multi-link cubes. Can we make two equal towers with five multi-link cubes?" The pupil worked this out practically, correctly identifying that four is an even number and five is an odd number. His previous knowledge was used to solve the problem successfully, and this gave the teacher an instant assessment of that pupils' understanding of odd and even numbers. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, and they progress at the same rate as their classmates.

³ The name given to the nursery and reception years.

⁴ The curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

22. One significant improvement in the teaching is that teachers now have high expectations about what the pupils can achieve in a lesson, as well as how well they behave. In one guided reading session in Year 4, at the start of the school day, a small group of pupils worked with their teacher reading *The Diary of a Killer Cat* by Anne Fine. The other pupils worked at different reading tasks; some using the computer, others working with the learning support assistant, some pupils worked in the library at a research topic and others were reading their chosen book. All of them knew exactly what they had to do, how much time was available, and what their role was at the feedback session at the end of the lesson. Tasks were interesting, encouraging the pupils to be actively involved throughout, whilst the teacher worked with her reading group.
23. Pupils were quite used to working in this way, rising successfully to the challenges set for them, and wasting no time. The lesson proceeded at a very good pace, no-one was left behind and many learning points were discussed and successfully highlighted by the teacher during the final reading by the poetry group. Standards were high and learning was very effective for all groups of pupils. Pupils in other parts of the school work independently, taking the responsibility for their own learning successfully. The main weakness is in science where there is too much direction by the teachers, and the pupils have too little time for their practical work. The working week is shorter at Walsham than it is at many other schools. This affects the amount of time available to teach the whole curriculum.
24. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught by every teacher. Planning is consistent and is of high quality. Teachers know their pupils well and tasks are pitched at the right levels for pupils working within all the attainment levels. Lessons get off to a brisk start, which is an improvement, and teachers are good at checking out what the pupils have remembered from previous lessons. The literacy and numeracy strategies have given the staff confidence. They know the subjects well and they move pupils' learning forward in a well-planned way so that standards continue to rise. Teachers are adept at questioning the pupils at the end of lessons to check out how much they have learnt, and to identify areas for future learning. This approach is successful because it enables staff to pose specific questions that are linked to the pupils' understanding, for example, to those pupils with special educational needs, or to the higher attaining pupils.

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

25. Main strengths

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage children is good.
- There is a good range of extra activities that support learning well.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Points for development

- There is a broad curriculum but it lacks balance in some curriculum areas, especially science where the pupils do not have enough time to investigate or to find things out for themselves.
 - Pupils do not have enough experience of practical activities in science.
 - There is an imbalance in the use of time. The time available for teaching and learning is less than it is in most schools, and some lessons are too long.
26. The curriculum provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is planned according to the national guidelines and activities are interesting and varied. The school has an exciting outdoor area that is used regularly for a range of activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The teacher has provided a stimulating and attractive learning environment, but some indoor equipment is old and needs replacing. For example, the lack of seating in the reading corner means that the children rarely actively chose to browse and look at books independently.
27. As at the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum of pupils aged five to nine makes a sound contribution to the standards achieved. The curriculum provided is relevant to pupils' backgrounds

and interest. The school meets statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There is good provision for personal and social education. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when there was no planned programme. Sex and drugs education are appropriately planned within the curriculum. Collective acts of worship meet statutory requirements.

28. The National Literacy and Numeracy Projects are securely in place and are used effectively to raise standards. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in year bands in Year 3 and 4 is effective, as pupil numbers are kept low and the teachers are able to focus on learning objectives for a single year. A range of strategies including separate guided reading sessions, regular use of optional assessment materials for English, mathematics and science, and targeted support, are all working well and having a positive impact on standards.
29. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. For pupils who have statements it is very good. The school meets its statutory requirements regarding pupils with special needs. The school has improved its system for identifying and supporting pupils. From an early age, children in the reception class are assessed in their first term and the information is used effectively to identify learning needs and to target further support.
30. A range of assessment materials is used effectively throughout the school to identify pupils' needs in literacy and numeracy. The school has a number of good strategies to help pupils on the special needs register and, as a result, many of these pupils achieve standards close to the national average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. There is good provision for two pupils who have been identified as gifted in mathematics.
31. Although the school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for pupils between the ages of five and nine, the curriculum is broad but it is not sufficiently balanced. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities for investigative work in science. The overall time allocation is slightly below the national recommendation for pupils in Year 1 and 2, and as a result not enough time is allocated for any of the subjects except English, mathematics and science. The teaching time allocation for pupils in Year 3 and 4 is over one hour short of the national recommendation. Music, art and design, history, geography and design technology are all below the recommended time. This limits the depth to which these subjects can be studied, and this can hold back standards.
32. There are also some weaknesses in the way the timetable is organised. Subjects such as art and design, science and history are taught in two-hour blocks. This can slow down the pace of pupils' learning because they lose interest towards the end of such lengthy sessions. Because of the organisation of the timetable, the art and design co-ordinator does not teach any art, which is a missed opportunity to utilise her expertise. The school needs to review its time allocation and the length of lessons in order to make the best possible use of the teaching time available.
33. There has been very good progress with most of the curriculum weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. The issues related to the Foundation Stage and special needs have been fully addressed.
34. The programme for personal and social and health education is good. Sex education and issues arising from drug misuse are taught within the science curriculum and as they arise. A school council has recently been formed so that the pupils can participate fully in issues that are of particular interest to them. The school's underlying atmosphere of care and concern for every individual, which is part of the school's aims, makes a powerful contribution to the personal and social development of its pupils.
35. The school enriches pupils' learning through a range of additional experiences. There is a good range of after school clubs including winter board games, choir, cross-stitch, readers, football, computer club and Wild Life watch. Year 3 pupils have a sleep-over and Year 4 a residential experience, both of which supports their social development well. Good use is made of the school grounds for geography and science, and visits to the local village extend the pupils' knowledge successfully in subjects such as religious education, art and design and geography. The school

regularly takes part in local and national competitions such as the K-Nex design and technology challenge, in order to add further interest to the curriculum.

36. The school has good links with the wider community. There is an extensive programme of regular visits and visitors who support various aspects of the curriculum. The visitors, (who include a local beekeeper, doctor, nurse, local police officer, and lay reader) have positive relationships with the pupils and add interest to the planned curriculum. Parents help on a regular basis in the Foundation Stage and make an invaluable contribution to the children's learning. A number of parent volunteers have also begun to support pupil's use of the library and a number of parents help teachers to run clubs. Care is taken to include boys and girls in available clubs.
37. The school has good relationships with partner institutions. The school works particularly closely with the nearby pre-school unit on curriculum issues. For example, they are currently working together on improving pupils' early reading skills. There are regular meetings between the school and staff of the local primary and middle schools. Staff from the local middle school, including the special needs co-ordinator, visit the school before pupils transfer and older pupils are invited to various curriculum events. These initiatives ensure that pupils transfer smoothly through each stage of their education.
38. The ways that the school helps pupils to develop their spirituality are good. In assemblies, for example, through themes such as "using our hands for good things", time is set aside for pupils to pray and explore their own thoughts and feelings. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the beauty and complexity of nature through, for example, the conservation area, the general layout and the beautifully planted, calm spaces of the school grounds. Throughout a reception lesson on light, there was an atmosphere of sheer delight and wonder as pupils identified sources of light such as the sun, fireworks and computer screens. There were similar levels of fascination and joy as pupils studied famous portraits and then tried portraiture for themselves. Carefully chosen music, ranging from "Greensleeves" to African "Sanctus" helped to set and change moods at the beginning and end of assemblies.
39. The school's efforts to enhance pupils' moral development are very good. Walsham-le-Willows' whole school approach to behaviour and discipline underpins every pupil's moral development. All pupils appreciate the need for high standards and the impact which good and bad behaviour have on the way that they learn and get on with each other. At the beginning of the school year, they are involved in setting and agreeing their class rules. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are protective of those whom they feel need help. They support the school's award system and celebrate each other's successes. The experimental school council was a success because pupils proved that they could maturely debate, for example, what was and what wasn't acceptable behaviour at playtimes. In the wider context, pupils are becoming aware that rules about how they should live their lives positively are linked to both Christian and Islamic beliefs. This develops their understanding successfully.
40. Walsham-le-Willows' provision for pupils' social development is very good. The vision of "a caring school where the children are happy" and "work co-operatively" is very much a reality. Pupils of all ages contribute to the smooth running of the community by, for example, delivering registers to the office and helping their teachers prepare before, and clear up after, lessons. Older pupils operate equipment during assemblies and help to organise playground toys.
41. Everyone looks after new pupils, young visitors from the next door nursery, and friends who have special learning and physical needs. In lessons pupils collaborate with each other. Clubs as varied as Cross Stitch and Wildlife Watch provide good opportunities, outside lesson time, for pupils to work, learn and develop their social skills. Excellent developmental opportunities for Year 4 pupils include a residential trip to Thornham Field Centre and a Year 3 "sleep over" in school. Pupils' awareness of the wider school community is evident, for example, in their posters about the school governors and support staff. They are involved in the world outside school through, for example, visits from the community policeman, competitions and fund raising for charities. A successful first attempt at a school council has given pupils an early taste of democracy in action and plans are now afoot for it to become a normal part of school life.

42. The school's efforts to broaden pupils' cultural development are good. Through their work on historical figures, such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, and visits to the village church, the Museum of East Anglian life and Bury theatre, they learn about their local and national culture. The school is committed to ensuring that pupils grow up to understand and respect others' beliefs and cultures. Therefore, through their assemblies and religious education lessons pupils learn about music from other lands and the principles of Christianity and Islam. Reading books include stories about culturally mixed communities and ethnic minorities. History and geography lessons help pupils explore the life in other times and countries. There are, for example, projects and major displays about the Anglo-Saxons, ancient Greeks and Islam. A large map of the world is illustrated with pupils' own work about the flags, populations, climates and sizes of various countries. Art lessons include introductions to the style and times of great artists such as Pablo Picasso and Vincent van Gogh.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Main strengths

- All staff and governors know their pupils really well and respond to their personal and general development needs.
- The whole school approach to behaviour is very effective.
- The use of assessment in English and mathematics is very good. In information and communications technology it is good.

Points for development

- Assessment arrangements for the rest of the curriculum are in place, but they need firming up.
44. The governors and staff of Walsham-le-Willows look after their pupils well. They are concerned to ensure that the school is as safe as possible. There are regular safety inspections, supported by the local education authority, of the whole school site and plans are in hand to introduce more rigorous risk assessment procedures. The arrangements for looking after pupils' welfare and child protection are good. All staff are well aware of the latter, which includes good links with all the appropriate local agencies. A number of staff have basic first aid qualifications.
45. The school's procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are straightforward and satisfactory, although actual levels of attendance are not. Attendance requirements are made very clear to every parent. Unexplained absences and poor punctuality are quickly followed up. On the rare occasions when serious problems do arise, the school brings in the local education welfare officer to work with the families.
46. Staff know their pupils really well. Everyone, including the school administrator and the lunch time supervisors, works hard to ensure that pupils' personal needs, as well as learning needs, are attended to properly. In lessons, such as a Year 4 session on how to measure the perimeter of a rectangle, teachers subtly change their questioning and presentation techniques to ensure that everyone is involved and makes the best possible progress. The learning support assistants are particularly sensitive to the problems of those pupils who have special educational needs and provide them with very good support.
47. Teachers encourage pupils to work hard. Achievements are recognised through the "marble jar" and award schemes. Teachers are good role models and set high standards of behaviour. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are based on a highly successful "whole school" system, which deals very effectively with any problems which do arise and the needs of the few pupils who have behavioural problems.

48. Circle time is used to encourage pupils to take responsibility for themselves and each other. A recent, experimental school council was so successful that a “mark two” version, which will include democratically elected class representatives, is in the pipeline.
49. The school’s arrangements for tracking pupils’ progress and achievements, which were criticised by the previous inspection team, have improved considerably. In English and mathematics, they are particularly good where a range of national, local authority, and teacher-designed assessments are used. The results of these assessments, and teachers’ lesson-by-lesson checks of pupils’ progress, are used to plan future lessons and set realistic but challenging targets for everyone. Similar but less formal methods are used to track and support pupils’ progress in ICT. Basic systems are in place for science, geography, history, religious education and physical education, and plans are in hand to extend these to rest of the curriculum subjects.
50. The staff and governors use the information provided by the assessment systems very successfully. This enables senior staff and governors to analyse the school’s strengths and weaknesses when they are preparing, reviewing and revising the school’s improvement plan.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Main strengths

- Parents think that Walsham-le-Willows is a very good school.
- Formal documents are good.
- Parents are kept closely informed about their children’s progress.
- There are very good “open door” communications.
- There are excellent arrangements for bringing new pupils into school.
- Parents make good contributions to the life of the school and their children’s education.

Points for development

None.

52. Parents think that Walsham-le-Willows is a very good school. They really value the family atmosphere and the way that the school cares for absolutely everyone. They firmly believe that the headteacher and the rest of the staff are successfully helping their children to work hard, learn and develop. They all support the well-established home-school agreement.
53. Formal documents, such as the prospectus and the governors’ report to parents, are well produced and contain a wealth of information about the school. Regular newsletters keep parents in touch with what is going on. Throughout the school year, there are regular consultation meeting where parents have the opportunity to discuss formally their children’s targets and progress. There are comprehensive end-of-year reports which provide subject by subject information about how pupils are getting on. Where appropriate, these reports include results of national tests. At the beginning of each term a summary of what pupils will be learning is sent home. All of this keeps parents up-to-date about how well their children are doing.
54. The arrangements for bringing new pupils into the school from the adjacent pre-school are excellent. Parents and carers are provided with information and ample opportunities to visit and meet their new teachers. The children, in the run up to their transfer, regularly join the reception class’s lessons and are made to feel really at home there.
55. The way that parents are welcomed into the school is a very good model of the “open door” approach to communication. Typically, at the beginning of the day, they come in to look at their children’s work, help them to settle, see what is going on in the classroom and chat to each other and the teachers. They then discretely “disappear” as registration time arrives. The headteacher goes out of her way to ensure that, when she is not teaching, she is available for any parents who wish to see her.

56. The headteacher and governors are committed to working in partnership with their pupils' parents. Hence, for example, parents were involved in the development and introduction of the highly successful "whole school approach" to discipline and behaviour. Plans to consult parents on ways and means of improving further older children's end-of-year reports are in the pipeline.
57. Homework is not a formal part of Walsham-le-Willows provision, but the arrangements are sound. The majority of parents conscientiously support their children's attempts to read and spell. Pupils' reading diaries are therefore very much up-to-date and an important means of communication between parents and teachers.
58. Parents are involved in the day-to-day running of the school. A small group of volunteers, for example, provide regular help in classes. Another recently formed group will help to run the new school library. Other parents help with after school clubs and the Friends Association is a successful fundraiser and organiser of social events. Many more parents are more than willing to help with "one-off" events such as educational visits.
59. The inspection team looked into the suggestion by a small number of parents that there were not enough extra-curricular activities. It concluded the number and range of activities was appropriate for a school of this size and type.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

60. Main strengths
- The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been overcome successfully and the school is now led well and managed effectively.
 - Staff work together effectively and they are well led by the headteacher. In this small school everyone has a range of responsibilities, which they carry out successfully.
 - Governors are really involved in shaping the way forward for the school. They know where the strengths and weaknesses are and everyone is an active member of the school team.
 - The school is much better than it was at monitoring and evaluating its performance. Support from the Local Education Authority has helped to improve this aspect of the school's work significantly.
 - All additional funds are well managed in ways that push up standards and speed up progress.
- Points for development
- In this small school the headteacher and the governors need to make sure that there is enough time in the school day to deliver an effective primary curriculum.
 - Standards in science need pushing up and the science curriculum needs some improvement.
61. The headteacher and her team have worked hard to move the school forward since its last inspection, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. At that time there were many significant weaknesses for the school to tackle. Very good progress has been made, especially over recent months, and the school no longer has serious weaknesses.
62. One of the main strengths at Walsham-le-Willows has been the determination of everyone connected with the school to do better, and to make sure that all the pupils are achieving as well as they can. There have been some significant successes; more pupils are achieving the higher level 3 in their tests at seven, and when they leave Walsham, aged nine, their standards are above average in English and mathematics. However, standards are average in science and there is work to do here. The leadership and management of the school is much stronger than it was. The headteacher provides firm leadership, and the governors have many strengths. They are excellent at carrying out their duties, and they have a firm role in shaping the way forward for the school.

63. The headteacher and her team are tackling the current improvement plan sensibly. They are moving forward positively under the guidance of the local education authority. Their support has been invaluable to the school, especially in determining the best ways to evaluate the school's performance so that it knows how well it is doing. There is a very strong, positive ethos in the school, and everyone is extremely eager to maintain the pace of improvement. Standards, teaching and learning are monitored effectively, and the school makes the best use of all the information available about its performance. What has to be tackled next are the issues regarding the length of curriculum time in the school day and the curriculum provision in science.
64. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis. Clearly understood systems are in place, everyone knows what is expected of them, and channels of communication are good. Parents are very supportive of the school and the good turn-out at the parents' meeting meant that parents' comments were truly indicative of their positive views.
65. A very able partnership between the chairman and vice-chairman means that the governors are led very well. Governors are very clear about their roles and responsibilities, and importantly, they are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the school and what to do about them. Finances are carefully monitored and developments costed. Costs are high, but not excessively so, to educate each pupil at this small village school. Extra funds are targeted specifically so that learning is improved, especially for those pupils with special educational needs. Governors take into account the principles of best value when they are determining their spending decisions, and they are successful. Funds are used prudently, and the significant amounts that are carried forward from year-to-year reflect this approach. For example, by employing an additional teacher so that the Year 3 and 4 pupils can be taught in smaller groups for literacy and numeracy. Standards are mainly above average when the pupils leave Walsham, from a broadly average starting point when they join the reception class. The cost of educating pupils at Walsham is high. Pupils of all capabilities make good progress, they behave well, and they have positive attitudes about coming to school and learning effectively. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
66. There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers and support staff for a school of this size. Staff have job descriptions but they are currently being reviewed in order to take into account changes in roles and responsibilities, which have been introduced since the previous inspection. All staff have professional development plans which include access to training to ensure that they are up to date. An appraisal system is in place and all staff have appropriate targets to work to. The arrangements for the induction and training of new teachers are very good. All of this has a positive impact on the school's work.
67. The inside and outside of the buildings are well maintained and are in good condition. Teaching accommodation is good. Since the previous inspection a new library and classroom have been built and the hall is no longer used as a classroom. A shortage of storage space, however, means that the hall and corridor are still too cluttered. The staffroom is very small and there is no separate and private space for the headteacher. The latter can cause problems, for example, when confidential meetings need to be held. The general environment is very good with large, well-maintained and attractively planted grass and hard play areas. There is a very attractive outdoor story telling and teaching area and a separate area for environmental studies. This extends the curriculum opportunities that are available to the pupils, enhancing their learning successfully.
68. Teaching resources, which were criticised by the previous inspection team, are now satisfactory overall. There has been particularly good progress in ICT where there are now at least three up-to-date computers in every classroom.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to push up standards further, and to improve the quality of education provided by the school the governors, headteacher and staff should:-

- (1) Improve standards, and the science curriculum, by making sure that all pupils have enough opportunities for practical work in their science investigations.
See paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 19, 124 – 130, 156

- (2) Governors and senior staff should ensure that there is enough time for teaching and learning in all subjects.
See paragraphs 19, 21, 23, 25, 31, 32, 60, 131, 138, 145, 175

Minor issue

Governors and senior managers should continue their efforts to improve attendance rates.
See paragraph 45

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	17	8	0	0	0
Percentage	6	23	49	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	67
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	16

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	9	9	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	15	18	17
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	83 (92)	100 (92)	94 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	15	16	17
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	83 (92)	89 (92)	94 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Because there are ten or fewer boys and girls in Year 2 their separate data is not included in the above table.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	53	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.2
Average class size	15

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	231946
Total expenditure	230933
Expenditure per pupil	2782
Balance brought forward from previous year	18379
Balance carried forward to next year	19392

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	67
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	38	62	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	41	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	50	3	3	0
The teaching is good.	62	35	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	41	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	38	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	32	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	47	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	9	0	3

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

70. Main strengths

- The school makes good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage.
- They are provided with a stimulating and varied curriculum and as a result they show real enthusiasm and interest in their learning.
- This all round good start is strength of the school.

Points for development

- Continue to develop the good provision for these young children in the Foundation Stage.

71. The teacher and learning support assistant work effectively together as a team and provide a calm purposeful, happy learning atmosphere. Teaching is good, with some very good features. Most children make good progress towards their Early Learning Goals and many are on course to exceed them by the end of the reception year. Children of all capabilities are well catered for. This is especially important as some of the youngest children only have one term in the reception class. There are currently no children identified as having special needs.
72. The very small number of reception children are in the mixed reception / Year 1 class. At the time of the inspection they had completed half a term, with no part time schooling. There are very good induction arrangements, which smooth the transition between home and school very well indeed. Pre-school children who join the school in the spring and summer terms have regular planned time in the reception class to help them settle easily and their parents are provided with an attractive and helpful informative booklet. All of this helps to provide a smooth transition. Parental contributions are welcomed and they make a good contribution to their children's learning, through the time they give in school and their support of the regular homework activities, such as visits to their home by Sam the snail!
73. Attainment is assessed using the local authority scheme. The assessments undertaken at the beginning of each year show that the level of attainment when children join reception is broadly average with a wide range of ability. The teacher makes very good use of the initial assessments, which, together with her own detailed on-going records guide her in taking the children's learning further. Last year's records show that the school adds measurable value to the children's knowledge, skills and understanding during the year. Children have simple individual targets that are shared with the parents and reviewed regularly. This helps their progress to be accurately assessed so that any gaps can be dealt with swiftly.
74. Teaching is consistently good in each area of learning with high expectations, a good understanding of the early year's curriculum, and very good teaching of reading, writing and numbers. Children respond well to the good teaching they receive. They work really hard and concentrate well. The teacher's planning is thorough and caters effectively for the children's wide range of ability. The learning support assistant is a particular strength in the way she reinforces the class routines and encourages the reception children to mix with the older Year 1 children.
75. There have been a number of improvements since the previous inspection, with very good progress with the minor key issue relating to the Foundation Stage, which has been fully addressed. The foundation curriculum has been introduced and the planning has been revised. There are more opportunities for reception children to make informal choices during the day. There is an attractive and secure outside area which the staff use imaginatively, providing a range of simultaneous indoor and outdoor activities whenever the weather permits. The Foundation Stage is managed well.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Reception children are confident and friendly. They have settled in well in a very short time because of the effective admission arrangements. Children are welcomed into a relaxed setting with a range of play equipment inside and outside the classroom and staff give them special time at the beginning of each day. Many reception and Year 1 parents spend this time talking to the staff and looking at children's work, which also helps the reception children feel secure and part of the larger class.
77. Care is taken to include the younger children in every lesson, and as a result reception children are confident to mix with the Year 1 children. Having younger children from the nearby pre-school for two afternoons each week also helps their confidence, as they are mixing with children they know. There are very good relationships between the staff and children. The staff make sure the children understand what behaviour is expected, with the use of lots of praise. The children respond well with good behaviour. The sessions with the Year 1 pupils are skilfully organised, so that the reception children have shorter sessions with a good range of practical activities.
78. Staff encourage the children to take responsibility for tidying away equipment. The Year 1 pupils provide good role models for appropriate behaviour. The children enter school with satisfactory levels of social skills; when they leave the reception class their standards are above average. Teaching is very good and the children make very good progress.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Children enter with broadly average communication, language and literacy skills, although their reading skills are below the national expectation. They have a wide range of ability. The reception teacher has identified, from the formal assessment material last year, aspects of reading where the children are weaker. She and the pre-school co-ordinator are working together effectively to improve children's knowledge of sounds, and enhance their reading skills. Children experience elements of the literacy framework and the teacher also plans separate informal language activities daily. A strong feature is the time the staff give to promoting children's speaking and listening skills, with frequent opportunities to talk. Fun activities using teddies are pitched well at the Year 1 and reception children, and the activities really capture their imagination. As a result, children listen well and enjoy answering questions.
80. Attractive big books such as *The bear and the scary night* are used to encourage children's enjoyment of reading. In a particularly good lesson the teacher's lively and interesting manner made a session on learning sounds and handwriting really fun for the younger children. The learning support assistant often reinforces this work in smaller groups, in a more informal setting. There are a range of good quality books, with reading books and word games to take home and share. Children use the school's attractive new library, but there is no special seating for children to sit informally and enjoy reading in comfort and, as a result, children rarely chose to sit in the book corner.
81. Last year's work shows that basic skills are covered thoroughly with handwriting, spelling and reading skills practised regularly. As a result, by the end of the year, many could write their name neatly and write simple sentences with some support. Each ability group is well catered for and higher attaining pupils and make very good progress. Supplies of paper, pencils, crayons, white boards and pens are available for children to make marks informally. Due to the lack of time in the Foundation Stage, a number of mainly younger children do not always complete the expected standard in reading and writing although they make good progress in a short time. Teaching is very good and as a result many children are on course to exceed their Early Learning Goals and make very good progress in their basic language skills.

Mathematical development

82. Most children enter school each year with broadly average skills in number awareness, with a wide range of ability. Elements of the numeracy framework are used effectively, especially the daily oral session. Number skills are practiced in different ways through a range of practical activities, which the children really enjoy. The class has an attractive mathematics area. There are plenty of good quality resources, including, number pictures, puzzles and number lines to 20, with regular opportunities to use sand and water trays to explore and fill containers.
83. There is an appropriate balance between number based activities and activities that promote the children's understanding of mathematical ideas and language. There are informal opportunities to count, match, thread beads, make patterns and handle coins. The teacher regularly uses number rhymes and songs so that children can practice and reinforce their learning in a fun way.
84. Scrutiny of last year's work shows that many pupils make good progress with their mathematical understanding. Due to the lack of time in the Foundation Stage, however, a minority of mainly younger children do not complete all the learning goals. Teaching is very good and, as a result, many children are likely to exceed their Early Learning Goals and make very good progress in their basic mathematical skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Children enter with the expected knowledge and understanding of the world around them. One strength of the teaching is the focus on extending children's curiosity through first hand activities. For example, in a lesson on light sources, the children were fully engaged and excited at investigating light sources around the school. However, there were limited opportunities for them to explore and investigate on their own. The school grounds, including the school pond, are used well to develop an interest and respect for living things and provide a good basis for their later work in science and geography.
86. Provision for ICT is good. Detailed records show that the children have regular opportunities to use computer programs to reinforce their reading and number skills. The children can use a mouse with confidence to move a picture of a teddy. Occasionally computer activities with Year 1 children are slightly too difficult for them.
87. The curriculum makes a positive contribution towards the children's knowledge and understanding of different cultures. The locally agreed religious syllabus covers simple religious stories and they learn about different festivals as they arise. Care is taken in the planned curriculum to use books that reflect people from different backgrounds and cultures, for example, when learning about being healthy children learnt about the life of two famous nurses, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. Teaching is good and most children are likely to achieve the standards expected, with many achieving above those expected.

Physical development

88. Children enter the reception class with the appropriate physical development for their age. They enjoy their physical activities. The learning support assistant makes a valuable contribution as she encourages the children to join in and to stop and listen to the class teacher. This helps build up their confidence. Opportunities to develop children's physical skills outside are very good. The children have access to a range of small equipment and wheeled vehicles, together with exciting equipment such as a climbing frame and attractive caterpillar! The staff are exploring ways to ensure that it is used as frequently as possible throughout the week.
89. When children start school most have had pre-school experience of using scissors, paintbrushes and glue. The staff build on these skills and continue to provide opportunities to handle equipment safely. Children use large and small construction equipment with confidence and pleasure. Teaching is good and the children make good progress. They are on course to exceed their Early Learning Goals because they have regular access to a wide range of equipment to fully develop all their physical skills.

Creative development

90. Most children enter school with the creative development expected for their age. Staff develop the children's creative talents well through art, music, physical education, dance and role-play sessions. The current reception children have had experiences of free painting, colour mixing, model making, handling play dough and using chalk to create floor drawings in the outside area. They enjoy drawing pictures of themselves and one child was delighted at a drawing of herself by an older Year 1 pupil.
91. Children have regular opportunities to sing songs and rhymes. A range of music is used well to develop their creative response. For example, a particularly well-chosen piece of music set the mood and helped them to use their imagination as they pretend to jump in and out of puddles.
92. The role-play area is used appropriately to develop their creativity. There is a home area with a range of clothing and a role-play area is currently set up as estate agents to encourage imaginative play. While the staff work hard to make these areas interesting for the children, much of the actual equipment is old and uninspiring. The school has allocated funds to replace this outdated equipment. Teaching is good and most children are likely to achieve the standards expected, with many achieving above that expected.

ENGLISH

93. The most recent test results in English show that a greater number of pupils are achieving the higher level 3 than they did in the previous year, 2001. Reading standards have improved significantly with every pupil achieving the expected level, with a significant amount of higher achievement. Writing standards are above the expected standard. Care has to be taken interpreting these and other results, as this is a small group of pupils.
94. Main strengths
 - Standards are improving and a greater percentage of pupils are achieving the higher level 3 in their reading and in their writing.
 - Teaching is good, and frequently very good. The literacy strategy has had a positive impact on improving teaching and learning. Planning is very good.
 - All the staff have a consistent approach to teaching English. This boosts standards all round.
 - Assessments are used effectively to guide planning, to set targets, and to monitor progress and attainment.

Points for development

- Year 2 pupils do not know how to find a book in the library.
 - Pupils pre-reading skills can be improved by extending the successful links with the nearby pre-school.
 - Pupils need more opportunities to read at home, in addition to the new parent/school reading initiative.
 - Some pupils find it hard to read their learning targets in their books.
95. Baseline assessment⁵ shows that pupils enter school with broadly average skills in speaking and listening and writing. Most pupils are below average in their reading skills.
 96. There were a number of issues related to teaching and planning that were identified as weaknesses at the time of the previous inspection. These have been fully addressed in a relatively short time. The planning is now very good and work is well matched to the pupils' different levels of ability. A systematic spelling programme is in place and pupils now achieve higher than

⁵ An assessment of pupils' skills that is undertaken when the pupils start school in the reception class.

nationally. The school has recently built an attractive library area for pupils to develop their research and library skills. Marking is more detailed and helpful to the pupils.

97. The literacy strategy has been effectively introduced and the school has a range of initiatives that are working well to raise standards. The separate guided reading programme is particularly successful and has helped drive up standards for the different ability groups. Each year more pupils are achieving above the national average and this is set to continue this year.
98. The current Year 2 achieve above average standards in writing, and average in reading and speaking and listening. By the end of the year, the school targets indicate that they may also be above average in reading, with an increased percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in both reading and writing. The majority of pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills from their initial baseline assessments, especially as a significant number of them have only one term in reception. Standards for the current Year 4 pupils are above average in speaking and listening and writing, and average in reading. Detailed analysis of pupils' test results over a number of years show that the majority of pupils make very good progress by the age of nine.
99. Pupils with special needs make good progress, and pupils with statements of special educational need make very good progress because of the very good support they receive from their learning support assistants. Many younger pupils, who have been in the school for less time, make very good progress. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
100. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted across the school. Standards for pupils in Year 1 are average for their age with many of them achieving above average standards. The school builds well on the very good teaching they receive in the Foundation Stage. The teacher skilfully uses a range of strategies to increase the younger children's confidence. For example, all pupils regularly use "the hot seat" to share their ideas. Less confident pupils share their ideas in pairs. Pupils with specific communication difficulties are supported by learning support assistants very well. They are encouraged to express ideas verbally and to share their ideas in very small groups. This helps them to become more confident when speaking to others.
101. Throughout the school most pupils listen well to their teachers. However, a small number of pupils have to be reminded to listen to each other and to the class teacher. This can happen when the introduction to a lesson is longer than usual, because they lose their concentration. Teachers in the mixed age classes generally provide good role models in communication for the youngest pupils in each class, and this develops the pupils' skills well. Pupils enjoy communicating and sharing their thoughts and opinions.
102. The current Year 3 have a significant minority of pupils who are below the national average in their speaking and listening skills. The teacher plans regular opportunities to enable them to express their ideas. In a very well taught lesson, the pupils made very good progress while talking about and finally memorising the poem *Bed in Summer*. The teacher's expressive voice and the well-chosen poem motivated the boys and girls, who joined in enthusiastically. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to agree a range of sensible and persuasive reasons why they should be able to stay up late!
103. In Year 4 most pupils can explain their ideas fluently. They listen well to each other and to the teachers. For example, they can summarise some of their learning about the history of the Olympic games in an interesting manner that holds the attention of other pupils. Standards are about average for this time in the school year. Year 4 pupils are expected to achieve the national average in reading, with some pupils exceeding the expectation. This represents good progress for both these groups of pupils who had below average skills in their reading when they started school, with very few higher attainers. This also represents very good progress for some of the youngest pupils who had less time in school.
104. The school has put in place a whole range of strategies to improve reading standards further. The school's decision to take guided reading out of the literacy hour is very effective and the numbers of pupils reaching the national average and above are improving each year. Throughout the school

each morning there is a really purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy these sessions and work really hard. The guided reading sessions are taught well across the school.

105. Year 2 pupils have appropriate reading skills and they build on the successful teaching in Year 1. They use a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words. Most read competently, showing much enthusiasm when reading. Lower attaining pupils have good strategies for approaching unfamiliar words. They use initial sounds and pictures to gather information successfully.
106. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have sound reading skills. Average and above average pupils read with good expression, interest and understanding. The school's home reading diaries are helpful to parents, as the suggestions are different for each year. Children have attractive bookmarks with their own targets. Most can read or recall their targets, however, some are written in words that are too difficult. A number of older pupils belong to a local library and talk enthusiastically about the type of books they enjoy. They use the new school library appropriately and can locate information from non-fiction texts. They are able to read silently and recall events from their books. Lower attaining pupils have some useful strategies to read text successfully.
107. Across the school pupils are encouraged to use the new school library. A group of parent volunteers work with pupils to develop their library skills. Older pupils have good research and library skills; they can select and return information books using the school's classification system. Year 2 pupils cannot find books from the library, and this is an area for development. The school has improved its range of books and there is a good selection of books from different cultures. The school has good strategies in place to ensure pupils read a range of books including poetry, plays, fiction and information books.
108. Writing skills are good across the school. Scrutiny of this term's work shows that pupils have a thorough grounding in basic skills, which are taught well. The school has addressed the issue of the limited range of writing opportunities and work scrutiny shows that the range has been increased significantly. The school keeps individual records of pupil's different kinds of reading and writing to ensure that all aspects are covered effectively.
109. Great emphasis is placed on handwriting skills. Throughout the school the pupils are encouraged to develop legible handwriting. From an early age, pupils are taught to form their letters correctly and by the end of Year 2 most pupils' handwriting is neat, correctly formed and the right size. The school uses helpful handwriting and spelling grids to ensure the skills are covered systematically. Pupils in Year 4 have a good grasp of punctuation and grammar. Their work is usually neat and well presented, with handwriting that is legible and joined up. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection regarding the teaching of spelling have been fully addressed. Regular spellings are set for homework and this is reflected in their work, as most spellings are accurate.
110. Pupils are encouraged by the staff to take pride in their work and the marking comments made by teachers are generally useful. Older pupils undertake extended writing activities and there are examples of redrafting and editing. There is a good balance between developing basic skills and increasing the pupil's imaginative writing in other subjects. For example, in history there are many opportunities for extended writing and to write imaginatively e.g. "The people of Caesar are shocked. Mark Anthony is shocked. Caesar is killed!" Computer programs are used well in most lessons and interesting programs such as "My incredible dictionary" are used effectively to consolidate and extend pupils' literacy skills.
111. Pupils' attitudes to language and literacy are very good. Most pupils are attentive, concentrate well, stay on task and work hard. Many pupils can work independently for periods of time while the teachers work with different groups of pupils. Alphabets, dictionaries and other resources are used appropriately. Pupils show respect for each other and for the staff and take responsibility for the equipment in classes. They have good co-operation skills and relationships with each other and with the staff.
112. The teaching is consistently good in Years 1 and 2 with examples of very good teaching of the younger children in guided reading. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is very good with real strengths in the teaching of guided reading. The quality of the teachers' marking has improved and they usually give detailed helpful pointers based on pupils' targets. The lessons across the school are

characterised by very good planning for the different groups of pupils, with careful systematic teaching of the basic skills of literacy and imaginative materials. The pace of lessons is usually good, although it slows down occasionally when the introductions are too long. A strength in English is the work of the learning support assistants, whose skilful interventions mean that the pupils with special educational needs make at least good progress. An example of all of the above teaching strengths was seen in a Year 4 lesson when pupils were fully involved in writing activities to produce a newspaper. The teacher's use of powerful verbs, alliteration and focused vocabulary, helped the pupils produce interesting and lively articles. The session was imaginatively planned with good challenge. While some lower attaining pupils struggled with the task, they were fully absorbed and made good efforts.

113. The school has benefited considerably from the expertise of the local education authority and, as a result, teaching has improved significantly and is now consistently good. There are some aspects of teaching, which could be improved further in order to continue to raise standards in English. The pace needs to be maintained in every lesson and less time spent on the introductions so that the pupils do not become restless.
114. The management of English is very good. The school's priorities for English are very clear and focused on raising standards. The headteacher has a monitoring programme in place that reflects the detailed action plan for English. She regularly observes teaching and learning and is currently focusing on the impact of the separate guided reading programme. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses and is tackling them in imaginative ways.

MATHEMATICS

115. In the most recent tests for the seven-year-olds, standards were above average, as they are for the nine-year-olds. Standards are higher than they were last year (2001), but this is a small group of pupils and one pupil can make a significant difference to overall grades. Inspectors found that standards are average for the Year 2 pupils and above average for those in Year 4. This is a similar pattern to previous years, but what has changed this year is that a greater percentage of Year 2 pupils achieved higher levels in the tests. This year, 2002/3, there is a significant minority of lower attaining pupils whose standards are lower than average.

116. The main strengths are:-

- Very good teaching for the Year 3 and 4 pupils means that they make very good progress as well.
- Teachers are confident in teaching mathematics, and the older pupils are well challenged and extended.
- Lessons are very well planned, and the teachers are good at tracking pupils' attainment and progress. This helps them to pitch work at the right levels.
- Higher attaining pupils are well extended, and those pupils with special educational needs are well supported.

Points for development:-

- Learning slows for some pupils in Year 1 and 2 because from time-to-time they need help and their teacher is working with other groups. When this happens teaching and learning are not as strong as they could be.

117. Lessons usually start with an oral session, which quickly gets the pupils' attention, keeping them on their toes so that no time is wasted. This is an improvement since the HMI visit in the spring term. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils speedily responded to the teacher's questions about number facts. This was a very good lead into the lesson on factors and multiplication, as the teacher skilfully drew the pupils' attention to the link between multiplication and the repeated addition of numbers e.g. $4 \times 4 = 16$, that is $4 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 16$. Standards were higher than expected for the age group at this time in the school year. The teacher's high expectations that the pupils used their

prior knowledge when answering her questions meant that their knowledge was extended successfully.

118. Higher, average and lower attaining pupils all benefited from this approach, helping them all to make very good progress. In this lesson the pupils made excellent use of the calculators on their class computers, using them as an integral component of the lesson. Boys and girls of all capabilities located the relevant file, scrolled down the menu, located the correct program and worked independently, allowing the teacher to give extra help where it was needed most.
119. Pupils worked diligently and very competently throughout the lesson, all of which contributed to rapid learning and good standards. Meticulous planning, and secure on-going assessment, kept the teacher fully appraised of gains in the pupils' learning. This information is successfully used to set targets for the pupils, as well as to plan future lessons. All of this makes sure that learning does not slip and that pupils achieve to the best of their capabilities.
120. Another high quality lesson in Year 4 focused on co-ordinates, with the pupils drawing common 2D shapes, variously orientated, on grids. Standards were higher than expected for the age group. In this class, the very highest attaining pupils were suitably challenged by the teacher's probing questions, whilst pupils with special educational needs were very well supported by the learning support assistant. This enabled them to make very good progress, like the rest of the class.
121. Standards in Year 2 are about average. The pupils count in twos fairly accurately up to 20, but there is a large group of lower attaining pupils who need a great deal of support to achieve this. This group find it difficult to count in twos unaided. Practical and written tasks are pitched at the right levels for the pupils, but the pace of learning slows from time-to-time because their teacher is working with one group and another group need help.
122. A previous weakness focused on pupils' inability to interpret graphs. This has been overcome, and they are now adept at interpreting the information on block graphs. These covered a variety of topics, ranging from giving data about themselves to their favourite authors and poets. Some older pupils had created graphs on the computer to link in with other on-going work in the classroom, with obvious success and enthusiasm.
123. Mathematics is managed very well, and the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning in the subject. The numeracy strategy has created a unified approach to teaching, and this is helping the staff to get the best from their pupils. The staff are well trained, and all of this results in a greater percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in the tests. Computers are used effectively to support the learning of all pupils and everyone is fully included in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum.

SCIENCE

124. Results in the 2002 science tests for seven-year-olds show an improvement on the previous year's results. More pupils achieved the higher levels than they did last year. Overall standards are average. That said, the group is small so results should be treated with caution. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were below average. Inspectors found standards at this early stage in the autumn term to be average for both the seven-year-olds and the nine-year-olds, but they could be better.
125. Main Strengths
 - Lesson plans are detailed and thorough, and pupils' progress is tracked regularly.
 - Pupils are keen and eager to learn.
 - A new co-ordinator is in post. She has speedily identified how to take the subject forward.

Points for development

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate and find out things for themselves. Standards could be better.
 - Better use could be made of ICT to chart the findings and results of pupils' investigations.
 - Lessons are too long and from time-to-time pupils lose their concentration towards the end of the lesson.
126. Although standards have improved since the last inspection, and are now average, they could be even better. The curriculum is carefully planned, and this helps learning to move forward at a sound rate. However, there are some gaps. The most significant one is that the pupils do not have enough opportunities to find out and to investigate for themselves. Teaching is satisfactory overall.
127. In one lesson older pupils were studying different sources of light. The lesson was carefully planned because it was very long – two hours. Pupils made sound progress. They firmed up their knowledge of light sources and they investigated some of the properties of light. However, the pupils needed longer time to do this well, and to record their findings themselves. There was too much direction for them, and they did not have enough opportunities to work independently. Learning points were not always developed as well as they could have been, especially for the average attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils were challenged by their task, which was pitched at the right level for them. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, had extra support, which was given by the teacher, and they too moved soundly forward in their learning.
128. What all the pupils were especially good at was identifying what they want to find out next. The teacher adeptly structured her questions to check out how much the pupils had found out about the properties of light, as well as guiding them towards the next stage in learning. This was done well, enabling the pupils to identify for themselves how they were going to build on and extend their knowledge. Standards are about average for both the Year 3 pupils and the Year 4 pupils.
129. Standards are also about average for the pupils in Year 2. They too were studying light and its sources. For part of the lesson pupils developed their understanding of darkness by investigating how light from a torch enabled them to “see” in a dark cupboard. The pupils were excited by this investigation, and they were very keen to take part. Their teacher made the best use of specific questions to aid their understanding, but there were missed opportunities to take forward the higher attaining pupils. Their worksheet lacked challenge when they were recording their findings. The lesson was too long to fully sustain the pupils’ interest throughout.
130. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. She has a very clear view about the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Her plans are clearly designed to move the subject forward, and the staff are well motivated to succeed.

ART AND DESIGN

131. Main strengths

- The subject is well led and managed.
- Pupils have a wide range of creative experiences using a range of media.

Points for development

- There are some weaknesses in the way art and design is organised. Some sessions are too long and currently there is not enough time allocated by the school for art and design.
 - All classes are below the nationally recommended time except Year 1. Years 3 and 4 are 50 per cent below the national recommendation. This means they are unlikely to have enough time to cover all the aspects planned in sufficient depth.
132. Only one art lesson was observed during the inspection therefore judgements cannot be made about teaching. Standards achieved by the seven- and nine-year-olds are average for this time in

the school year. This is the same standard that was found at the last inspection. Most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. At the last inspection there was a weakness in art and design. This has been well tackled and pupils' skills are now being suitably developed.

133. In the Year 1 lesson observed the younger pupils responded enthusiastically to the teaching. They showed good creative effort and worked well in small groups. Boys and girls were equally enthusiastic about their art experiences. The teacher and learning support assistant encouraged the children to use mirrors carefully to observe their features, and by the end of the session most children had produced portraits of themselves or each other in a range of media, including paint, chalk and play dough. The small numbers in the class meant that the class teacher and learning support assistant could give quality interventions and individual support, and, as a result, all children, including those pupils with special educational needs, made good progress. Whilst the lesson was always interesting, the pace dipped occasionally because the two hour session was too long for some pupils.
134. In Year 1 and 2 pupils cover a range of skills and techniques. Attention is paid to colour mixing, painting and drawing skills and to using equipment such as scissors, and paint brushes sensibly. Pupils in the mixed reception/Year 1 class produce portraits of each other to a high standard with a good level of detail. Year 2 pupils use clay as part of their two-dimensional work. The local grounds are used well, for example, when the Year 1 and 2 class produced observational art from nature, made cushions based on snail patterns and produced a collage of bright and cheerful sunflower paintings based on huge sunflowers grown in the school grounds.
135. Pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class build on these skills successfully, achieving the standard expected for their age. Good examples in the work scrutiny show how pupils are using their computer skills regularly to support their learning. Pupils' use of sketchbooks is good across the school. Older pupils use the books to sketch aspects of work and to review their techniques, for example, when designing chairs or sketching parts of buildings. Year 4 pupils take their sketchbooks with them to the middle school as part of their transition arrangements. This is a helpful point of contact and discussion when the pupils join their new school. Occasionally teachers make useful comments to help the pupils take their learning forward, although this could be employed more systematically across the school.
136. Pupils experience a range of art and artists including European, African, and Aboriginal art. Pupils enjoy art and design but cannot name any artists they have studied. There are a good range of high quality pictures to develop pupils' interest in art and artists. These were used well in the reception / Year 1 lesson when children really enjoyed looking at the different ways artists such as Miro, Picasso and van Gough painted faces.
137. The subject co-ordinator keeps a useful portfolio of skills, together with some photos that illustrate different techniques. Pupils' progress is monitored soundly, and their skills are assessed at regular intervals. This helps the co-ordinator to plan the next stages in the subject's development successfully. Because of the organisation of the timetable the co-ordinator does not teach any art and design, which is a missed opportunity to utilise her expertise.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

138. Main strengths

- The co-ordinator has a secure grasp of the subject, which is well led.

Points for development

- ❑ The school has identified the need to increase the opportunities for food technology and to increase the amount of equipment in the school. The school has begun to address this issue through technology days where pupils are involved in a range of activities including making food.
 - ❑ Currently there is not enough time allocated for technology. For example Years 3 and 4 have 50 per cent less than the time recommended nationally, which means they do they are unlikely to have enough time to cover all the aspects planned in sufficient depth.
139. No lessons were seen. Evidence from work samples of last year and this term, shows that all elements of the subject are covered. The seven-year-olds are achieving average standards, as they were at the last inspection, but there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the nine-year-olds. Most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They have made puppets, wheeled vehicles and designed a playground. In food technology they have made fruit salads and sandwiches. Good use is made of evaluation sheets to encourage pupils to evaluate the quality of their work. In one example, after designing items for a playground they evaluated its success. One pupil noted the hardest thing to do was “to stick the wood together” and another pupil commented “I have learnt to use a glue gun safely”.
140. Planning shows that pupils in Year 3 and 4 have made photograph frames, and some have made either money containers, purses or pencil containers. They have designed sandwiches and taken part in the K-Nex Challenge involving pupils in designing and making model vehicles than can move across the floor.
141. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the design process. They can evaluate aspects of their work, noting successes and difficulties. When discussing how they made picture frames a Year 2 pupil noted that it was more difficult than they thought when they designed it because “a bit stuck out from the wood and it did not stand up so I had to make it again more carefully”. They understand safety issues and know they have to be careful when using a glue gun “because it is hot and can burn”.
142. A good feature across the school is the use of different skills to support work in design and technology. This aspect has been developed well by the co-ordinator. Pupils’ skills are charted regularly, and their progress is monitored soundly, enabling the co-ordinator to identify where there are gaps in pupils’ learning. Literacy and art skills are used when pupils record their work and some mathematical skills are used for measuring. There are also links between the science and technology, i.e. when designing a torch. There are some examples of pupils using their computer skills, for example, when they logged on to the Internet to research healthy food as part of a survey. All of this helps to promote pupils’ interest and involvement in the subject successfully.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

143. It was not possible to observe geography being taught during the inspection. Scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate that Year 2 pupils have a working knowledge and understanding of maps. Older pupils found it difficult to recall work in geography, and needed much prompting. On the evidence available it was not possible to make any judgements about geography, except that there is not enough time available for the subject.
144. Both history and geography are priority areas for the school's development. Evidence suggests that it is making steady progress, and is moving forward in developing these aspects of its work, especially in history. However, it is early days and much work still remains to be done in geography in this small school.
145. The main strengths in history are:-
- ❑ Standards of attainment are about average at the end of Year 2 and higher than this at the end of Year 4. This is an improvement from the previous inspection.

- ❑ History is well used to further pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- ❑ Teaching is good in Years 3 and 4 (no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2).
- ❑ The curriculum is stimulating and interesting.

Points for development in both subjects

- ❑ The curriculum is being overhauled. Consideration needs to be given to the amount of time that is given to history and geography.
146. Work during this term shows that by the age of seven pupils are covering the planned curriculum appropriately. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about the life of Florence Nightingale in detail. They learn what it means to be a famous person today and in the past. As one pupil wrote, "David Beckham is famous because he is such a good footballer". Pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they are seven. They make good progress after that. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress
 147. In one lesson, time was given for children to share their thoughts. As a result, a pupil was able to share his additional knowledge about the life of Queen Victoria. While the introduction valued pupils' contributions, the time the children spent listening on the carpet was too long and some pupils became restless. Care was taken to include all pupils. Learning materials were well adapted to ensure that pupils with visual impairment made a full contribution.
 148. Teaching is good in Years 3 and 4 because the subject is researched well and presented in a lively and interesting way. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct terms, to research carefully and to interpret the materials they use. As a result, pupils generally use the correct language to explain themselves. They confidently access information from a range of secondary sources including fact cards, videos, books, pictures and the Internet. Pupils successfully use images from Greek pots to interpret information about the lives of Greeks in the past.
 149. Planning for the mixed age Year 3 and 4 class is good, with a range of work at different levels. In a well-taught lesson, the pace was good and the teacher used her time well to keep pupils' interest and motivation in a rather long two-hour block. The research task on the Olympic games, present and past, really motivated the pupils, who worked hard and showed real fascination. As one pupil commented "this work is challenging but really interesting!"
 150. The content of the curriculum throughout the school is rich and stimulating. Good quality resources are used to make the subject interesting. Research skills are built up and pupils taught how to extract information. This was a weakness in the previous report that has been addressed. For example, in Years 1 and 2 helpful question sheets focus pupils' attention through pertinent questions such as "What does this picture tell you?" In Years 3 and 4, good use is made regularly of the computer and library for research purposes.
 151. Pupils across the school have positive attitudes to history. Both girls and boys respond well to the teaching they receive. They talk about history with genuine enthusiasm. Teachers encourage pupils to present their work neatly and pupils take pride in their work, which is neat.
 152. A strong feature of the way history is delivered is the links made with other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy, art and geography, to bring the subject to life. Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced and used well to develop historical understanding. Time is given to extended writing and to the development of imaginative writing. Pupils' artistic talents are well promoted during their history projects, with opportunities to draw Greek soldiers and Greek warships in real detail.
 153. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. They collaborate well and share resources sensibly. They learn about people in different times and places and about the contribution of people such as Mary Seacole.
 154. History is well led. The co-ordinator liaises with local schools about the content of the curriculum and this ensures a smooth transition. Ongoing assessment questions are built into every topic

and the co-ordinator is currently developing this aspect further. The time allocated for history for Years 1 and 2 is too low, and this adversely affects the amount of progress pupils can make.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

155. ICT was an area of significant weakness at the last inspection. Very good progress has been made in tackling the subject, which is now fully in place across the entire school. The curriculum is appropriate, skills are taught and developed successfully in every class and the pupils successfully use their ICT skills to support learning in the other subjects.

156. Main Strengths

- ❑ Standards are average for the seven- and above average for the nine-year-olds.
- ❑ Teachers are secure in their knowledge of ICT, and skills are taught well.
- ❑ Pupils' progress and attainment are tracked in every class. They are competent users of ICT.

Points for development

- ❑ To make better use of ICT to record and chart pupils' findings in their science investigations.

157. The significant input into ICT has paid dividends. Pupils' skills have improved rapidly over the two years since the last full inspection. Pupils now have good access to machines and printers are networked to machines enabling the pupils to print their own work. Lessons are planned so that pupils' skills are built up over time, and the pupils are given enough time to practise their skills. Pupils with special educational needs play a full role in this programme, and everyone is included.

158. Standards have improved because teachers are much more confident than they were at teaching ICT. Lessons are always planned very well, and they almost always include an element of ICT. Year 2 pupils can operate the computer well. They are able to work independently, illustrate stories, create interesting designs and labels, experiment with art techniques and create lists and charts. All of these skills are used effectively to support learning across the curriculum. Lower attaining pupils need help with some of the skills listed above, but they receive the right level of support from the learning support assistants and this enables them to make good progress, like their classmates.

159. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 are capable and independent users of ICT. They use the Internet facility regularly, and they are at ease when talking about their ICT capabilities. Pupils can create and save a file, using drop down menus. They can also talk about carrying out pre-planned moves, with obvious success. Throughout the school pupils are keen to use the computers. They are enthusiastic about ICT, and they help and support each other when working in pairs. These positive attitudes, alongside the good teaching, are the main reasons that the pupils are doing well.

160. Teachers provide an appropriate range of tasks, which promote and extend pupils' learning making sure that they are suitably challenged. Teaching is good. There is a strong focus on the development of skills as well as what is produced at the end. For example, Year 2 pupils were working with a drawing and printing program. Working in pairs of similar capability they produced a range of interesting coloured sketches and outlines; the higher and average attaining pupils were working independently, whilst the lower attainers worked with a learning support assistant (LSA). Some good quality work was produced. The support of the LSA enabled the lower attainers to produce their own coloured sketches, as well as independently printing their work at the end of the lesson. This was good progress for them because they were not at all confident when the lesson started.

161. One strength in this lesson was the way in which the teacher consolidated learning points during the final discussions at the end of the lesson. The pupils were knowledgeable and engaged as the teacher revisited the main functions of the computer. She made good use of questions to find out how much the pupils had learnt in the lesson, noting down the main points so that she could base

her plans for the next lesson on pupils' current knowledge and understanding. All of this helps to reinforce the pupils' learning so that they can apply their new ICT skills across the entire curriculum.

162. Pupils were doing just that in a high quality lesson in Year 4. The pupils were creating a newspaper, developing an article from the previous day's interview. They used a range of strategies including basic note taking by hand, as well as working straight on to the computer. The teacher and her LSA worked together well, effectively supporting the pupils and guiding them so that the finished product was an article for the newspaper. Standards were good, not only in English but in ICT as well.
163. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has worked hard to make sure that all the staff are properly trained, that an appropriate curriculum is in place, and that pupils' progress is tracked and recorded. The information gained is carefully analysed and then used to plan the way ahead. The subject is moving forward very successfully.

MUSIC

164. Main strengths

- Pupils from Years 1 to 4 sing tunefully and with expression during whole school assemblies, at a standard that would be expected for their age.

165. No lessons were observed, but discussions with pupils indicate that Year 2 pupils can name, use and handle musical instruments as expected. They can identify high and low, soft and loud sounds and use a keyboard. They have used a computer program to compose a short tune with notes that go up and down. They demonstrate the standards expected for their age at this time of the year. This is the same positive picture as at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
166. Year 4 pupils have taken part in a class orchestra, singing and performing their own compositions to pupils in Year 1 and 2. They have worked on musical notation at an appropriate level for their age. When asked, they can name different types of music including classical, jazz, African and folk music but are unable to name a composer. There is no evidence to judge what standards Year 4 pupils have achieved in using musical instruments.
167. Music is used well to support pupils creativity in other subjects, such as when reception pupils sing number rhymes, when music is used to evoke a particular mood in a Year 1 dance session and when musical instruments are used in Year 4 to create a particular mood for poetry.
168. Pupils experience a range of music within the planned curriculum. Older pupils have opportunities to select music for assemblies from tapes including classical, European and world music. The Year 2 curriculum includes the use of Indian music during geography work and the Year 3 curriculum includes the use of Chinese music when learning about the Chinese New Year. Money allocated in the current budget has extended the range of musical instruments from different cultures, successfully widening pupils' musical experiences. Older pupils visit the middle school for a music morning. These experiences make a positive contribution to pupils' knowledge and appreciation of music of different times and cultures.
169. The policy is detailed and helpful to staff. It identifies opportunities to perform such as during assemblies, school productions and through karaoke sessions. While resources are adequate, the co-ordinator has identified the need to replace some older, damaged instruments. This was identified as a need at the time of the previous inspection.
170. Currently there is not enough time allocated for music. All classes are below the nationally recommended time except Year 2. This means they are unlikely to have enough time to cover all the aspects planned in sufficient depth.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

171. Main Strengths

- Teaching is good, and the pupils enjoy their lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of physical education.

General Point

- Quite a lot of equipment is housed in the hall and this takes up valuable space.

172. Standards are average for the seven-year-olds, as they were at the last inspection. No lessons were seen this time with Year 3 and 4 pupils. Teaching in Year 1 and 2 is good, and lessons are well planned and organised so that the pupils progress well. This helps them to develop their dance, games and gymnastic skills successfully. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen because they are well taught. Effective management, good planning and a well-structured curriculum, means that PE has a firm profile at Walsham-le-Willows.

173. In one lesson Year 1 and 2 pupils were using bean-bags. The brisk start to the lesson meant that pupils' attention was focused on their task straight away so that no time was wasted. A range of challenges by their teacher, such as balancing the bean-bag on different parts of their body, and throwing and catching the bean-bag, meant that pupils' skills were taught skilfully as she demonstrated how they could do better. Some pupils found this hard, but they persevered, and their skills began to improve, giving them confidence. Learning was well extended when the pupils worked with a partner, planning their own games with a their bean-bags and a target.

174. As the lesson moved on the pupils explained their games clearly, demonstrating them to the rest of the class so that everyone had the opportunity to comment and to make suggestions for improvement. All the pupils were fully engaged in the practical activity as well as in the evaluation at the end, making this a productive lesson all round.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

175. Main strengths

- Pupils enjoy the subject. Their knowledge and understanding has been well extended by their work on Islam.

Points for development

- Lessons can be too long and then it becomes harder to keep the pupils interested.

176. Standards are about average for both the seven- and nine-year-olds, as they were at the last inspection. Discussions with the pupils indicate that they have a secure grasp of aspects of Christianity, such as knowing the main Bible stories and Christian festivals. The school's close links with the local church successfully helps the pupils to extend their knowledge of the church building, its religious symbols, traditions and artefacts.

177. There are many opportunities for the pupils to develop their ideas and to express their feelings, not only in religious education lessons but in other subjects such as English and history. Teaching is good. For example, in a lesson on Islam, the Year 3 and 4 pupils were encouraged to share their ideas about how they express their own faith. Their teacher successfully drew on their suggestions, which were based on Christianity, before sharing with the pupils how Muslims express their faith through prayer. A short video clip successfully extended the pupils' understanding and knowledge and good progress was made.

178. This was a long lesson, which was interesting and stimulating. However, there were one or two instances when a few pupils lost their concentration when working at their written task. This was

spotted by the teacher, and she quickly regained their interest and concentration. Two shorter lessons instead of one longer lesson would help all the pupils to sustain their concentration for the duration of the lesson.

179. The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher. The curriculum follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, and the pupils' progress and attainment are tracked effectively by the teachers. The information gained helps the co-ordinator to plan the next steps in learning effectively.