

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **BENHALL St. MARY'S C.E. V.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Benhall, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124721

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Winyard

Reporting inspector: Mr R Fry  
21073

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 September 2002

Inspection number: 248623

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

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## GLOSSARY

Foundation Stage – (young children up to the age of 5+ of nursery and reception age)  
The curriculum includes the 'Areas of Learning' - language development, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative, physical and social development. Children are expected to meet the Early Learning Goals by the age of six. As children progress through the curriculum they pass from one bit of learning or Stepping Stone to another on the way to the Early Learning Goals.

Key Stage 1 – Years 1 and 2.

Curriculum – everything the school teaches pupils in and out of class, such as English, science and health education, use of visits and visitors.

Schemes of work – courses of lessons in e.g. English, for teachers to use when planning lessons.

ICT – information and communication technology.

Baseline assessment – tests for young children when they join the school or in their first year.

Co-ordinator – teacher in charge of organising a subject, such as English or physical education.

School development (or improvement) plan – set of plans that shows how the school will improve over the coming year or longer, what its priorities for action are and how it will spend its money.

National averages – refer to National Curriculum test results and teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science where there are comparisons with all schools nationally and similar schools.

National expectations – most pupils are expected to reach Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects at the age of seven years and Level 4 at the age of eleven.

Ethos – sense of atmosphere in a school.

Comenius School Development Project - a source of money from the European Union to help schools set up links with schools in other European countries.

Circle time discussions - times when a class meets together, often in a circle on the carpet, to discuss ideas.

Big book - very large books with big writing and pictures that teachers read to pupils during eg. literacy lessons.

ICT - information and communication technology.

White board - is the equivalent of the old blackboard but white.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary - first
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed

School address:	Benhall Saxmundham Suffolk
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Postcode:	IP17 1HE
Telephone number:	01728 602407
Fax number:	01728 602407

Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Wyllie

Date of previous inspection:	9 February 1998
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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21073	Roger Fry	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11439	Jill Moore	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24031	Iris Idle	Team inspector	Special educational needs Foundation Stage curriculum English Art Design and technology Music Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>
(Glossary on page 2)	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Benhall St. Mary's is a school for boys and girls aged between four and nine years. The school educates pupils from Benhall, Saxmundham and the surrounding area. It has 44 pupils on roll, including two children currently of Reception age. Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical of young children nationally. Thirty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. Some pupils, for example, need extra help with reading, writing and mathematics skills. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is an above average proportion. All pupils speak English and no pupils have English as an additional language. The Church of England will inspect acts of collective worship and pupils' spiritual development later in the term and will issue a separate report.

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

Benhall St. Mary's provides an effective education for its pupils. The governors and headteacher provide good leadership and the school is well managed by the staff. The teaching is good and pupils learn well. Pupils' standards of work in English over the last three years have improved and lately in mathematics also. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their work. The school makes sure it includes all pupils in everything that it does. Within the context of small schools, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The school has improved the quality of its work very well since the last inspection.
- The school has received national recognition for the improvement in standards of pupils' work.
- The school is well managed and led.
- The curriculum is interesting and there are good links with other schools.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good.
- Pupils are well cared for and relationships are very good.
- The school's provision for and use of information and communication technology is very good.

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

- Boys' standards of work are not as high as girls' standards.
- The quality of pupils' written work is not high enough in some subjects.
- The school's discipline policy does not work well enough with a few pupils.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1998 and progress with the key issues identified then has been very good. The role of the head teacher, subject leaders and the governing body has been clarified. They are now effective in their work. The school development plan identifies important priorities that have a positive effect on standards. The headteacher, teachers and governors, with the help of the local education authority, have made regular checks on the quality of education provided by the school and its effect on the attainment and progress of pupils. There has been very good improvement in the provision for information and communication technology. Pupils now receive a much fuller curriculum and use modern machines. The quality of teaching is better now and teachers are clear about what children will learn in lessons. Teachers have higher expectations of the quality of pupils' work also, although pupils' presentation of work is not as good as it could be. Most lessons now proceed at a good pace. The curriculum is properly organised and the provision for young children is good. Teachers watch and record pupils' progress effectively and use this information to group pupils so that they can make good progress. There are now no problems with the times of buses at the end of the day, which in the past shortened the school day for some pupils. There are other improvements.

The school has gained national Achievement Awards for the improvement in pupils' standards of work. Pupils' cultural development is now very good. Relationships between all in the school have also improved.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Benhall St. Mary's compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	E*	B	B	A
Writing	E*	C	B	A
Mathematics	E*	D	E	E

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average     E

very low                  E\*

Pupils' performances have varied considerably in the last three years. It is common for results to fluctuate from year to year in small schools, so the results in the table need to be treated with some caution. In National Curriculum tests in 2001, Year 2 pupils' standards of work in English were above average, and in mathematics they were well below average compared with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, English results were well above average and mathematics results were well below average. In science, all pupils attained the expected standard. These results reflect a great improvement since 1999 when results were in the lowest five percent of schools nationally. Last year's results (summer 2002) were not quite as high as those in 2000 and 2001 and they reflect the capabilities of pupils. Pupils mostly meet their targets each year.

English results in Year 2 over the last three years have varied between well below average and above average in comparison with all schools nationally. Standards in mathematics have been significantly lower than those in reading and writing. Girls' standards of work have been higher than those of boys in English. However, an important reason for the improvement in standards generally has been the way that teachers have become better organised and have had higher expectations of pupils. The school has used the national strategies for English and mathematics increasingly effectively. Overall pupils have achieved well since the last inspection.

Pupils' work in Year 4 observed during the inspection matched the standards expected nationally in English and science, and were above expectations in mathematics. Pupils were found to be making at least the progress typical of pupils nationally. Pupils' standards and progress in mathematics have improved. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their work throughout the school and they attain the targets in their individual education plans. Year 2 pupils' standards of work observed met national expectations in English and mathematics and they are already making good progress in English. Pupils made effective progress in the lessons observed. Pupils' work in all other subjects met national standards in all years, but pupils do not often explain their ideas in writing. In the reception class, children attain standards similar to those of children nationally and make the expected progress in all the 'Areas of Learning' they study. Young children become more confident and continue to learn many important skills, such as how to settle to tasks and to read and write.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show a keen interest in school life and enjoy going to school. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and to each other during lessons. Pupils speak confidently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils work well together on shared activities. Movement around the school is also good. A few pupils tend to disrupt lessons on occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils share their feelings and thoughts confidently. They enjoy the duties and tasks they have to do. Most pupils establish very good relationships with everyone.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teacher's attention to young children's individual needs in the Reception, Year 1 and 2 class is good. Children continue the good start to their education begun in the independent pre-school. Activities are varied and well planned. Teaching takes full account of children's emotional and social needs and provides, for example, good practical activities in creative lessons.

There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers question pupils well during the oral sections of lessons and use this method to revise pupils' knowledge and to stimulate them. Teachers check pupils' understanding of ideas carefully. The basic skills of English and mathematics are taught well in literacy and numeracy lessons in all years. Pupils of similar capabilities are grouped effectively in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are usually managed effectively. However, at times, the discipline policy does not work well enough and a few lessons are disrupted. Pupils' written work is not always tidy enough and pupils have few opportunities in some subjects to write at any length. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because teachers and support staff meet their needs quickly, often in small groups. Support staff make an important and positive contribution to the teaching in all situations.

Pupils' capacity to learn is extended well in most lessons. Teachers make particularly good use of the information and communication technology equipment. Pupils learn more rapidly in many lessons because of the high quality of the on-screen displays and from the way teachers move and change information on display.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school gives high priority to teaching the basic skills. The school has good links with local schools and several in Europe. The curriculum is interesting and teachers make helpful links between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Support staff help pupils effectively in lessons and in small groups with their work. Pupils with statements of their special educational needs are well integrated into all lessons. Pupils with behavioural needs do not always have their needs met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' cultural development is very good. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in everything that the school does but there are very few clubs for pupils to join. The social and moral tone of acts of collective worship is good and pupils learn, for example, how to make good choices.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for each day. There are agreed procedures for assessing and recording pupils' knowledge and understanding in subjects. The school helps pupils to develop as young people effectively. However, procedures for improving pupils' behaviour do not work for every pupil. The school does not record in sufficient detail, for example, health and safety procedures.
Partnership with parents	Good. Many parents take a positive interest in the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and staff provide good leadership. Since the last inspection the headteacher, working with governors, teachers and the local education authority has identified clearly what needs to be done, and got on with it. Staff with responsibilities have clear plans for action to improve the school further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are effective 'critical friends' to the school. Many governors take an active role in helping to lead and develop the school. The chair of governors understands the school's strengths and what still needs to be done particularly well. Governors have been closely involved in writing the school's development plan and they are good 'critical friends' to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's development plan is used effectively to check progress towards targets. The school has used the results of checks on teaching and learning well as a source of targets for the development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has made good use of the money available to it and 'best value' is found for purchases. The school did not spend all its money last year because some was provided very late in the year. The school intends to use the underspend to help balance the budget as pupil numbers change.

The accommodation is good and there are sufficient books and equipment for pupils to use in lessons. The school has extensive facilities for information and communication technology. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good number of support staff, who work effectively.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Forty eight per cent of questionnaires were returned and 3 parents attended the meeting

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like going to school.</li><li>• They make good progress with their work.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Most parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with a question or problem.</li><li>• The school has high expectations of children.</li><li>• The school helps children to mature and be responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• The degree to which the school works closely with parents.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Inspectors agree that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited but many pupils have long journeys at the beginning and end of the day. There is scope for improvement. Inspectors feel that the school makes many attempts to work closely with parents and many respond positively.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children begin school with skills in all the Areas of Learning that are typical of schools nationally. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children have attained the Early Learning Goals expected of children of this age nationally and have made sound progress. They make steady progress because, for example, the school has successfully introduced the recent national guidance for children in Reception classes. The teaching is good and pupils have work that matches their needs. The strong links maintained with the separate pre-school have a significantly positive effect on the experiences provided for children. Young children become more confident and continue to learn many important skills, such as how to settle to tasks for periods of time and to read and write.
2. Pupils' overall performances in National Tests at the end of Years 2 and 4 have varied considerably in the last three years because year groups have been very small and pupils' capabilities vary from year to year. It is common for results to fluctuate in small schools, so the school's results need to be treated with some caution. In 2001 pupils met the targets for reading and mathematics, but not for writing. In 2002 more pupils reached above average standards than expected in reading and spelling but not as many in mathematics and writing. However, the effects of the good teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are now evident in the school's results. Governors, headteacher, teachers and the local education authority have all helped to improve standards since the last inspection through their regular reviews of progress towards targets in successive development plans. The changes made over the years have had a positive effect.
3. Since the last inspection, pupils' English National Test results at the end of Year 2 have improved from well below average to above average in reading and writing. In 2001, pupils' standards were well above average in comparison with similar schools. The school has received national recognition two years running for its improvement in reading and writing results from the Department of Education and Skills. Evidence shows that pupils have made good progress throughout their time in school and most reach the standards expected for their age or better. Results in 2002 were not quite as high as those of the two previous years and reflect pupils' capabilities on entry to the school. Pupils' standards of work observed during the inspection in Years 2 and 4 were typical of pupils nationally. However, the current Year 2 class is already making good progress at this early time in the year. The main strength in English standards is the above average standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Standards are good because of the good quality of teaching in all classes, the good pupil to teacher ratio and the good support given to those pupils who need extra help.
4. In mathematics, pupils' attainment currently in Year 2 is average and in Year 4 the standard is above national expectations. This is an improvement on the standards reached by pupils reported during the last inspection. Pupils now achieve well. In the 2001 National Tests for Year 2 pupils, mathematics standards at that time were well below average. In 2002, four out of five Year 2 pupils attained the standard in mathematics expected nationally. The reasons for the improvement are that pupils with special educational needs receive good adult support and make good progress towards their individual learning targets. Years 3 and 4 pupils are challenged well in

the upper and lower mathematics groups and teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to guide their lesson planning. Teachers' use of the ICT facilities has led to pupils' better progress because the presentation of lessons is visually exciting.

5. Work in literacy lessons links well to work in other subjects. In numeracy lessons pupils write large numbers in words accurately. Teachers use non-fiction books well in guided reading sessions to enable older pupils to learn about dinosaurs, invaders and settlers. All teachers make very good use of digital projectors in literacy lessons to make lessons come alive. Pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in other subjects. Pupils use dates in historical time lines and make weather reports in geography. In science, distances and temperatures feature in work. Pupils use estimation and measuring skills in design and technology. In music, teachers encourage pupils to count beats and to analyse rhythms.
6. The school successfully uses ICT to support work in other subjects. Pupils wrote word-processed booklets last year in English lessons. The results were impressive and the school is right to be proud of them. In mathematics, pupils have seen giant pictures of coins. The size of the projected coins helped pupils to recognise them better. Pupils draw graphs to help them understand what they have learned from surveys or collections of other information. Year 2 pupils have made weather graphs in geography showing what the weather was like over a week using given symbols. The good teaching has raised pupils' standards of work.
7. Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 4 in science matches the standards expected nationally. In Year 2 in 2001, teachers found that all pupils attained the expected Level 2 of the National Curriculum but very few pupils attained a higher standard. Higher attaining pupils have work that challenges them, but there is room to develop a better match of written work to pupils' capabilities to improve their progress further.
8. Standards of pupils' work in ICT match those expected nationally in Years 2 and 4 and pupils make satisfactory and improving progress. The school has made very good improvements to the quality of provision since the last inspection now that the computer based facilities are in place. The computer facilities have made a strong positive impact on pupils' learning and pupils now build systematically on their skills as they move through the school.
9. At the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils attain the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and make satisfactory progress. The school uses Suffolk's 'themes and schemes' programme and pupils study Christianity and Judaism appropriately.
10. Pupils' achievement is enhanced because in many lessons the teaching is interesting, practical activities are common and additional adults help pupils to understand new ideas. During the inspection, Years 2 and 4 pupils' standards of work observed were typical of pupils nationally in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
11. The progress made by pupils on the special needs register with learning difficulties is good because they have good adult support and the work set for them matches their individual needs. The very few pupils with behaviour difficulties do not make the progress they might. They are not monitored well enough to enable them to progress well with their work.

12. Several issues have a negative effect on pupils' standards of work and their achievement. Teachers mark pupils' work, but do not often leave pupils with a thought-provoking question about their discoveries or a target for improvement, such as about tidy presentation. Teachers do not allow pupils enough opportunities to write their thoughts in their own words. In science, for example, pupils rarely record findings scientifically, using headings such as 'What I want to know,' 'What I predict will happen,' 'What I did,' and 'What I found out.' There are significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls that the school needs to address. Teachers do not spend enough time ensuring that boys produce their work to a similar standard as girls. The behaviour policy is not strong enough and the resistance of some boys is not dealt with effectively.
13. Benhall is an improving school that has identified many of its weaknesses in the past and corrected them. The school has good plans in place to improve further. Overall, the school adds value to pupils.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and make an important contribution to the standards pupils attain. The behaviour of most pupils is good. Pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, are well supported in small group settings and their attitudes and behaviour are positive. The school has maintained standards since last inspection. During the inspection, no bullying was observed or any other form of harassment.
15. Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy coming to school. They are interested in their work and are keen to take an active part in lessons. For example, in Year 2, pupils are keen to respond and eager to share the rhymes they create to help them to spell long words. In lessons, they concentrate on tasks, maintain good levels of interest and listen well to their teachers. In Year 3, most pupils participate in discussions and answer questions with interest. They are clear about what is expected of them and most settle quickly to their work. Overall, most pupils work hard and are keen to improve their work. The many opportunities for pupils to work in small groups help to foster good relationships and this makes a good contribution to the progress that they make.
16. Around the school, pupils are clear about the expected standards of behaviour and move sensibly around the building. Pupils co-operate well with each other in lessons. They are friendly and polite and make visitors to the school feel welcome. They talk happily and confidently about their work and life in school. For example, older pupils talked about their work in art and described very clearly the work they had done with a visiting artist when creating silk patterns. In assemblies, pupils enter and leave the hall quietly. They listen quietly to the music and settle with little fuss. In the playground, pupils play well with each other in a lively and happy atmosphere.
17. There are occasions when a small number of boys, in both the infant and junior classes, do not apply themselves to their work well enough. On occasions, they do not listen to the teacher, behave in an immature way and are disruptive. This behaviour clearly affects the quality of the work they produce. It also negatively affects the learning for other pupils in the class during those times. The school's behaviour management policy and practice works for most pupils, but not for all.

18. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and relationships and these are fostered well in the caring atmosphere promoted by the school. Teachers spend much time developing pupils' social and moral capacities during assemblies and at many times during the day. Pupils are taught right from wrong and parents support the school's work strongly. Children develop confidence at an early age in the Foundation Stage and infant class and they become more confident as they grow older. Pupils and all staff work well together and show respect for each other. In the infant class, pupils shared their feelings about the character in the book and how he felt when he was lost and how they would feel in that situation. The younger pupils listen carefully to each other when sharing information in their speaking and listening time. Older pupils show an understanding of their weaknesses during discussion in circle time and are able to set their own personal targets to do better. These targets include, 'Not swinging on their chairs in lessons,' and 'Passing the ball more often in football.' They are sufficiently confident to sing on their own in music lessons.
19. The level of pupils' attendance at school has declined slightly since the last inspection but is still satisfactory and in line with attendance nationally. Pupils were punctual during the inspection. Registration arrangements are efficient and lessons start on time but there are some inconsistencies in teachers' use of the correct codes for marking absences. The headteacher and secretary monitor attendance carefully and parents are contacted after two days of unexplained absence. The education welfare officer also monitors registers each term. The home-school agreement has clear information for parents about reporting absences. There were three exclusions during the past year affecting two pupils.

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

20. The teaching is now good and has improved since the last inspection. The teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. In 73 per cent of lessons the teaching was good and it was very good in four per cent of them. No lessons were unsatisfactory. The overall good quality of teaching has a positive effect on the learning that takes place and the standards pupils attain. Throughout the school, there are particular strengths in the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and in teachers' use of ICT to develop lessons in exciting ways. Pupils enjoy school because the teaching is often interesting and pupils feel secure because many of their emotional needs are met.
21. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge, appropriate expectations of children and plans a wide range of interesting activities and experiences for children. Children develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in all the Areas of Learning effectively. The teacher identifies children with special educational needs and they receive good support and make steady progress. The school has successfully introduced the national curricular guidance for children of Reception age. The school maintains strong links with the pre-school next door, which has a significant positive effect on children. The transition between the two schools is smooth, well organised and therefore does not worry children. In lessons the teacher manages children well.
22. The teaching provided for most pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers identify pupils with learning difficulties early for support. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because their work is clearly matched to their

needs and is presented to them with enthusiasm, so holding their interest. Pupils are withdrawn from classes, for example, for assessment and for additional work on a letter sound programme to support pupils' reading. This takes place during the literacy hour. However, the few pupils with behaviour difficulties do not always make satisfactory progress. Their attitudes and behaviour hinder their learning at times, the progress they make and the standards they attain.

23. The teacher's management of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 and 4 it is satisfactory. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of older boys sometimes distracts other pupils and hinders their learning. The teachers' management of this behaviour on occasions is not effective enough. The school has adopted an assertive discipline policy and many aspects of this policy work well so that pupils are clearly motivated to do well and gain rewards. Overall pupils' achievement is good. However, in several lessons a small number of boys were disruptive. The sanctions imposed for disruption, for example, a few minutes in another classroom as a 'time-out' was not effective. Consequently, teachers have found themselves wasting some time repeating warnings. The assertive approach is for the teacher to continue teaching whilst administering the rewards or sanctions without having to stop the lesson for any reason. Teachers sometimes do not expect enough from boys.
24. The teaching of English is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers use the National Strategy for Literacy well and their planning is clear and well founded. The tasks set for pupils match their individual needs and this enables all pupils to make good progress. The challenge of mixed age classes has been met effectively in English and mathematics. Higher and lower attainers from Years 3 and 4 are placed together in teaching groups of like ability. This arrangement has proved successful. In Years 1 and 2 the teacher prepares lessons with all pupils' levels of attainment in mind. Pupils have individual targets to attain and their progress in literacy is carefully watched throughout school. Most pupils develop very good relationships with all adults working with them. Pupils learn to read and write in English lessons successfully.
25. The quality of mathematics teaching is good. In Years 1 and 2, the teacher plans lessons effectively. In Years 3 and 4, the good teaching in both the lower and upper groups allows pupils to make good progress. Teachers give pupils time targets in which they have to complete their work. Lessons therefore proceed at a good pace. Lower attaining pupils have learnt to pay for objects with different combinations of coins and in the upper group pupils have learnt to order numbers up to 10,000. Teachers question pupils well to assess what they know, understand and can do in the oral parts of lessons. Teachers record what pupils know. Good questioning of pupils by teachers ensures a lively pace to lessons. Teachers make effective use of common errors to make teaching points to the whole class, often using the digital projectors. In this way, pupils learn a variety of ways to tackle problems. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is good, both within classrooms from the teacher and by learning support assistants and pupils make good progress. Teachers use ICT very well to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
26. Science teaching is interesting to pupils and practical activities are common for older pupils. This way of working helps pupils understand new ideas better. Pupils learn, for example, about forces when pushing or pulling toys and they know which foods are good for them. The teaching of ICT is good. Teachers and support staff give good clear explanations and the right amount of support to help pupils learn.



Teachers often prepare their work at home using computers and bring lessons to school on disc ready to go. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the quality of the visual displays. For example, Year 4 pupils learned to work with large numbers better because the teacher was able to overlay parts of numbers effectively in front of pupils on screen. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory. The content of the locally agreed syllabus is taught with enthusiasm. Much of what pupils learn in religious education lessons is not recorded by pupils, but is experienced through story, role-play and discussions.

27. An important strength of the teaching is that key ideas are repeated many times, so that all pupils have a good chance to remember what they have heard. The school is sufficiently well staffed to allow more than one adult to be present in many lessons. Most pupils make good efforts to learn and show interest and good concentration. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to help pupils revise new ideas learned in class.
28. The teaching is good in other subjects and teachers have good subject knowledge. For example in an art lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher improved pupils' observational skills, use of colours and their cutting skills when working on the camouflage of animals in the natural environment. In design and technology, pupils learn, for example, to use construction kits to express their ideas. In physical education and geography lessons, pupils learn to move safely in school and outdoors where there is traffic. Pupils learn to control their bodies better in physical education and to respond quickly to commands. Pupils learn to make movements at different heights with apparatus. In music lessons, pupils learn to sing, play instruments and to appreciate composers' work over the year.
29. Pupils' often record their work on worksheets, which is satisfactory, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to draft and write their ideas tidily in their own words. Teachers' expectations of pupils' capacity to record ideas in their own words are not high enough. Teachers do not spend enough time developing pupils' presentation skills and marking pupils' work so that they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

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

30. The school provides a good curriculum for all its pupils. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all subjects and this is also an improvement since the last inspection.
31. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage gives children a reassuring start to their education and builds on the work done at the pre-school. The curriculum is based clearly on the Early Learning Goals and the Stepping Stones form the basis for all planning for the youngest children in school. Good purposeful outdoor play activities are now in place. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection.

32. The requirements of the National Curriculum are recorded in the school's yearly and termly planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All teachers now plan to a common format that identifies clearly what is to be taught, what the targets of lessons are and how the work will meet the individual needs of pupils. There are policies for all subjects now and this ensures that there is a much better focus on what is to be taught and how, with an emphasis on raising standards.
33. There is a satisfactory balance between the time spent on literacy and numeracy and the other subjects so that all subjects are taught effectively. Good plans are in place for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and pupils have achieved well over the last three years. The planning for art and design technology ensures that pupils spend three half terms a year on each subject. This is also the case for geography and history.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers assess pupils early in their school lives so that difficulties can be identified quickly. Teachers set clear targets for pupils in their individual education plans, especially in literacy and in their personal and social development. Pupils in all classes receive regular additional support in small groups for literacy teaching. The teaching they receive links well to their work with the class teacher and helps them to make good progress. This provision is good. Boys and girls are treated equally though girls make significantly more progress in their English work. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is good. A small number of boys, with individual behaviour plans, are disruptive in lessons and the ways of dealing with their behaviour have not been addressed fully. A behaviour policy has been introduced but this is not effective enough with this small group.
35. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A guitar club was established last year and pupils are encouraged to work on computers before school, during lunchtime and after school. Some pupils are brought to school and collected by bus as they come from a wide area around the school. This arrangement makes it difficult to run a range of additional activities, particularly after school. There is scope for the school to use extra-curricular activities more as a reward for good behaviour.
36. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school allocates time to pupils' personal, health and social education and circle time class discussions throughout the school. Older pupils start their school week by coming into school ten minutes early for circle time class discussions. Sessions help pupils to set their own personal targets and review these with each other. Pupils showed concern about safety issues and their comments were displayed on the walls of the Years 3 and 4 classroom. The school is addressing the issues raised. This process has a positive effect on pupils' moral and social development.
37. The school has good links with a local company. This company has provided one of its staff as a 'Partner in Leadership' to work alongside the headteacher to enhance her management skills. The process has been successful. A local daily newspaper supports a reading project with Years 3 and 4 and provides activity books for pupils. Teachers use the local area well to help pupils in their studies of geography and history. Younger pupils visit Colchester Zoo as part of their work on animals of the world. Older pupils visit Sutton Hoo, where they study Anglo-Saxon burials. They learn about their local history during a visit to the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. The school receives a range of visitors from the local churches. Links

are strong and support pupils' moral and religious education. There are good links with the pre-school, the middle school and the high school. The pre-school children come into school weekly to share parent assemblies, they also join physical education lessons with reception children. Teachers from the middle school visit Benhall to meet new pupils and to talk about life in the middle school. Year 4 pupils visit the middle school for two half days and there is also a parents' meeting. There are good links between the staff teaching literacy and numeracy at both schools.

38. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is good. The staff values pupils and encourages them to do their best. Pupils' work is attractively mounted and displayed. Teachers display pupils' good work and positive achievements on the achievement board. Pupils have opportunities to express their personal thoughts and feelings in lessons such as English, art and design and religious education. An act of collective worship is held each day. Pupils sing and pray together or share a time of quiet reflection. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the wonders of the world around them in many subjects. Pupils show their awe and wonder when, for example, Years 3 and 4 see a full size model of a skeleton for the first time. The youngest children in school were amazed to find that their painted elephants matched the colours in their play area and were therefore camouflaged. Pupils had the opportunity to meet the Queen during her visit to Ipswich and were delighted when she accepted their flowers.
39. Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development. All adults in the school provide very good role models for pupils. They strive to encourage equality of opportunity for all. Pupils show a good understanding of their weaknesses and can explain to others why they have chosen particular personal targets. This attention to pupils' personal development has a good effect on their behaviour and attitudes to school. There is a good ethos of caring for and supporting others within the school. The good story telling in assemblies helps pupils to understand the consequences of making good and bad choices. Pupils understand right from wrong. Pupils raise money for charities such as The Children's Society, Blue Peter and to support a school in Kenya. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and in groups. For example, in Years 3 and 4, groups of pupils created collaborative pieces of silk painting supported by a visiting artist. Pupils listen to each other's ideas carefully and contribute confidently in discussions. They have some opportunities to help with classroom routines. They show respect for other pupils and all adults in school. They make visitors welcome and are keen to show their work and talk about it. Pupils respect their teachers and form good relationships with other pupils and with all adults in school.
40. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It is enhanced by visits to Colchester Zoo, Sutton Hoo and the Museum of East Anglian Life. The school teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Pupils study the local traditional music of Suffolk and a visitor from the village comes into school to teach local step dancing. Older pupils make dancing dolls, which are a traditional craft in the Suffolk area. Good links exist with schools in Latvia and Belgium through the Comenius School Development Project. (See glossary.) A teacher visited Latvia and shared her experiences with the pupils. Teachers, pupils and parents visited Belgium and wrote an informative account of their experiences. They have also compared life in a school in another European country with their own school. Older pupils have pen pals in a school in Kenya and begin to develop an understanding of life in a third world country. They study Kenya

as part of their work in Geography. Good links have been created with the Aldeburgh festival and pupils learn about the music of Benjamin Britten. The curate, vicar and lay reader all come into school to take assemblies. The headteacher of the middle school and a senior member of the high school staff also take assemblies in school.

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

41. The school provides a good caring environment for its pupils, and places great store in being a positive, friendly and inclusive place where all pupils feel safe and valued. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Parents are happy with the care the school gives and feel that children enjoy coming to the school. The school provides good personal support and guidance for its pupils. The school encourages the development of social and moral skills so that pupils can learn in a calm and relaxed way. Teachers encourage their pupils to do well both in and out of school, for instance, by asking pupils to share their successes with the whole school in parents' assemblies.
42. Pupils have some opportunities to undertake responsibilities around the school, which increase their sense of social responsibility, self-esteem and confidence. Whilst the behaviour of pupils is good overall there are inconsistencies in the implementation of the discipline policy. This means that some poor behaviour is not dealt with quickly and effectively and so can disturb the progress of pupils in class. The school has a reward and sanctions system as part of the behaviour policy but the rewards are not imaginative enough for some pupils and the sanctions do not have the required effect on occasions. There was no oppressive behaviour or bullying seen. The school makes good use of in-class adult support for children with special educational needs, thus ensuring their good progress.
43. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. The school makes good use of circle time discussions to explore relationships and to help children to understand the consequences of their actions upon others. There is a wide range of informative and helpful displays for pupils to read that reinforces their knowledge. Children have helped to modify the reward system in school after they expressed concerns about it.
44. Pupils who travel by bus now arrive promptly at school. The school encourages parents to take responsibility for ensuring that their children arrive promptly and regularly and that reasons for absence are communicated to the school at the start of all absences. Standard request forms are used when parents apply for holidays in term time, and the consequent effects on children's learning from missing school are fully explained. There were three short, fixed-term exclusions last year involving two pupils. Registers of attendance are not always completed with the reasons for pupils' absence.
45. The school's policy for child protection is working well in practice, but staff do not have a written reference guide to use. Health and safety matters within school have a high priority. For example, in physical education teachers encourage pupils to think about their safety and to adjust their behaviour to their activities. Some risk assessments are in place, such as for trips and swimming, however the school does not have completed risk assessments for all areas of school life and activities. Staff and governors monitor the health and safety on site and the risk assessments that are in place guide repairs and maintenance. There is no school caretaker and so responsibilities are shared adequately between the cleaner in charge, the health

and safety co-ordinator and the headteacher. The outdoor play provision is good. There is a safe enclosed area for the under fives and climbing activities for older children.

46. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans are up to date, action points are clear, support staff are fully involved and parents are informed of what is happening. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and learning takes place in a purposeful and inclusive atmosphere. Pupils are fully included in all lessons and in the life of the school. There is scope for the school to develop the provision for pupils with behavioural needs.
47. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, such as in English and mathematics. The first assessment of children's abilities (baseline assessment) takes place during the first half term when children enter the Foundation Stage. The pre-school passes on good records to the infant teacher. Procedures for assessing children in the Foundation Stage are good. The teacher and teaching assistants observe and record what children learn as they work frequently. There are regular school based tests each term for pupils in English, which give teachers a good idea of how well pupils progress from year to year. The school analyses results from all tests to pinpoint areas of weakness in a particular subject. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress in ICT. In other subjects, teachers keep an adequate record of what pupils have attained at the end of each unit of work.
48. The school makes good use of its assessment data. Some information helps teachers predict what pupils might attain as they progress towards Year 4. Other information is used to determine ability groups for English and mathematics amongst older pupils. Information also helps to identify pupils who would benefit from 'booster' classes that help them attain better in National Tests. In the Foundation Stage, the information gathered is used well to move pupils forward into the early stages of the National Curriculum. Assessments of younger pupils help teachers identify those pupils who find learning difficult and additional help for them is then provided.

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

49. Parents' views of the school are positive and pupils like coming to school. Parents feel that children make progress and that the teaching is good. The parents' meeting with inspectors was not well attended but no issues of concern were raised. The Wednesday morning parents' assemblies are popular, a fact which was confirmed during the inspection. The questionnaires from parents show more negative comments than at the last inspection. The two areas of concern were the degree to which the school works closely with parents and the lack of extra curricular activities.
50. Inspection evidence shows that the school works hard to keep parents informed, by sending letters home regularly on the same day each week. The letters and newsletters are clear, friendly and informative. The school posts important letters if it feels that this is necessary. Inspectors also found that the number of after-school activities is limited because some children travel home by bus that leaves at a set time each day or live a long distance from the school. There is, however, time at lunchtime and before school to accommodate some clubs. The bus children use

the computers before school and children use them at lunchtime in an informal way. Last term there was a guitar club. There is scope for development of extra-curricular activities.

51. There are regular parents-teacher interview evenings and they are well attended. Alternative appointments are made for parents unable to attend on the given evening and the headteacher makes home visits if parents find attendance at school impossible. Parents are well informed about the curriculum taught in school. Progress reports to parents cover all subjects taught but sometimes the comments that teachers make are not obviously clear. For example, comments are made such as; 'His pitch in singing is challenging,' rather than 'He cannot sing in tune'. Reports are mostly made up of 'the child can do' statements. There are not enough areas for development for children to attain to help parents to improve their children's learning at home. The annual governors' report for parents and the school brochure do not contain all the statutory items required.
52. A limited number of parents help in the school and this help is invaluable. The school invites parents to sign a home-school agreement that sets out what is expected of the school and of families. The school encourages parents to co-operate with the school and work in partnership for the benefit of their children. There is an active parent-teacher association that provides valuable funds and social events for pupils and the community. The production of 'Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat' proved to be a sell-out success.
53. The school works effectively with parents of children with special educational needs. Parents become involved as soon as it becomes apparent that their children need extra help. The school encourages all parents to play their part in ensuring the prompt and regular attendance of pupils. Although the school's relationship with parents is not as strong as it was, there is an effective partnership with parents whose views are valued and sought before changes take place within the school.

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

54. When the school was last inspected, Benhall was 'just satisfactory' value for money. There have been many changes since 1998, and very good progress with the key issues identified during the previous inspection. The school now gives good value for money.
55. The governing body makes a good contribution to the smooth and effective running of the school and it fulfils its statutory responsibilities. The chair of governors has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the many influences on the school. She knows about pupils' standards of work and how much progress pupils make now. She provides good support, wisdom and direction for the school and knows it very well. Governors have, for example, participated in the many meetings with the local education authority intended to improve the provision the school made for pupils since the last inspection. The headteacher receives good support from the committees in all areas of the school's work, such as in making financial decisions and development planning. Governors know about the standards that pupils' attain and they have helped to prepare the main priorities in the school development plan, which are intended to raise standards further. There are three minor issues for the governing body to address. The content of the annual report to parents and brochure do not meet statutory requirements and the school's assessments of physical risks are incomplete.

56. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school and promotes a supportive working atmosphere. All pupils are an equal part of the school. The school's improvement is based on close teamwork amongst staff and clear expectations of what needs to be done, for example, in the area of raising standards. The school is keen to improve further and the staff shares the vision for the school. The school's aims are evident in practice and the school's development plan is good. There are priorities for the coming year with criteria for success, so that the school knows when it has achieved a target or not. Many aspects of the school's work have targets and the main priorities for improving teaching and raising standards are well conceived. The head teacher has been receptive to initiatives to help improve her leadership. She has participated with enthusiasm in the 'Partners in Leadership' programme. The headteacher has worked closely with a governor who works in industry and they both report that there has been good progress in the way that the school is led and managed. Through this approach, governors, for example, have challenged the costs of the ICT initiative and required the head teacher to justify the decision to spend money on the provision. Since the last inspection, governors and the headteacher have worked together closely and successfully to improve the school.
57. The headteacher is responsible for many checking activities. Teachers receive helpful comments and points for development. Strengths and weaknesses in the school's results and in teachers' assessments are evaluated carefully in, for example, English and mathematics. These analyses guide teachers' plans effectively. For example, results of the analysis of pupils' performances have been used to justify the setting of pupils by ability in some subjects in Years 3 and 4, in an attempt to raise standards further. Early evidence suggests that this programme is successful.
58. Co-ordinators have opportunities to develop teachers' quality of work and this is an area that the school intends to develop further. Co-ordinators, for example, provide useful ideas for their colleagues to use in their planning. Each co-ordinator is responsible for many subjects in a small school. However, each has an action plan for their responsibilities and they know much of what needs to be done next to improve how subjects are taught. One area, for example, identified by the inspection team as a key issue features in the school development plan as an area for development, that of attention to writing standards. The co-ordination of ICT is worthy of a special mention. A huge amount of work has been put into this comprehensive provision.
59. A newly appointed co-ordinator is responsible for the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. She works in school for two mornings each month but is available for additional time when required. At the time of the inspection, the special educational needs register was not up to date. Current review dates were not on the register. The school's policy has been reviewed as a result of the new Code of Practice and a good development plan has been written. The co-ordinator has an overview of individual education and behaviour plans but the plans are not monitored sufficiently well to ensure that all pupils are supported and appropriately challenged in class. This is particularly the case with a small number of pupils with behaviour difficulties. The behaviour of these pupils is of concern to the school but they have not been recommended for assessment with the local education authority.
60. Governors keep a good check on the budget. The school has a significant financial surplus that will be used to offset the effects of any changes in pupil numbers in the

near future. The school also did not spend all its money last year because some was provided very late in the financial year. The headteacher allocates funds to ensure that the school maintains its good provision. The use of resources, including funds for teachers' courses, is effective. Teachers have attended a range of relevant and useful courses that have assisted their teaching. The school follows the principles of 'best value' well. For example, the school has taken the decision to buy computers rather than lease them on financial grounds. The school has made very good use of its delegated building budget to help with the costs of installing the digital projectors and associated equipment.

61. The school administration has just gone through a period of major changes. Both members of staff in the office are new to their jobs. The administration of the school is satisfactory and adequate use is made of new technology to save time. The headteacher had some difficulty with providing the inspection team with the up-to-date financial situation. However, this is a temporary situation but one the school needs to attend to quickly.
62. The accommodation is good and it is well looked after by the cleaning staff. The school has an adequately sized hall, sufficient classrooms and the library is easily accessible. Books and equipment for use in lessons are good. The school makes very good use of computers and projectors to help pupils learn. There are sufficient well qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. All these features have a positive effect on pupils' standards of work.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

63. Governors, headteacher and staff need to;
  - Raise boys' standards of work by motivating them more consistently and ensuring they concentrate on tasks and work hard.  
(Paragraphs 12,17,22,23,83,86,94,104,120)
  - Improve the behaviour policy, by making the rewards for pupils' good behaviour more attractive and sanctions worthwhile, so that all pupils respond quickly to them.  
(Paragraphs 11,17,23,34,42,83,94,104,122)
  - Improve the quality of pupils' written work in some subjects, such as religious education, by encouraging pupils to write at length more often, giving more time to pupils' presentation skills and marking pupils' work so that they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.  
(Paragraphs 12,29,75,81,94,98,109,111,121)

The governors, headteacher and staff should consider including the following lesser issues in their action plan.

- Ensure that the register for pupils with special educational needs is kept up to date.  
(Paragraphs 11,46,59)



- Ensure that the statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met yearly and that the school brochure contains all necessary sections. (Paragraphs 51,55)
- Ensure that assessments of risk are completed for all aspects of the school's work. (Paragraphs 45,55)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	16	5	0	0	0
Percentage	0	4	73	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 four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	44
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	15

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	4.8	School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	3	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	92 (86)	100 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	8	9	9
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	3.05
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15:1
Average class size	18

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	204297
Total expenditure	199134
Expenditure per pupil	3018
Balance brought forward from previous year	4029
Balance carried forward to next year	9192

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	44
Number of questionnaires returned	21

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	38	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	62	19	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	52	19	0	19
The teaching is good.	33	62	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	43	19	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	29	14	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	48	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	19	48	33	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	10	71	19	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	57	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	14	57	14	10

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None

## **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**

64. At the time of the inspection there were just two children of Foundation Stage age. In order not to identify individual children, this report will concentrate on the provision the school makes for young children. When they start school in most years, young children's attainment is typical of that expected for their age. Most children attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 and attain the expected standards in all the Areas of Learning. Young children are taught in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and the class has 16 pupils in total. There is a part time teaching assistant to help children with their work. Children enter school in the term before their fifth birthday and most of them have attended the nearby pre-school playgroup.
65. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The teacher plans activities that give children experiences in all the Areas of Learning recommended for children of this age. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets. The teaching in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class is good now. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Lesson planning is focused on the Early Learning Goals recommended for young children. The provision builds successfully on children's records received from the playgroup and links well into the requirements of the National Curriculum at Year 1. The staff use time effectively and the teaching assistant works very closely with the teacher. Children receive much individual attention because the class is small this term. Good assessment procedures are in place and the needs of all children are carefully addressed. The outdoor play environment has been very effectively re-developed and it offers opportunities for a wide range of activities. The Foundation Stage provision was a key issue at the time of the last inspection and all the issues identified have now been put right. The improved provision for Foundation Stage children has had a positive effect on standards measured at the end of Years 2 and 4.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

66. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good when they start school. Most children have attended pre-school groups. They have the confidence to leave their main carer and are quite independent. Children have good relationships with adults. The learning environment created by the school and the good support in a small group setting allows children to quickly develop a sense of belonging to their class. Each year children learn to work well together. They learn to stay on task for quite long periods and confidently select their own independent activities. The pre-school playgroup children join school assemblies on a regular basis and they share physical education lessons in the hall together. Adults reinforce good work habits at all times and have a very well developed sense of anticipating children's needs.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**



67. On entry to the school, children have skills in speaking and listening that are typical of children nationally. The teaching ensures that most children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1. Children learn, for example, to recognise their own names and identify the first letter's sound correctly. The provision for extending their skills in this area of learning is good. Adults help children to practise writing single letters, to build words and develop reading skills. This process enhances the quality of their emerging writing. The teacher uses videotapes well to develop children's understanding of first and last letter sounds. They learn three letter words, such as 'bat' and children learn that 'cat,' 'hat,' 'sat,' are rhyming words.
68. Children develop good speaking and listening skills when they take part in a 'Bear Hunt' in the school's grounds. The whole class remembers much of the song and tries to add appropriate facial expressions as they go on their hunt. Circle time discussions give children good opportunities to talk about familiar things and listen to the contributions of others. Children have their own reading bags and reading records that they take home each day. The listening station that has many recorded stories enables children to enjoy listening to stories and talking about them on a regular basis with the teaching assistant. Children, including those who find learning difficult, are well supported in a small group by the teaching assistant who has good questioning skills and carefully records the progress children make and the difficulties encounter as children do their work.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

69. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and they achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. The planning and provision for the development of children's mathematical understanding are clearly linked to the Early Learning Goals. Children learn to put the numbers up to 10 in order successfully. They learn to identify two-dimensional shapes correctly, such as a circle, square and triangle. Children recognise the patterns of dots when they roll dice and match these to numbers on cards. The school provides a good range of practical apparatus for children to use, such as counters and building blocks. The teacher uses interesting and stimulating displays on the classroom wall to help children learn more about numbers. The teacher reinforces the use of numbers effectively in many other lessons. Children often count aloud when appropriate in different lessons.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

70. Good provision is made for this Area of Learning. Each year children learn about their immediate area near the school when the teacher takes them for a walk around the village. They develop an appropriate range of vocabulary such as 'land,' 'river,' 'ford,' 'lake,' 'woods,' and learn to look more carefully at the environment around them. The teacher clearly reinforces the Green Cross Code and emphasises the importance of looking and listening carefully in order to cross the road safely. They visit the village green and the nature conservation area. They learn about the ford and why it exists. This work leads to simple map making and children look at similarities and differences they find in their local environment. They study a range of animals and how their colours camouflage them in their natural environment. Children have regular opportunities to work on the computer. Children develop good hand skills when they use small construction kits to create models.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

71. The provision for children's creative development is effective. The teacher plans for children to experience a wide range of art materials. Children look at how the colour of animals camouflages them in their natural environment. Children learn to mix paint and then find the same colour in the outdoor play area in order to hide the animal in the play area. Children develop an understanding of the work of other artists by looking at pictures by Van Gogh, Monet and Anthony Frost. Good displays on the classroom walls show children how much their work is valued.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

72. Children explore space and shape when they go on a 'Bear Hunt' in the school grounds. Indoor lessons are shared with children from the playgroup. These lessons allow the teacher to get to know the new children coming into school before they join the Reception class. The targets for the lesson observed were clearly linked to the Early Learning Goals and focused on children travelling over, under and around objects using small and large equipment. Adults give very clear instructions and the class teacher's knowledge of young children's learning through physical activities is good. The outdoor play environment offers opportunities for a wide range of activities.

## ENGLISH

73. Since the last inspection, pupils' National Test results at the end of Year 2 have improved from well below average to above average in reading and writing. In 2001, pupils' standards were well above average in comparison with similar schools. The school has received national recognition for its improvement in English, a success of which they are justifiably proud. Results in reading and writing since the last inspection show that girls have attained significantly better than boys in English. This trend reflects the national pattern. Evidence shows that pupils have made good progress throughout their time in school and most reach the levels expected for their age or better. Results in 2002 were not quite as high as those of the two previous years. However, pupils achieved well taking into account their capabilities on entry to the school. Pupils' achievement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' standards of work observed during the inspection in Years 2 and 4 were average. However, the current Year 2 class is already making good progress at this early time in the year.
74. The main strengths in English are the above average level of pupils' speaking and listening skills, the good quality of teaching in all classes and the good support given to those pupils needing extra help. Parents feel that the teaching of literacy has had a positive impact and that pupils have made good progress. They correctly feel that there has been considerable improvement in pupils' standards of work since the last inspection. The results of annual tests are examined carefully to identify which areas of pupils' English work are most in need of improvement. For instance, the school has identified writing as an area for improvement in their literacy action plan.

75. The areas for improvement identified during the inspection are as follows. Teachers do not manage a small number of pupils throughout the school well enough. On occasions a small number of boys do not try hard enough and this attitude has had a negative effect on their attainment. On occasions, teachers do not ensure that pupils work at a good pace or that pupils understand the need to present their work to a high standard, taking pride in their handwriting.
76. Pupils' standards of speaking and listening are above national expectations at the age of seven and nine. Teachers ask pupils a range of interesting and challenging questions and these are often addressed to individual pupils. Younger pupils up to Year 2 have good opportunities to discuss the character of Nigel in their story 'Naughty Nigel' and identify that, 'He is a naughty boy because he runs away and never listens to anything said to him.' Special things brought into school by the pupils are used well in circle time discussions to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their objects, describe them and give their opinions about them. All pupils take part, with very sensitive adult support for the few who are less confident. Pupils who find learning difficult have good opportunities to talk about their experiences at the weekend in their small literacy groups.
77. Another good feature of lessons with the more able older pupils, is the way that pupils discuss their work together. For example, they discussed their answers with each other after completing comprehension questions about the Celts. Older pupils link sentences together successfully when sharing their ideas in circle time discussions. In discussion with visitors, pupils in Years 3 and 4 very confidently talked about previous work they had done and about the way they had achieved particular effects in their silk painting art lesson.
78. Standards in reading heard during the inspection were average in Years 2 and 4. Teachers use ICT, videos, listening stations with stories on tape and a wide range of other resources to help pupils read better. Pupils use computers to write lists of words and sentences. This process helps them to improve their reading, spelling and writing skills. When teachers read a 'big book' story with the whole class, pupils of all ages sound out letters or break words down into manageable parts to help them work out what the words say. Pupils work successfully in small groups with good adult support to learn letter names and sounds. Pupils who find reading difficult have good additional work and use a special literacy scheme.
79. Younger pupils up to Year 2 know a range of effective ways to read unfamiliar words. Many parents of pupils in the infant class contribute much to the progress made by their children. For example, they make appropriate comments in reading record books. The more able pupils in Year 2 read aloud confidently and expressively, both when reading individually or as part of the class group. They predict what is going to happen next in the story and are happy to give their opinions about their books. For example, one pupil said, "I like this book because it has lots of jokes and I can tell them to my friends." Boys' reading standards in Year 3 are well below average. The school has identified this issue and good adult support is in place to help pupils improve their reading. These pupils work in small groups with an adult and use the additional literacy scheme successfully. Pupils' study skills, such as locating and using information in books in the school library, are good and improve pupils' knowledge, particularly in science lessons.
80. Pupils' writing standards are average at the age of both seven and nine. By the end of their time in the infant class, more able pupils have a good understanding of

sentences. They use describing words well to make their sentences more interesting and their use of punctuation and capital letters is generally correct when they write about, 'My Teddy's Adventure.' They show a good knowledge of the sounds of letters and their spellings are accurate or understandable. Teachers use projected computer displays well and pupils easily identify words that, for example, contain "ee" or "ea" sounds. Pupils were very keen to find the words and ensured that the teacher highlighted them on the white board in yellow. Pupils enjoy making up rhymes to help them to remember how to spell long words. They understand the difference between writing for information and other forms of writing. Pupils use ICT well to create their own poems. The teacher emphasises joined writing in the infant class and many pupils in Year 2 use well formed letters and a pleasing style of writing. Pupils who find writing difficult have help in small groups and make good progress with sentence building. The school's analysis of test results shows that encouraging pupils' use of more sophisticated language will improve standards further.

81. The more able pupils in Year 4 develop a fluent writing style and write with an audience very much in mind. For example, they choose words very well and write in complex sentences when complaining to an electrical company about problems with a vacuum cleaner. Pupils described the difficulties as; 'It spits out dust, lets out smoke and sucks up the carpet.' Their books show good examples of persuasive writing and of writing instructions. The school has good links with a school in Kenya and pupils write interesting letters to their pen-pals describing life in their own school and comparing it well with the school experiences of their friends in Kenya. There is a wide range of ability within a small year group and some pupils find it difficult to use full stops and capital letters accurately in their writing. They confuse capital and small letters within words and their writing shows poor letter formation. Pupils use ICT well to present a best copy of their extended writing but pupils' own writing skills have been affected by the lack of consistency in teaching last year. The presentation of work in their books is poor, both in terms of content and handwriting. These books are 'draft' books, all pupils write in pencil, not all work is completed and it is hard for pupils to see progress as the work is poorly organised within the books.
82. Throughout the school, pupils who find learning difficult, particularly those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is largely due to the good programmes of work that bring pupils to the levels expected for their age. Learning support assistants work skilfully in regular small group sessions, to help pupils acquire basic skills.
83. The teaching throughout the school is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers clearly show good subject knowledge and their planning is clear. The tasks set for pupils match their individual needs well and enable all pupils to make good progress. The quality of teaching has been raised by the feedback to teachers from lesson observations made by the head teacher and the subject leader together with much support from the local education authority. Teachers have received good advice. Pupils' work is also checked to help promote better progress from class to class. Pupils have individual targets to attain and their progress in literacy is carefully watched throughout school. Pupils work well in literacy lessons. Many listen carefully, concentrate and try hard. They develop very good relationships with all adults working with them. However, the poor behaviour of a few boys sometimes distracts other pupils and hinders their learning. The teachers' management of this behaviour on occasions is not effective enough.

84. Work in literacy lessons links well to work in other subjects. In numeracy lessons pupils write large numbers in words accurately. Teachers use non-fiction books well in guided reading sessions to enable older pupils to learn about dinosaurs and invaders and settlers. All teachers use computers in lessons. All teachers make very good use of digital projectors in literacy lessons to make lessons come alive.
85. An experienced teacher leads English and she has good subject knowledge. She has a sound overview of teaching and learning throughout school. The school library is well stocked with both fiction and non-fiction books. The cataloguing and colour coding of the books enable older pupils to find the information they require easily. There is a very good range of good quality reading books in school. These are located next to the library and are of good quality.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 currently is average and in Year 4 the standard is above national expectations. This is an improvement on the standards reached by pupils reported during the last inspection. Pupils now achieve well. Over the last four years, pupils' standards in mathematics have been lower than those in English. In the 2001 National Tests for Year 2 pupils, mathematics standards at that time were well below average. In 2002, four out of five Year 2 pupils attained the standard in mathematics expected nationally. Direct comparisons from year to year can be unreliable because of the small number of pupils in each year group and the varying abilities of successive year groups. Mathematics standards have improved. There are, however, significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls that the school needs to address. Girls presently in Year 4 take most of the places in the upper mathematics group.
87. Pupils with special educational needs receive good adult support and make good progress towards their individual learning targets. Years 3 and 4 pupils are challenged well by the tasks they have to do in mathematics groups and teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. These two factors together with teachers' use of the ICT facilities have led to pupils' better progress.
88. In Year 2, average and higher attaining pupils know how to divide small numbers, measure in centimetres and find a quarter of six. Pupils subtract 19 from 67 successfully and make block graphs about information they have found. Lower attaining pupils are able to draw charts, subtract 7 from 22 successfully and begin to grasp how to tell the time.
89. At the end of Year 4, pupils' work contains many problem-solving activities. In this way pupils have learnt to use mathematics in a wide variety of ways to find answers to problems. Higher attaining pupils add large numbers successfully, understand the value of numbers up to 10,000 and can show some interesting patterns in sets of numbers. Average attaining pupils tend to work in an untidy fashion and often do not use a ruler for straight lines. However, they successfully take 73 from 100, find the area of rectangles and work quite accurately with large numbers. Lower attaining pupils have work that is well suited to their needs. They subtract eight from 16 successfully, find lines of symmetry in shapes and know the time to quarter past and quarter to the hour.
90. The quality of teaching is good. A strength of the teaching is in the relationships that teachers have with pupils. They know the pupils well and most pupils of all ages

respond positively by showing positive attitudes to the tasks given to them. There is a purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, which supports learning. In Years 1 and 2, the teacher plans lessons effectively. In one lesson observed, lower attaining pupils learned how to add tens and units and revised the values of different numbers within larger numbers. Average and higher attainers learnt to turn two cards over at random and add the numbers successfully. In Years 3 and 4, the good teaching in both the lower and upper groups allows pupils to make good progress. Teachers give pupils time targets in which they have to complete their work. Lessons therefore proceed at a good pace. Lower attaining pupils have learnt to pay for objects in different ways with different combinations of coins and in the upper group pupils have learnt to order numbers up to 10,000.

91. Teachers question pupils well to assess what they know, understand and can do in the oral parts of lessons. Good questioning of pupils by the teachers ensures a lively pace to lessons. Errors made by pupils during mental calculations are quickly corrected and teachers make effective use of common errors to make teaching points to the whole class, often using the digital projectors. In this way, pupils learn a variety of ways to tackle problems. Teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and then, for example, explain how they might have tackled a problem. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is good, both within classrooms from the teacher and by learning support assistants. The support is effective and pupils make good progress.
92. Teachers use ICT very well to support pupils' learning in mathematics. There are good examples of work in data handling evident in classrooms and pupils make good progress using and presenting information in a variety of ways. Teachers make good use of pupils' literacy skills to support learning in mathematics, particularly when pupils are expected to explain to others how they have solved a problem.
93. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils use dates in historical time lines. Pupils make weather reports in geography. In science, distances and temperatures feature in work. Pupils use estimation and measuring skills in design and technology. In music, teachers encourage pupils to count beats and to analyse rhythms.
94. The quality of marking of pupils' books is inconsistent and it often does not help pupils to organise and present work correctly or let them know what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Throughout the school, the presentation of work is often not corrected, with many untidy examples of work not commented upon. Consequently, over time some pupils do little to improve the way they set out work, or develop the ability to use a ruler appropriately when drawing lines. Some pupils have difficulty placing one number under another when necessary. The appropriate use of squared paper would help pupils to grasp the value of numbers more quickly. Girls are particularly well motivated and they work faster because they concentrate better. Teachers do not spend enough time ensuring that boys produce their work to a similar standard to girls. The behaviour policy is not strong enough and the resistance of some boys is not dealt with effectively.
95. Leadership and management of the subject are good now. The co-ordinator has identified the weaknesses in mathematics and has put into place a plan for action. Her monitoring of teaching is rigorous in many areas and clear feedback to staff helps teachers know what they do well and what could be improved. All staff work from a similar planning format and from the National Numeracy Strategy. There are

still inconsistencies, but these have been recognised and where necessary further staff training has been undertaken and the outcome of this is being monitored. The range and quality of books and equipment are good.

## SCIENCE

96. Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 4 matches the standards expected nationally. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2 in 2001, teachers found that all pupils attained the expected Level 2 of the National Curriculum but very few pupils attained a higher standard.
97. In Year 2, pupils know the difference between carnivores and herbivores. They know that some forces push while others pull. They have watched seeds grow into plants and have recorded the cycle of growth in a diagram form. Pupils have briefly written about how a circuit works and have made one that lights a bulb. Pupils use ICT to draw graphs of the food they had eaten at a party. There is scope for more lessons to develop pupils' understanding through investigations and for pupils to comment more often, for example, on whether things happened as they expected or not.
98. Year 4 pupils understand how the food chain works. They have looked closely at a healthy diet, digestion and how various other systems in the body function. Pupils know that some materials are synthetic and others are natural and they have carried out a survey of the amount and type of rubbish we all make. Pupils have recorded their work satisfactorily. Pupils do not make much use of their literacy skills to express their ideas and thinking clearly. Pupils record much of their work on work sheets, which are often untidy and appear to suggest that pupils' understanding is superficial. This is not the case because pupils in fact often have a good understanding of what they have learnt.
99. The teaching is interesting and the practical activities, which are common for older pupils, help pupils understand new ideas better. Pupils discuss their findings and reach sensible conclusions. Pupils respond well and show interest. Pupils gain a range of knowledge and understanding, building on their experiences of the world. They learn about forces when pushing or pulling toys, they know which foods are good for them, they expand their understanding of how electrical appliances work by constructing simple electrical circuits, and learn about properties of materials when choosing them for different purposes.
100. In a good lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils investigated skeletons. The teacher began the lesson by bringing in a full size copy of a skeleton, which impressed pupils very much. Pupils learned many new words, such as 'femur,' 'shoulder blade' and 'fossil.' They also used their measuring skills effectively when they measured different bones in their bodies. Pupils learnt, for example, that the ribs protect our lungs and that men have a narrower pelvis. The teacher introduced many sources of information into the lesson, including from the Internet and school library.
101. Pupils with special educational needs receive a good level of support from teachers, support assistants and helpers. Adults help them in a variety of ways to overcome their difficulties and pupils make steady progress in lessons. Higher attaining pupils have work that challenges them, but there is room to develop a better match of written work to pupils' capabilities to improve their progress further. Teachers mark pupils' work, but do not often leave pupils with a thought-provoking question about

their discoveries or a target for improvement, such as about tidy presentation. Teachers do not make enough use of headings to ensure pupils' investigate and record findings scientifically in their own words, such as 'What I want to know,' 'What I predict will happen,' 'What I did,' and 'What I found out.' The co-ordinator's plans to improve science in the school are good in many areas of the subject. The school's site is a good resource for teaching science. The school has a wormery that recycles natural material. Pupils learn at first-hand how efficient and beneficial the recycling process can be.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

102. Standards of work match those expected nationally in Years 2 and 4 and pupils make satisfactory and improving progress. The school has made very good improvements to the quality of provision since the last inspection now that the computer based facilities are in place. The computer facilities, with access to the Internet, have made a strong positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils now build on their skills systematically as they move through the school. Teachers' arrangements for assessing pupils' work and recording what they have learned up to Year 4 are clear and informative. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils receive a good curriculum that covers all aspects of ICT during their time at the school. The ICT facilities in the school have a major impact on most lessons. The investment has been well worthwhile and staff have benefited greatly from the courses they have taken provided by the New Opportunities Fund. Money for equipment has been spent wisely. The digital projectors in every class and the small computer suite show in their constant use by staff and pupils how wisely the money from the government for ICT facilities has been spent. The co-ordinator and staff have worked very hard to make the new systems work. The co-ordinator has been particularly active and effective, supported by the headteacher.
103. Pupils in Year 4 know how to make a text look the way they want it to look. They change text into bold type, change its size and style and recognise and correct spelling errors. They use the Internet to find information successfully and use ICT as a matter of routine in their work. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have made stick drawings and some very satisfying patterns that show reflective symmetry. Pupils have word-processed good pieces of writing telling of the day they met the Queen. They particularly enjoy the painting program that allows them to spray colour, to make repeating stamps or to make their own cartoon type characters.
104. Pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. One of the major positive features of the digital projectors is that pupils concentrate better on what is presented. Pupils answer questions with interest, settle to tasks well and share equipment effectively. One or two pupils occasionally interrupt the teacher. The teachers' responses are limited by the behaviour policy and are therefore not as effective as they might be. Many pupils attend the informal ICT club that runs before and after school and at lunchtime.
105. The teaching is good. Teachers and support staff give good clear explanations and the right amount of support to help pupils learn at a steady pace. Teachers often prepare their work at home using computers and bring lessons to school on discs, ready to go. Teachers have begun to use the great potential of the digital projectors. They move information around the screen, simplify the display when necessary or complicate it to suit the needs of lessons. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the quality of the visual displays. For example, Year 4 pupils learned to work with large



numbers better because the teacher was able to overlay parts of numbers effectively in front of pupils on screen. Teachers consolidate ideas well and many lessons have an ICT component. Pupils regularly learn a new feature or process that will help them in their work in the years to come.

106. The school successfully uses ICT to support work in other subjects. For example, pupils have sent e-mails. Pupils have word-processed booklets last year in English lessons. The results were impressive and the school is right to be proud of them. In mathematics, pupils have seen giant pictures of coins. The great size of the projected coins helped pupils to recognise them better. Pupils draw graphs to help them understand what they have learned from surveys or collections of other information. Year 2 pupils have made weather graphs in geography showing what the weather was like over the week using symbols.
107. The co-ordinator, headteacher and all staff have raised the profile of ICT very effectively. The computers around the school have a good range of basic programs for teachers to use that include painting and word-processing. The school makes considerable efforts to ensure that pupils who have limited hearing can hear teachers in lessons and assemblies. The school has installed a good microphone and loudspeaker system which teachers use regularly to amplify their voices.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

108. At the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils attain the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The school uses Suffolk's 'Themes and Schemes' programme and pupils study Christianity and Judaism. Buddhism features when pupils go to the middle school.
109. The theme for this term for pupils up to age 7 is, 'What might happen if?' Pupils are becoming more aware of their actions on others and how they can help and please others. Pupils show some understanding of the meaning of celebrations but there is not much written evidence of what they have done. Pupils understand symbolic actions in prayers, such as the raising of hands above the head that symbolises reaching up to God. Pupils learn much during circle time discussions by listening and speaking, and in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils study the development of Christianity in East Anglia in history.
110. In Years 3 and 4, the theme this term is about rules and customs. Pupils have a clear understanding of what good and bad behaviour is and pupils know they have choices to make in the future. Pupils have begun to compare Christian customs with those of Judaism. The headteacher supports pupils' moral development effectively. During the inspection week, there was a clear focus on making good or bad choices in assemblies. The headteacher also teaches understanding of the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Creed.
111. The teaching is satisfactory. The content of the locally agreed syllabus is taught with enthusiasm. Pupils experience religious education through story, role-play and discussions. Pupils do not record much of what they learn in religious education lessons even though it offers good opportunities for pupils to clarify their thoughts in writing. Teachers are not giving this aspect of the curriculum enough emphasis. Teachers have just begun recording assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding of ideas.

112. The co-ordinator has been in place for 10 years and has a keen interest in the subject. The policy for religious education has been brought up to date effectively. Each theme in the scheme of work has very appropriate resources to support teaching and pupils' learning. There are also good information books in the library.

## **ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, MUSIC and PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

113. Pupils reach the standards expected nationally in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils' achievement in the subjects is satisfactory and on occasions is good. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for the subjects.
114. In **art** pupils develop an understanding of colour and tone when matching coloured papers with objects in classroom. They mix paint successfully to make secondary colours. Younger pupils up to Year 2 know about the work of Anthony Frost and have successfully tried to reproduce his techniques to create interesting texture in their paintings. The art co-ordinator is enthusiastic and pupils respond well to her teaching. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study a range of artists' work and paint in the style of Monet and Van Gogh. Pupils use their skills in other subjects successfully to illustrate writing. For example, poems on the achievement board have been illustrated attractively in pencil. Pupils use their ICT design skills to make borders, use different styles of letters and create their own pictures on screen. Pupils have sound opportunities to use paint, to print, use different fabrics and make collages.
115. Pupils plan what they intend to do in **design and technology**, make simple mechanisms, build structures, use construction kits and blend textiles and foods. By the time pupils leave the school, they have used construction kits to make and understand gears, have used different ways of joining materials and have learned to investigate specific tasks. Years 3 and 4 pupils' folders show good designs for making a moving vehicle. Pupils understand the design process though have only evaluated their work verbally. There is scope for pupils to write more and to label the parts and materials needed better. Pupils have produced some good sketches of various views of their vehicles including the inside, such as seats inside a bus and the staircase. Pupils have designed winding devices to lift a stage curtain on a model stage. In one example, a pupil made a very good drawing of a winding device using a pencil as a roller on which to wind foam to help the string to grip the rod.
116. Benhall and several other schools in England, and schools in Belgium and Latvia will soon link together on a very good **design and technology** project. All will use the book, "The Cow That Fell In The Canal," as a starting point. Pupils will look at how, for example, barges, flood gates and canals work. This work is to be assessed, with a focus on the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' work will be taken to Belgium in November for comparison to find similarities and differences between approaches. The co-ordinator is aware that teachers' approach to the design and make process is not entirely consistent across the school and he intends to review the school's policy and plans in the near future.
117. Teachers plan **geography and history** lessons at different times of the year. During the inspection Reception and Years 1 and 2 pupils went on an interesting walk around the area to look at the way that Benhall is laid out and how the land is used. Pupils understand terms such as 'land,' 'river,' 'ford,' 'lake' and 'woods.'

Pupils know that the local 'green' has many uses and that the wood is a conservation area. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study a range of geographical ideas, such as about the similarities and differences between areas. They know where East Anglia is in relation to England and later in the year consider the attractive and unattractive features of places. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study the weather, maps and plans and how the environment changes. In history lessons pupils, for example, study how the world was discovered. They know some facts about famous people, such as Christopher Columbus and Francis Drake. In Years 3 and 4 pupils study the Ancient Greeks' beliefs and achievements. Pupils' work is often too similar in content. Higher attaining pupils are rarely challenged with more difficult ideas that result in a written piece of work in their own words.

118. The focus in **music** this term is rhythm and pitch. Year 2 pupils sing simple rhythms and patterns back to their teacher correctly. Across the school, most girls sing in tune but boys find this more difficult. There is a good range of instruments to accompany singing. Pupils usually listen carefully to the sounds and identify whether or not they illustrate the words of the songs they hear.
119. Year 2 pupils work successfully in **physical education** lessons. All pupils in the class used the floor and apparatus to make bridge shapes with their bodies. They moved in a co-ordinated way and most could hold a balance for several seconds. Pupils followed instructions quickly and nearly all pupils balanced successfully on two hands and one foot. Higher attaining pupils used the apparatus very successfully to extend the height of their bridge positions. Pupils are mature enough to work in pairs and make bridges with a partner. Year 4 pupils step and jump in different ways. They make sequences of movements, often with the three or four phases. They add skips, rolls and slides in various combinations using hands and feet successfully.
120. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development in the subjects are good. Pupils enjoy discovering and using new ideas. The school employs an 'Artist in residence' from time to time and older pupils, for example, enjoyed making silk paintings. All boys and girls are well behaved when working in practical ways, such as in design and technology. In music, younger pupils expressed feelings identified in the words of songs through voice and facial expressions. Many confidently sing on their own to the rest of the class. In physical education, pupils enjoy moving and responding quickly to the themes of the lesson. A few boys sometimes do not participate as well as they might.
121. The teaching is good overall and teachers have good subject knowledge. For example in art, the sequence of tasks set by the teacher improved pupils' observational skills, use of mixing and matching colours and their cutting skills when working on the camouflage of animals in the natural environment. Teachers plan design and technology effectively. All aspects of the subject are taught, with an emphasis on practical work. Pupils learn, for example, to use junk materials and manufactured construction kits to express their ideas. Work about healthy eating has taught pupils about balanced meals. Pupils learned the process of making a sandwich, wrote the sequence of instructions to follow, listed ingredients needed and made sandwiches they liked. Pupils' often record their work in these subjects on worksheets, which is satisfactory, but there are few opportunities for pupils to draft and write their ideas tidily in their own words.
122. In a music lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, pupils did not have enough chances to sing for enjoyment and some boys became restless. Pupils had too few chances to

explore the sounds of un-tuned instruments. In physical education lessons and geography, the emphasis is correctly on practical activities. Pupils learn to move safely in school and outdoors where there is traffic. Pupils learn to control their bodies better and to respond quickly to commands. Pupils learn to make movements at different heights including using apparatus. Teachers generally manage pupils well but on occasions the discipline policy is not effective enough when large groups, for the size of hall, take part in a lessons. The checks that teachers use sometimes do not work and valuable time is wasted. Support staff are particularly effective. They have very good relationship with pupils and often keep them on task if their concentration begins to wander.

123. The co-ordination of the subjects is good. For example, the music co-ordinator is a good musician. She sings and plays guitar and on one occasion sang to the whole school, to their obvious pleasure. Work in geography and history is planned carefully. Teachers have an enthusiasm for their subjects and it shows in many ways, such as in the displays that teachers make of pupils' work and of interesting facts and information. The co-ordination of subjects is often a shared process because there are so few teachers. Nevertheless, each subject receives a reasonable amount of time, books and other equipment are plentiful and the full range of the National Curriculum is taught. The school is trying a new timetable where Years 3 and 4 are grouped together for music and physical education. In the two lessons seen in these subjects, they were a little too long and the class was too large to allow much active practical work.