

## INSPECTION REPORT

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

Thorndon, Eye

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124745

Headteacher: Mr S A Robbins

Reporting inspector: Mrs Helen Ranger  
22223

Dates of inspection: 25 – 26 February 2003

Inspection number: 248626

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

|                              |                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | Infant and junior                        |
| School category:             | Voluntary controlled                     |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 - 11                                   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                    |
| School address:              | The Street<br>Thorndon<br>Eye<br>Suffolk |
| Postcode:                    | IP23 7JR                                 |
| Telephone number:            | 01379 678392                             |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                       |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr N Brinsley                            |
| Date of previous inspection: | December 1997                            |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members            |                      | Subject responsibilities                                                                                                                                 | Aspect responsibilities                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Helen Ranger<br>22223   | Registered inspector | The Foundation Stage curriculum<br>Mathematics<br>Music<br>Religious education<br>Equal opportunities                                                    | How high are standards?<br>a) The school's results and achievements<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further?                                  |
| Helen Griffiths<br>9446 | Lay inspector        |                                                                                                                                                          | How high are standards?<br>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Sue O'Sullivan<br>31525 | Team inspector       | English<br>Art and design<br>Geography<br>History<br>English as an additional language                                                                   | How well are pupils taught?                                                                                                                                                                      |
| David Riddle<br>12721   | Team inspector       | Science<br>Design and technology<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education<br>Educational inclusion<br>Special educational needs | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?                                                                                                                           |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a small Church of England village school. There are 51 pupils on roll and currently more boys than girls. The numbers admitted each year fluctuate quite widely; for example, the present Year 2 consists of only three boys. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Their attainment on entry is average. Most pupils live in Thorndon and the surrounding hamlets, but about one in five comes from outside the school's own designated area. Since its last inspection, the intake has changed with the addition of a social housing project in the village; the pupils who live there tend to be more mobile than other pupils. Almost all the pupils are from white British families. The proportion who are identified with special educational needs is broadly average (25 per cent at present), but three have statements of special educational needs, which is a high proportion for a school of this size.

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

The school provides its pupils with a sound education in a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Pupils reach average standards in their work. Teaching and pupils' progress are often good in literacy, numeracy and science, but there are aspects for development in some other subjects. The headteacher, staff and governors provide strong pastoral leadership and establish an effective climate for learning where pupils feel valued as individuals. The staff and governors monitor standards and teaching adequately, but this is an area for further development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Many key aspects of teaching are good, especially how the school develops pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and science and achieves above average standards in writing in the oldest pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school, behave well, form very good relationships and are keen to learn.
- The headteacher, staff and governors ensure that the school is a community that values and caters for pupils' individuality and diversity.
- There are high levels of care for pupils and good attention to their welfare and safety.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is effective.
- The school works in a close and productive partnership with parents.

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

- Standards in history and geography, which are below average.
- Aspects of how the teachers plan for the full range of ages and attainments in each class.
- The short-term and longer-term procedures for assessing and communicating pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of the co-ordinators in monitoring and improving the standards of pupils' work in the foundation subjects<sup>1</sup> and religious education.

*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 December 1997. It has made sufficient improvement since then. The standards achieved by pupils have risen satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained in areas that were identified as strengths then, such as pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships, and the provision for their personal development. Most of the areas for development from the last inspection have shown sufficient improvement. The accommodation has been substantially improved and is now satisfactory. The teaching in lessons seen this time was better, particularly in reception and Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures have improved and tracking systems are being developed, but assessment is still not effective in some subjects. The staff monitor the core subjects of English, mathematics and science soundly and pastoral provision is now evaluated. However, the subject leaders still do not check standards or the effectiveness of provision enough in other subjects.

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<sup>1</sup> The foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

## STANDARDS

Because this is a small school and the numbers in each year group are low, it is not relevant to compare the results of its pupils in the National Curriculum tests in Years 2 and 6 with either national results or with similar schools. Results from each year group vary widely from year to year and are often dependent on the numbers of pupils who have significant special educational needs which may limit their attainment in the tests. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils' attainment that are based on individual assessments of their likely progress. The targets have risen sharply over the past few years. Last year the targets were not met; with such small year groups, relatively small variations in pupils' performance and factors, such as pupils' absence during tests, as happened last year, have a large impact on the school's overall success as measured by targets.

Inspection evidence shows that most pupils in all age groups make at least sound progress. They achieve well in English, mathematics and science. However, in several other subjects, the older and more capable pupils in each class could do better at times if their work was more challenging. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The small number whose first language is not English rapidly develop the communication skills they need. The children in the reception group settle well and most are on course to reach the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in all areas of learning by the end of the school year. The pupils in Years 1 to 6 reach at least the levels expected in all the subjects seen during the inspection, except history and geography where standards are below average. No lessons were seen in physical education to judge attainment. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, pupils often do well and several of the oldest reach above expected levels in aspects of their work, especially writing. In information and communication technology, pupils make sound progress in acquiring new skills and applying these to their work in some other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.                                            |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good in lessons, in the playground and around the school. Pupils are friendly and polite.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils form very good relationships. They show increasing maturity as they get older. |
| Attendance                             | Satisfactory, but a little below the national average.                                      |

The school functions well as a friendly community where pupils show respect for other children and for adults. Pupils of all ages mix well.

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<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals are the levels in all the Areas of Learning that children are expected to reach by the end of the reception class. The Areas of Learning are the Government guidelines for the curriculum for children in nursery and reception classes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching    | good      | good        | good        |

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

Teaching and learning are effective in all age groups. This is particularly because of the good quality of teaching in the reception group and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy is promoted well, including for those who have special learning needs. In other subjects, teaching is satisfactory overall, with good features. Teachers' planning and organisation are often good, especially in the core subjects, but, sometimes, not enough account is taken of the needs of the highest attainers and the oldest pupils in each class. There is not enough systematic teaching of the skills and understanding needed by pupils in history and geography. Support staff and specialist teachers are used well. The teachers and other adults promote a pleasant, settled atmosphere for learning in their classrooms and manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers use tests soundly to assess progress. However, they do not carry out enough day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress, including how they mark work. As a result, subsequent lessons are not planned in line with pupils' known attainment and pupils are not given enough information about how well they are doing. Pupils record their work satisfactorily, but the expectations of how work will be presented and stored are not always high enough and do not encourage the pride in finished products that pupils' efforts often deserve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect                                                                                      | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The quality and range of the curriculum                                                     | Satisfactory for all age groups, but with more attention needed to how the curriculum is planned for the mixed-age classes, particularly in history and geography and for higher attainers.                            |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs                                         | Good. Teachers and support staff identify pupils' individual needs well and cater for them in lessons.                                                                                                                 |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Good, individual help for the small number of pupils whose first language is not English. These pupils make good progress.                                                                                             |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is strong and supports the good quality of relationships and behaviour in the school. Spiritual and cultural provision are satisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils                                                    | Good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety and sound monitoring of their progress and personal development. The assessment of progress in the foundation subjects needs to be improved.                   |

The school enjoys the very good support of parents and works hard to encourage them to be involved in a close partnership in children's learning. The curriculum is enhanced well by programmes of personal, social and health education and by a good range of visits and visitors. The school has productive links with other schools in the local 'pyramid' and with the nearby playgroup; these contribute well to the continuity of education.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect                                                           | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory overall. Pastoral leadership in the school is strong. The staff work well as a team. Subject leaders do not monitor standards and teaching rigorously enough in some subjects.                                |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | Statutory requirements are met well. Governors have a sound understanding of the school and give it active and committed support.                                                                                          |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school increasingly analyses pupils' performance and uses the information to raise standards. The written improvement plans reflect current priorities well, but do not communicate the strategic view as effectively. |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Resources are directed well to priorities and due account is taken of a longer-term perspective. Best value is considered satisfactorily in planning and spending decisions.                                               |

Staffing levels are satisfactory, but all teachers have a heavy workload due to the wide range of pupils in each class and to the extra responsibilities each teacher has for leading subjects and aspects of the school. Levels of learning resources are sufficient, except those for outdoor play for the reception year which are planned for improvement. The accommodation has been considerably improved, but some weaknesses remain for the youngest children who have no sink in their classroom and no separate outdoor play area.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | What parents would like to see improved                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children are encouraged to be mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The homework arrangements.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul> |

The parents of 28 pupils (55 per cent) responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and seven parents attended the meeting with inspectors. The parents hold very positive views of the school; the proportion who expressed great satisfaction with the school was high and only a small number had concerns. The inspection supports most of the parents' positive views. Inspectors consider that the provision of extra activities such as visits and clubs is good for a school of this size. Inspectors feel that the quality of homework does not always support the otherwise good home-school partnership and that the arrangements for setting it are not always communicated well to parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that vary widely from year to year and between individuals, but which are average overall. They are admitted in the term of their fifth birthday and often have a relatively short time in school before they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. They achieve well as a result of carefully planned lessons and good adult support. Most are on course to meet the levels expected by the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the school year.
2. Because the school has small intakes of pupils each year, it is not valid to compare their results in the tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with the results of schools nationally. Variations of a very small number of pupils in each year group can make a great difference to the school's results in the tests when expressed as a percentage of the intake. The school sets itself targets for pupils' performance each year which are based securely on their assessments of individuals. These targets have risen sharply over the past four years. They are not always met, but are appropriately challenging.
3. Inspection findings are that pupils make at least sound progress in most lessons and most subjects. They achieve well in English, mathematics and science. This includes those with special educational needs who receive good support in line with their individual learning targets. The small number of pupils whose first language is not English are supported well and achieve in line with their classmates. Pupils reach at least the levels expected nationally by Year 2 and Year 6 in the three 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science and some pupils exceed these levels. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection and indicate that the school has kept pace with the improving trend in performance nationally. Writing is a strength in Year 6. Pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy support their learning in other subjects satisfactorily.
4. Pupils' attainment is in line with expected levels in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and religious education. No lessons could be seen in physical education during the inspection so attainment cannot be judged in the subject. Attainment and pupils' achievements are below average in history and geography; pupils are introduced to a broadly satisfactory range of knowledge in these subjects, but their understanding and skills in both subjects are below the levels seen in most schools and below the expectations of the National Curriculum.
5. While pupils mainly achieve well, at times in lessons some groups of pupils do not do as well as others. This is when lessons do not cater well enough for the full range of ages and attainments represented in each class. Sometimes work is not challenging enough for the oldest pupils or the higher attainers or it is too hard for the younger pupils. This happens mostly in the foundation subjects.

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

6. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and their personal development are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Parents feel very strongly that behaviour and attitudes are good and this was endorsed by the findings of the inspection.
7. In its mission statement, the school aims to develop awareness of self and sensitivity to others, to enable pupils to acquire a sense of moral values, to develop confidence, self-discipline, co-operation and appropriate behaviour, and to develop a caring and positive attitude towards others, irrespective of their creed, colour or race. Pupils' attitudes reflect

the school's aims well. They are keen to come to school and punctuality is good for the great majority of pupils, although a small number of families have problems with timekeeping. Pupils are thoughtful of others and know right from wrong. They are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities.

8. Attitudes to learning are consistently good. Pupils show good levels of interest in their lessons and concentrate well. For example, in a Year 5/6 information and communication technology lesson, the pupils were closely engaged throughout the lesson, with good levels of concentration and application. They listen well to their teachers and are eager to contribute their ideas to discussions. In a Year 4 lesson about life in the Tudor period, pupils were very keen to put forward their suggestions of examples of likely occupations for the poor. Pupils are keen to do well and value their teachers' praise and encouragement. They work well together in groups, although they do not always show independence in their learning. However, pupils' good levels of interest and motivation make a positive contribution to their progress.
9. The school functions well as an orderly community. Pupils know the rules well and feel they are treated fairly. They respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and, as a result, behaviour is good in lessons, assemblies and at play and lunch times. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion. They are polite and friendly to visitors. Teachers offer good examples of courtesy and fairness. Relationships are good and pupils are thoughtful of each other's feelings. Bullying is rare and pupils and parents are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
10. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. There are some opportunities for them to take responsibility and these are taken seriously. Pupils value the star system of rewards. They understand the values of other cultures through art, music, religious education and geography and show respect for the feelings of others.
11. Attendance rates, which were good at the time of the last inspection, are now satisfactory. They are a little below average, but this is due to a few pupils with valid reasons for absence. Registration takes place quickly and effectively and ensures a calm start to sessions.

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

12. The quality of teaching is good in all classes, including for pupils in the Foundation Stage. Pupils of all levels of ability are learning well as a result, especially in English, mathematics and science. This includes pupils who have special learning or behavioural needs. The pupils whose first language is not English are taught well and make good progress; if they are admitted with limited spoken English, they rapidly develop the skills they need to take a full part in lessons.
13. The teaching seen during this inspection showed a significant improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the efforts made by the school to improve. Nearly four fifths of the teaching seen was good. Of this, over a fifth was very good. In only one lesson was teaching less than satisfactory, because the expectations of pupils were not high enough and pupils were not making enough progress. The best teaching is in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in information and communication technology. Good teaching was also seen in music lessons taken by the peripatetic teacher. The teaching of foundation subjects is satisfactory, but the school needs to raise expectations of what pupils, especially the potential higher attainers, can achieve in these subjects. There are weaknesses in how teachers plan lessons in history and geography that result from deficiencies in overall curricular planning.

14. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and has improved since the last inspection. The teacher and support staff work well as a team. They manage to plan lessons that cater well for the youngest children, alongside the planning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are in the same class. Often, common themes are taught to the whole class, but the teacher ensures that the objectives and methods of teaching are tailored to the needs of the youngest children. A strong strand of the teaching is the detailed knowledge of and support for each individual. This is built up from the time children enter the school, using both formal and informal assessment procedures. Adults' questioning and the amounts of help they give each child reflect their knowledge of individual needs.
15. In Years 1 to 6, the teaching of literacy is good. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to plan well-structured lessons. Letters, sounds and their combinations are taught with care in the early years. As pupils move up the school, they learn how to express themselves effectively, with correct grammar and accurate punctuation. Pupils are developing well in reading and writing. Handwriting is mainly legible and well formed; spelling is usually good. The teaching of literacy is enlivened by the way teachers link this work to other subjects, such as art and history. The teaching of specialist vocabulary is a good feature of work in most subjects. The lack of marking showing pupils how to improve their work limits the effectiveness of literacy targets set.
16. The teaching of numeracy is good in all classes. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to stimulate pupils' skills of mental and written calculation. They plan work well for pupils of all levels of attainment and pupils make good progress. Lessons are well organised and support staff and resources are well used. However, expectations of presentation and of the layout of pupils' written work are too low. The work pupils complete on loose paper or worksheets is often stored haphazardly, so that pupils cannot reflect on the progress they have made over time or take a pride in their finished efforts. Marking is weak, as it too rarely includes written comments from teachers that enable pupils to know how well they have done or the next step in their learning.
17. The teaching of information and communication technology seen during the inspection was very good. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils learned how to use questions to extract information from a database very effectively. In a science lesson in the same class, pupils used the Internet and a CD-ROM to research the solar system and the phases of the moon. Pupils are learning basic keyboard and computer skills.
18. The planning of lessons in English, mathematics and science is good. In foundation subjects, it is satisfactory. In the core subjects, teachers generally provide well for pupils of different ages and levels of ability, but, in other subjects, the expectations of what pupils should achieve are sometimes too low. This is particularly so where curriculum planning is over a two-year cycle and with mixed-age classes; at times teachers do not identify clearly enough the separate objectives and content that need to be presented to cater for the range of ages and attainments in each class, or take enough account of pupils' prior skills and experiences. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The individual education plans for these pupils contain clear targets. Class teachers and learning support assistants take note of them when planning work. Class teachers and learning support assistants are very effective in enabling pupils with special educational needs to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
19. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They draw on a good range of strategies and methods to help pupils learn and make good use of resources. In particular, teachers work well with support staff. This makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

20. Effective learning is also a result of the good atmosphere and relationships in the school. Pupils are interested in their work and are keen to take part in lessons. They listen well to teachers and do their best, particularly in whole class work. In these sessions, teachers are skilled at targeting their questions for each age group. In individual work, pupils work sensibly, but the pace sometimes slackens. This is partly because expectations of attainment are not clear to pupils. They carry out the tasks set willingly, but are less aware of the standards they are aiming at.
21. Teachers follow the school's marking policy which is to encourage and support pupils, by giving response and guidance orally and in some written comments. The oral feedback to pupils seen during the inspection was good. There is little evidence in pupils' work of teachers' comments, so it is difficult for pupils to look back over their work and note progress. The school uses published schemes of work as the basis of their planning. In their lesson planning, teachers do not identify sufficiently clearly the National Curriculum levels expected of each year group, nor do they refer to the detailed knowledge, understanding and skills that are to be taught in each subject. The lack of clear criteria in each subject against which to measure pupils' progress makes it harder for teachers and pupils to know what they need to do to raise standards. This is an aspect of teaching that the school needs to improve.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. National and local guidance on planning for children in the Foundation Stage is used soundly as a basis for the curriculum for this small group. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education; no lessons were seen resulting from this, but the work covered by pupils as shown in their books indicates that this is an effective aspect of the curriculum.
23. The planning for the youngest children gives an effective balance to all the main areas of learning. The exception is in outdoor activities. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school does not have a separate outdoor area for the group. In practice, adults try to ensure that the children work and play outside regularly. The school has recognised in its management plans the continuing need to provide better facilities for this aspect and hopes to start work on it soon.
24. The curriculum is inclusive, mainly giving access to all pupils, although the needs of the higher attainers are not catered for sufficiently at times. Planning of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has improved since the previous inspection, but there is still insufficient use of assessment to enable long-term and medium-term planning, especially for the older pupils in each class, to take account of their prior attainment. There is a satisfactory curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. It enables pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in lessons within classes and to have full access to the curriculum.
25. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented with benefit to pupils' attainment. Pupils are given good opportunities for developing their speaking skills in lessons other than English and through drama, but the school has not identified all opportunities for teaching literacy skills across the curriculum. Similarly, the National Numeracy Strategy is employed effectively in mathematics lessons and in other subjects such as science, but opportunities for the development of pupils' numeracy skills are not always planned in other subjects. There is some good application of information and communication technology, for example in music, but the planning for information and communication technology to support the rest of the curriculum is under-developed.

26. The curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with good long-term and medium-term planning to accommodate pupils' different needs. There is some satisfactory planning to take account of pupils' different needs in mixed-age classes, for example, in physical education. However, in some other subjects, such as history, geography and music, long-term and medium-term plans take insufficient account of pupils' prior attainment and overall standards are sometimes below what would be expected as a result. The school has recently begun to identify pupils with particular gifts or talents, but there is no special programme in place for such pupils.
27. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary education, which includes preliminary visits to the receiving high school. Year 6 pupils benefit from having some design and technology lessons in the high school. There are good links with the main playgroup nearby which ease the transition to school for those children who attend.
28. Members of the local community make a positive contribution to the curriculum; for example, by hearing pupils read, running the computer club and helping with design and technology lessons. Satisfactory use is made of off-site visits, such as to a science museum connected with a topic on healthy eating and on geography trips when studying rivers. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum, including various sports clubs, a computer club and recorder club. Working in conjunction with other local schools enhances the curriculum, for example, in connection with sport. Older pupils benefit from residential visits, where they are involved in a range of activities with pupils from other local schools.
29. The planning for the personal development of pupils is good. The provision for their moral and social development is strong, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
30. Acts of collective worship provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their experiences and those of others. Pupils are encouraged to show respect for others and respond well to this. They visit the parish church regularly for services. However, there are few planned opportunities for pupils to develop aspects of spiritual awareness in most lessons.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development and is successful in promoting good attitudes and behaviour. School rules are prominently displayed. The strategies for managing behaviour are applied consistently and pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions.
32. In lessons and other school activities, the school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. There are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in small groups. They respond well and are co-operative and friendly. They enjoy working together in the range of activities provided by the school. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and there are some opportunities for them to do so. The local schools' pyramid is used well to provide for extra activities and the residential stay for older pupils. The programmes of personal, social and health education make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides a sound range of visits to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. There are some good examples of art provision in Years 3 to 6. A peripatetic music teacher is employed to good effect and, during the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 gave a good performance of two-part singing in an assembly. Pupils in Class 2 have produced a good display of Australian Aboriginal art and poetry. However, while satisfactory, there are few planned opportunities, for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of life in modern Britain.

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

34. The school is a caring community, which has a warm and friendly atmosphere. The care provided for pupils has improved since the last inspection because child protection procedures are now securely in place and all teaching staff receive informal training. The headteacher has been recently trained. The senior teacher and non-teaching staff are to be trained next term. The school has adopted local education authority guidelines. Links with social services are good.
35. The school now has an effective health and safety policy, although the revised version is undated. Three members of staff have been fully trained in first aid. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions and for pupils who become ill during the school day are effective. Accident books are properly kept. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Fire and electrical equipment is checked annually. Fire drills take place each term and are logged appropriately. There is good safety practice in subjects such as science. Supervision at playtimes is good.
36. Good behaviour is promoted well. Pupils understand that high standards are expected of them and school rules are displayed prominently. Class teachers praise pupils for good behaviour and hard work, and award stars to individual pupils which build towards a celebratory party for the class. Sanctions include loss of play time and 'community service' to help staff and pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are informal, but effective, through class notes, teachers' personal knowledge and annual written reports.
37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The educational welfare officer visits the school each term. The headteacher and the school secretary monitor the registers approximately once a month. However, pupils who do not arrive at school cannot always be telephoned on the first day of absence to check the reason because the secretary does not work full-time.
38. There are good assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage, based on adults' regular recording of children's progress in each area of learning. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' standards at the age of entry, at seven and at eleven, by means of assessment on admission and national tests at ages seven and eleven. In between, it applies the local education authority's chosen tests for pupils at the ages of six plus, eight plus, and ten plus. The school analyses this data for individual pupils and uses it to inform class teachers of the standards attained at each point. Teachers feel that their ongoing knowledge of pupils is thorough, formed as it is by observation of pupils in daily lessons. However, this is in part observation of pupils' effort and behaviour and there is too little ongoing tracking of pupils' progress against National Curriculum criteria as a result and no recorded assessment, except for pupils with special educational needs. Ongoing assessment of pupils is unsatisfactory.
39. Assessment procedures for pupils with statements of special educational need are satisfactory. These show that pupils are making good progress towards the targets set for them. Staff are aware of procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and are familiar with the requirements of the 2002 Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> for pupils with special needs.
40. Teachers follow the school's marking and assessment policies which stress the need to encourage and guide pupils. When done orally or, at times, in writing this contributes well to pupils' personal development. However, the lack of ongoing assessment of academic

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<sup>3</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the respective Education Acts.

performance in the full range of subjects results in pupils being unclear about the standards they are aiming at and how to improve their work. The headteacher is aware that this is an area for future improvement and he has already taken steps to build on the good practice that exists in tracking pupils' personal development.

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

41. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting were very supportive of the school and all that it does for their children. In a high response to the questionnaire, all parents were pleased with the quality of the teaching and leadership and felt that staff were very approachable. Almost all felt that their children were making good progress, that behaviour was good and that the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. They felt very well informed about their children's progress and felt that the school worked very closely with them. The only areas in which there was some dissatisfaction were the range of extra-curricular activities and the inconsistency of homework between classes.
42. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views. The quality and range of extra-curricular activities are considered by inspectors to be good for the size of the school. However, there is no homework timetable and it is not always given progressively up to Year 6; inspectors agree with parents that these arrangements could be clearer and could make a better contribution to the home-school partnership.
43. The school has good links with parents, as it had at the time of the last inspection. The information it provides for them is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are clearly written and presented in a readable style (although they do not include the required attendance data). Advance information about the curriculum is sent to parents each term to enable them to help their children with their learning. Useful reading guides are distributed to all parents. Newsletters are frequent and friendly in tone. The home/school agreement has been signed by most parents.
44. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. Homework diaries in Years 5 and 6 and reading diaries throughout the school are used well as a means of dialogue between home and school. The annual written reports are good; they offer targets for improvement and helpful information on progress, as well as the opportunity for pupils and parents to comment. An appropriate number of consultation meetings are held each year and parents feel that teachers are always willing to talk to them informally about their children's progress. Procedures for communicating with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Parents and carers of these pupils have the opportunity to contribute to the setting of appropriate targets, but there is no evidence of pupils doing so.
45. Parent governors are active members of the governing body. A good number of parents help in school on a regular basis and more on trips and visits. The 'Friends' Association' runs a good range of social and fund-raising events each year and has raised substantial sums towards the school's new buildings, as well as for equipment to enhance children's learning



## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, teachers and governors remain sound and have good features, as at the time of the previous inspection. A particular strength is the extent to which the school promotes a caring ethos based on very good relationships at all levels and with the local community at its heart. The headteacher's pastoral leadership is strong and he is supported well by the teamwork of the staff and governors who work together successfully to fulfil the school's aims. These aims are based on a commitment to pupils' personal development and to providing a broad curriculum; the school achieves these goals. It retains a 'family' atmosphere and benefits from close links with its local church; these factors underpin its provision and popularity with parents.
47. The headteacher has secured the commitment of experienced staff who provide continuity and stability for pupils. Together with them, he has secured satisfactory action on most of the recommendations from the last inspection. He has led the school well through the disruption of the recent building programme. All the main responsibilities for the curriculum and for major aspects of the school are shared widely among the staff, including some support staff and the job-share teachers. This means that delegation is good and staff contribute well to the school's continuing development.
48. The headteacher and his colleagues increasingly analyse how well the school is doing in local and national tests. They also observe lessons and look at pupils' work. They use this information to set targets and raise standards in the core subjects. To this extent, a key issue from the last inspection has been acted on appropriately and monitoring systems have been improved. However, these improvements have yet to have a full enough impact on how staff examine standards in other subjects. There is a tendency for the teachers to feel that they know the pupils well enough without systematic monitoring. This has resulted in a lack of rigour in checking the curriculum, teaching and pupils' standards in several subjects. As a result, teachers are not aware of the details of how well pupils are doing or how the subjects can be improved.
49. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They bring active and interested support to the school and have an appropriate committee structure. They have established a sound understanding of the school's current and future position – for example, by examining projected rolls and likely budgets for the next few years. They have a good understanding of what the school does well and are fully involved in its development. The written development plans give a clear view of current priorities and initiatives, but do not reflect the useful strategic planning that happens in the governing body. Best value is considered satisfactorily by the staff and governors questioning critically what they do in some areas, consulting on the school's development and comparing their performance with other schools locally and nationally.
50. Financial planning supports the school's work well and available funds are either targeted to priorities for development or retained to ensure that the budget is healthy in the future. An appropriate contingency fund is reserved because governors are aware of the implications of a possible falling roll, due to the low numbers of young children in the area who are likely to be admitted in the next few years. The school's finances are managed soundly. The most recent audit report made a number of important recommendations for improvement that have been acted on since. The general administration is efficient, although the secretary does not work full-time and this puts pressure on the school, as there are times when the office is not staffed and times when the headteacher has to take over routine administrative duties. The school increasingly makes use of new technology in its administration, but does not fully exploit this to increase the efficiency of its pupil records or tracking systems. Grants and specific funding, such as that for pupils with

special educational needs, are properly allocated, although there are no formal arrangements to evaluate the cost effectiveness of these aspects of the budget.

51. Educational inclusion is managed soundly in most respects. Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has appropriate time to carry out the associated administration. Annual reviews of the progress of pupils with statements of special educational needs are correctly carried out and the appropriate agencies are involved. The school has a draft policy for special educational needs, but this has not been approved by the governing body and should have been fully in place in September 2002. Members of the governing body are insufficiently involved in monitoring the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The individual needs of pupils whose first language is not English are considered well on admission and provision is tailored to their requirements. At times, the provision for higher attainers and for the oldest pupils in each class is not monitored enough. There is no policy for promoting racial equality, although the school is aware that this is needed.
52. The headteacher has made good use of recent local and national initiatives in school improvement. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have had a positive impact on provision and the school has welcomed and made good use of the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The school feels, however, that the large number of initiatives nationally in the core subjects has not enabled it to develop other subjects as much as it would wish. It has received valued support from the local education authority's advisory and support teams, although many of these have now to be purchased separately, which puts pressure on the budget. The school has also valued the 'pyramid' arrangements in the county that have enabled it to share good practice and training opportunities with other small schools.
53. The school has a satisfactory match of staff to its needs. The staff are experienced and suitably trained. However, the current budget means that the headteacher has a classroom commitment for most of the week, the reception/Year 1 and 2 class does not have full-time ancillary support and the office is not staffed full-time; all these factors place constraints on the school's current staff and on the time available for development. The school has good arrangements for the staff's continuing training and improvement. This includes for ancillary staff and has been effective in areas, such as Early Literacy Support and behaviour management. It has implemented the national arrangements for performance management, and training is linked well to both the school's and individuals' needs.
54. The accommodation is adequate and has been improved by the recent building programme. It is accessible to the disabled. The school occupies a pleasant site and has a good playing field. No indoor space is wasted, but there is no large area where pupils can gather comfortably for assembly or take part in physical education. The school continues to make good use of a local gymnasium and swimming pool to ensure that pupils receive a full physical education curriculum. There is no separate outdoor area for the youngest children, but one is planned for development this year. There is no water supply in one classroom. The provision of practical learning resources is sufficient to the demands of the curriculum and there is a small, accessible library. Book stocks are good.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. To build on the school's strengths, raise standards and improve the quality of provision further, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should act in the following areas:

- raise standards in history and geography, by:
  - ensuring that teachers identify and teach the understanding and skills needed for each age group;
  - introducing manageable assessment procedures so that teachers are more aware of the pupils' prior attainment when planning lessons;
  - monitoring the standards attained by pupils in lessons and as shown in their work;

*paragraphs 4, 13, 18, 26, 103-113*

- ensure that teachers' plans cater for the full range of ages and attainments in each class in the foundation subjects, by:
  - continuing to review how these subjects are planned to take account of mixed-age classes;
  - ensuring that the oldest and highest attaining pupils are catered for effectively;

*paragraphs 5, 13, 18, 24, 26, 70, 102, 107, 108*

- improve the effectiveness of assessment procedures in all subjects, by:
  - improving the quality of teachers' marking and other written feedback to pupils;
  - implementing manageable procedures to assess pupils' attainment in the foundation subjects;
  - ensuring that the information available on pupils' attainment is used effectively in teachers' subsequent planning;

*paragraphs 15-16, 18, 21, 24, 38, 40, 70, 77, 83, 89, 97-98, 102, 107, 113, 118, 125, 133*

- improve the effectiveness of the subject leaders in monitoring and improving the standards of pupils' work in the foundation subjects and religious education, by:
  - enabling subject leaders to monitor the quality of teaching in lessons;
  - improving the arrangements for subject leaders to assess the standards of pupils' learning more effectively; for example, through the analysis of their written work and mental recall.

*paragraphs 48, 98, 107, 113, 118, 127, 134*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

18

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 0         | 4         | 10   | 3            | 1              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 0         | 22        | 56   | 17           | 5              | 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 five percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

51

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

6

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

3

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

13

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

5

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

1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 5.8 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0.5 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census         | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                                     | 48                   | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – Irish                                       | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background                  | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Chinese                                             | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 0                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 3.4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 15  |
| Average class size                       | 17  |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|                                         |    |
|-----------------------------------------|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 71 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

|                                            |           |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 2001-2002 |
|                                            | £         |
| Total income                               | 194,294   |
| Total expenditure                          | 189,280   |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 3,155     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 7,336     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 12,350    |

### **Recruitment of teachers**

|                                                                      |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 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: 55 per cent**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 51 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 28 |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|                                                                                    | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.                                                             | 57             | 39            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.                                        | 39             | 61            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.                                                   | 39             | 57            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 19             | 59            | 19               | 0                 | 4          |
| The teaching is good.                                                              | 57             | 43            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 39             | 54            | 4                | 4                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 79             | 21            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 43             | 50            | 4                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school works closely with parents.                                             | 32             | 61            | 4                | 4                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.                                                | 54             | 46            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 64             | 32            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 39             | 43            | 11               | 0                 | 7          |

## **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**

56. The Foundation Stage in the school consists of a group of four children in the reception year who form part of a class that also caters for all the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The children are admitted at the beginning of the term in which they are five and there are useful links with the local playgroup that some children have attended. Attainment on entry varies from year to year. It is usually average, but not as high as at the time of the last inspection. The teaching is good for this age group and has improved considerably on the findings of the previous report. The planning is better and more carefully matched to the needs of the youngest children.
57. The adults in the class work well as a team, although there are times when the teacher does not have extra help and has to cater alone for the needs of a very wide-ranging class. Staff succeed in providing appropriate activities for the ages and capabilities of the reception group, while making effective links where possible with the work that the older children in the class are doing. Most of the children in the current reception group are on target to reach the levels expected by the Early Learning Goals by the end of the school year in all areas of learning. Children are assessed regularly to ensure that work is matched to their individual needs and that they are making good progress.

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

58. The children show interest and excitement in their work. This was evident when they collected materials from the school field to construct a troll's bridge in connection with their work about 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. They worked well as a group to ensure that they had a suitable range of objects and negotiated what they should reject. They show good concentration and are able to sit with the older children in the class for a sustained period while the teacher explains tasks. They behave well when working as a small group or with older children. They are beginning to show confidence and self-control.
59. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher and support staff plan activities that the children find interesting and they encourage independence and collaboration. They respect and encourage the children's ideas and use questioning well to enable them to express themselves at greater length.

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

60. The children reach expected levels in this area of learning in their independent work and sometimes exceed them when working directly with adults. They listen effectively, respond in understandable sentences to adults and talk alongside other children. The more mature engage in conversation with other children, taking turns to speak. They enjoy stories and rhymes, joining in with the troll's and goats' responses in the literacy lessons seen during the inspection. They compared two versions of the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', identifying similarities and differences. They used role play to act part of the story and were anxious to redo part of their performance, commenting 'because we messed it up'. They are beginning to identify the sounds that start words and pick out familiar words in texts. They copy an adult's model of writing with varying accuracy and attempt their own unaided writing. Their books show good progress in letter formation since they started school.
61. Teaching and learning are good. The staff enable the children to take part in activities that link well to what the older children are doing, but that address the children's individual



levels of ability. The classroom provides an interesting range of language displays and activities that support learning well.

### **Mathematical development**

62. The children reach expected levels. They recognise and write numbers to 10 independently and some count well beyond this. They order and add single-digit numbers accurately. In a lesson seen, they worked out problems of 'one more' and 'one less' up to 20, recording their findings in writing. They demonstrated their understanding by working out the problems with toys and with cubes. They know the names of some simple shapes and carry out simple comparisons of measurement such as identifying long and short items.
63. Teaching and learning are good. The children's books show good progress in their ability to form numbers and to record their work. Adults provide activities that are based securely on practical experience and at a level that is suitable for each individual. In the lesson seen, the support assistant ensured that each child was challenged at the right level by her questions and this enabled all of them to make progress in relation to prior attainment.

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

64. The children are keen to learn about the world around them. They have a basic scientific understanding, as shown during the inspection in their investigation of water and how it is absorbed differently by different materials. They show an understanding of chronology through their work on sorting old and new toys. They comment on the effects of age on the toys. They explore the wider world through work about the seaside and their holidays. Their work in religious education explores contemporary stories and well known Bible stories and they write and draw about their families and friends. They use computers satisfactorily to type letters and numbers and to make pictures. They make simple jointed figures with paper fasteners and card and make 'moving pictures'.
65. Teaching and learning are good. The children's previous work shows a good range of activities that cater for this area of learning at an appropriate level. Experiences are reinforced by areas of the classroom, such as the role-play area that currently is set up as a doctor's surgery.

### **Physical development**

66. Evidence of this area of learning was limited during the inspection. Children's physical skills as seen in their general classroom work are at expected levels. They use tools, such as pencils and scissors satisfactorily. They move around the classroom with attention to their own safety and the needs of others. They are given regular opportunities by adults to run and play outdoors, such as when they collected the materials for the troll's bridge and with other children at playtimes. However, their experiences are constrained by the lack of a separate outdoor play area and by the absence of resources, such as wheeled toys. This is a weakness in provision that was commented on by the previous inspection and has still not been resolved, although the school has plans to provide such an area soon.

### **Creative development**

67. Children experience a reasonable range of art techniques and materials. They have produced good large-scale pictures that demonstrate their ability to mix paint colours and to use texture in their work with fabric, card and straws. They represent events in their lives through pictures, such as those showing the recent snowy weather made with chalk and black paper, and drawings of visits to the doctor in the class 'surgery'. They begin to build up a repertoire of songs and rhymes that they perform with enjoyment and

confidence. They use drama and role-play as part of a group to interpret their work in areas such as literacy and health education. There was very limited direct evidence of teaching in this area of learning during the inspection, although evidence from the children's recorded work indicates that it is at least satisfactory and has some good features. The classroom, as at the time of the last inspection, does not have a sink or water supply for use with practical activities.

## ENGLISH

68. Pupils' standards in English by Year 2 are at the level expected for their age. By Year 6, standards are average in speaking, listening and reading and are above average in writing. These standards are comparable with those at the time of the previous inspection. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress in all classes.
69. Teaching and learning are good across the school. The main strengths are:
- good use of the National Literacy Strategy, especially in whole class work;
  - good questioning by teachers that stimulates thoughtful responses from pupils;
  - a good range of texts and styles used to develop pupils' drafting and writing skills;
  - good links made between literacy and other subjects;
  - a good focus on basic skills in reading, spelling and handwriting.
70. The areas for development in order to raise standards further are:
- to clarify more sharply, in planning work, the expectations of pupils of different ages in mixed-age classes;
  - to provide a more challenging range of tasks for higher-attaining pupils;
  - to develop effective ways of tracking pupils' progress in ongoing work.
71. Standards of speaking and listening are satisfactory across the school. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other in whole class sessions. Many pupils are keen to answer questions and to contribute their own ideas. Teachers are skilled at targeting questions to pupils of all ages and in making sure that each age group has opportunities to respond at their own level. Teachers identify key words, such as verbs and adjectives and pupils are encouraged to use them in speaking. For instance, in the Year 3/Year 4 class, pupils examined adjectives that convey mood and attitudes. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, contributed ideas. Older and higher-attaining pupils expressed themselves thoughtfully with imaginative examples. Sometimes, less confident or lower-attaining pupils need greater encouragement to express their thoughts in speech.
72. Standards of reading are satisfactory across the school and pupils are making sound progress in understanding what they are reading. Teachers provide a good range of materials, from stories in different styles to information texts and poetry, as well as books from the school's reading scheme. The teaching of early reading using 'big books' to develop pupils' phonic skills is particularly good. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are confident in reading aloud with expression and enjoy stories, such as 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. They recount parts of the story and suggest imaginative endings for the troll. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing sound standards in reading. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good grasp of the motives and attitudes of characters in stories. Higher-attaining pupils enjoy reading complex texts, such as the Harry Potter series. Pupils know how to use the library to find reference books and use indexes to retrieve information as well as other sources such as dictionaries and CD-ROMs.

73. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils are making satisfactory progress in writing. They are beginning to control the shape and size of letters and to write simple sentences. By the age of seven, pupils express their ideas in short sequences of sentences, in legible handwriting, using some punctuation such as full stops and capital letters. By the age of 11, most pupils have made good progress in writing. Their handwriting is well formed and legible and spelling is mainly good. This is because teachers pay particular attention to these aspects and have high standards. Regular testing of spelling helps many pupils to be confident and creative in using difficult words in their work.
74. The quality of imaginative writing in Years 3 to 6 is high. Pupils draft this work and improve on it by careful attention to vocabulary and sentence construction. They write stories and poems with a strong sense of writing for an audience. They use different styles, such as science fiction, and first and third person narratives. They use dialogue dramatically and create narrative tension. Pupils apply the rules of punctuation carefully and with accurate grammar.
75. Teachers are particularly skilful at using links with other subjects to extend literacy. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils had read stories and poems from Aboriginal culture. They created a class map of Australia that supported their work in geography. Pupils also wrote poems, based on an original Aboriginal poem, in which they demonstrated a good grasp of rhythm and imagery. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils had used work in geography about rivers as a stimulus for poems about water. They planned and drafted these and the finished poems were of high quality. This work was the result of sustained good teaching. The teacher had conveyed to pupils the excitement of exploring ideas through language and had given them the language tools with which to do so. Pupils chose their vocabulary, especially verbs, very effectively to convey the flow and movement of water in streams and rivers. Their poems created vivid images in the mind of the reader.
76. Pupils are developing literacy skills in other subjects too. In mathematics and science, pupils use specialist terminology appropriately. In a history lesson in the Year 3/4 class, the teacher used drama effectively to help pupils bring to life some of the facts they had learned about life in the Tudor period. Pupils use computers to find information. Pupils' written work in imaginative writing is better developed than their ability to record how they are applying their knowledge and understanding, for instance through the interpretation of facts or in presenting well-reasoned argument. This is partly because they are given fewer opportunities to practise these skills.
77. The leadership and management of literacy are satisfactory. Much work has been done in planning the curriculum and implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Co-ordinators need to monitor pupils' work more and assess their progress against National Curriculum criteria more regularly. Progress in English is checked by national tests and the two-yearly Suffolk tests. This information is recorded and analysed by the school. Although teachers know their pupils well, they need to develop an ongoing system of tracking pupils' progress against specific literacy targets in order to ensure that work in mixed-age classes is better matched to the age and ability of pupils. Targets are set for older pupils in literacy and are included in the annual reports sent to parents, but the lack of marking to show pupils how to improve limits the effectiveness of the targets.

## MATHEMATICS

78. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain average standards. Most meet the required National Curriculum levels for their age group and a few exceed these. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection and indicate that the school has kept pace with national improvements in this subject. Pupils in all age groups make at least sound progress over time and, in the lessons seen, their progress was good. This includes the progress made by pupils with special learning, behavioural or language needs.
79. Pupils in Year 1, for example, use single-digit numbers accurately in addition and subtraction. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to be able to explain their calculations and to use a range of methods to solve problems. They use two-digit numbers flexibly, such as when they were doubling or halving numbers up to 60 in a lesson that was observed. Their previous work shows good coverage of the required curriculum. They order numbers up to 1,000, record amounts of money in decimal format, tell the time in quarter hours and know the main properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes.
80. Pupils build on their achievements as they move through Years 3 to 6. In the Year 3/4 class, the pupils manipulated multiples of three, four and five well, with the older pupils showing increased skill compared to their younger classmates. Higher attainers in this class commented on the pattern produced when they started a sequence from either an odd or even number. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class show an eagerness to learn and good concentration. They demonstrated their understanding of angles and how these are measured. Most of the Year 6 pupils in the lesson seen were working at Level 5<sup>4</sup>, using accurate terminology, such as 'reflex angle' and 'perpendicular' and mentally calculating fractions of a whole turn, such as one sixteenth of 360 degrees. The previous work of the Year 6 group shows good coverage of the curriculum and sound understanding at the expected levels of attainment. For example, pupils handle large numbers accurately, use calculators efficiently and measure time and distance in standard units.
81. Pupils show satisfactory application of their numeracy skills to other subjects, such as recording experimental findings in science and measuring items in design and technology.
82. Teaching and learning are good and promote pupils' numeracy skills well. The main strengths are:
- the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy that supports teachers' methods and organisation;
  - teachers' clear objectives, explanations and instructions that ensure pupils know what to do;
  - the promotion of good attitudes and relationships that contribute to a pleasant learning atmosphere in all classes;
  - the use of support staff to give additional attention to pupils as needed;
  - the use of practical resources to aid pupils' understanding;
  - examples of the effective integration of information and communication technology into lessons, as seen in the use of a computer program to give practice in angle work for the oldest pupils.

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<sup>4</sup> The nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 is Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5, then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

83. The main weaknesses in teaching are:
- expectations of how pupils' work is laid out and presented, which are too low for the younger pupils;
  - the quality of marking and written feedback to pupils that does not communicate well enough how pupils have done and what they should do to improve.
84. The subject is led and managed well. There is clear guidance on planning that takes into account the needs of the mixed-age classes. Regular tests and assessments are used to gauge pupils' progress and support the next stage of planning. Additional support is targeted well to the pupils who will benefit most, such as small group teaching for pupils in Year 2 and 'booster' sessions for pupils in Year 6 as they approach the national tests. Satisfactory homework tasks are set for pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6 and these supplement pupils' learning in school.

## SCIENCE

85. Standards of pupils' work by Year 2 and Year 6 are average in both age groups, with some pupils attaining at higher levels. This is similar to the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Boys' and girls' work is at similar levels.
86. By Year 2, for instance, pupils have a good understanding of how living things develop, having grown flowers from seeds. They know that food is needed for growth and to be healthy. They use bar charts to represent their results when carrying out a survey of favourite foods. Science links very well with their health education programme as pupils study the safe usage of medicines. However, they do not always use correct terminology, such as when discussing and recording information about commonly used medicines. Pupils are beginning to develop the basis of good scientific method, for example, by being able to predict what might happen and then testing to see if their predictions are borne out. They compare materials and test them to establish their properties, for example, to determine if a material is waterproof. They make simple electrical devices and know that a circuit is required for electrical items to work. Pupils understand that forces are required to make a ball move. They know that wind is a force and can measure and record it.
87. By Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding that to carry out a fair test only one factor can be changed at a time. They test common materials to establish if they have magnetic properties. Pupils carry out investigations to establish that change in temperature can lead to a change of state of substances and record and interpret their results in the form of graphs. They have a good understanding of the solar system and of the relative sizes of the planets. They have a detailed knowledge of the moon as a satellite and why it appears in different phases. However, higher attaining pupils have not made the link between the moon's gravitational effect and tides. Good teaching led pupils in Years 3 and 4 to have a secure understanding of the purpose of different food groups. However, higher attaining pupils did not always use correct terminology when discussing these food groups.
88. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and apply themselves well to tasks set. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; this is a result of good planning and adult support to meet their needs. Good support is also given to any pupils who need help learning English.
89. Teaching and learning are good. The following strengths and areas for development were apparent from lessons observed:
- good levels of planning in most lessons for the needs of different pupils, enabling all to make good progress;
  - a good range of teaching techniques to consolidate pupils learning;
  - teachers' good subject knowledge used well; for example, when using questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding;

- a good range and quality of resources to support pupils learning;
  - there is insufficient use of marking of pupils' work to indicate how they might improve in future;
  - higher attaining pupils are not encouraged to make sufficient use of specialist language.
90. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. Teachers plan work together, but there is insufficient direct monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work. There is a good curriculum in place. This is supplemented by some off-site visits. For example, younger pupils are due to make a visit to a local science museum, linked to a topic on healthy eating.
91. Pupils use information and communication technology for measurement, for example, of temperature and convert the data obtained into graph form. They also use it for research using the Internet. Other opportunities for its use are not taken; for example, to explore different methods of recording the results of investigations.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Standards in art and design by Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory and are comparable with those at the time of the previous inspection. In Years 3 to 6, some aspects of pupils' work are good.
93. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are learning to express their ideas in drawings and paintings with increasing confidence. They enjoy experimenting in mixing colour and choose colours for their effect. They use a variety of media including pencil, crayon and paint as well as creating three-dimensional compositions from materials such as paper and card. By the age of seven, pupils talk about their own work, but do not suggest ways of improving it.
94. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn well the processes involved in planning, designing and creating work. They draw on knowledge gained from the study of famous artists, such as Van Gogh, to develop their own techniques of drawing and painting. They produce good observational drawings, for instance of fish in Year 5/6, with good attention to line, pattern, shape and colour. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to experiment with different media including textiles and print-making.
95. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils used a viewfinder to isolate part of their own drawing to create a pattern. They did this well, creating expressive patterns with shape and a bold use of colour. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils took this process further by creating prints from their patterns and printing on to calico bags. Pupils chose and created patterns thoughtfully. They selected their preferred colour combination and printed it successfully. In work seen, one pupil had painted a striking mask in water colours, with a very effective use of shape, colour and a peacock's feather as an ornament. Written notes showed a brief evaluation of the work. Pupils' ability to talk about their work, about how they express their ideas through it, and how to evaluate its quality, is less developed than their ability to apply the processes taught.
96. The teaching of art and design is sound. It is well informed and is particularly successful in leading pupils through the process of designing and making images in different ways. Teachers convey, through their own enthusiasm, the pleasure of creative work. As a result, pupils enjoy art and work hard. Teachers provide a wide range of materials and processes which pupils are keen to learn about and try out. This results in some lively and interesting work around the school.
97. There is no ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in the skills and knowledge about art that are set out in the National Curriculum. While their skills of design and control improve

with practice, pupils have no clear understanding of what their standards should be at each level.

98. The leadership and co-ordination of work in art and design are satisfactory. A new county scheme of work has recently been introduced and is being followed by all teachers. Resources are good and are easily accessible. The school needs to monitor pupils' work and to establish expectations of the standards aimed at in each year. If assessment of pupils' progress relates closely to these expectations, the school will find it easier to meet the needs of all pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. No design and technology was being taught during the inspection and so no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching or learning. Judgements are based on other inspection evidence, including discussions with staff and pupils, examination of pupils' work and examination of curriculum documents. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 meet national expectations at these ages. Boys' and girls' work is of a similar standard.
100. By Year 2, pupils list the tools and materials they are likely to use for items they intend to make. They relate the principle of levers to everyday objects, such as scissors, and produce good models of them. When they design an item, they know that it has to be fit for its purpose; when planning to make a house for a giant, for example, they know it has to be large. In food technology, they know how to work hygienically when preparing sandwiches.
101. By Year 6, pupils use the Internet as a research tool when looking for existing examples of work, such as slippers, but do not evaluate what they have found out. They use labelled sketches to indicate their ideas, but do not explore and sketch a range of ideas, which would be expected of higher attaining pupils. Pupils have too little experience of taking into account the views of possible users of the items they design and make. They make good use of planning sheets to help them to organise their design work. In food technology, they evaluate existing objects, such as biscuits, using criteria, including taste, texture and appearance. Pupils have experience of how a range of mechanisms work and make models using cams to change motion. When producing structures, they understand they can be reinforced using the principle of triangulation. They use simple electrical circuits to produce alarm devices for particular purposes. Pupils evaluate their work and identify changes they would make if the work had to be carried out again.
102. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum is sound, with good coverage of some elements, but planning takes insufficient account of the potential of some pupils to work at higher levels. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' work. There is no structured assessment system, which means that teachers cannot take account of pupils' prior levels of work in their planning. Marking is not used enough to show pupils how they can improved their work. The resources for the subject are sufficient, but are stored centrally and are not easily accessible to pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. Standards in geography by Year 2 and Year 6 are below those expected for pupils at these ages. This shows a slight drop from the previous inspection. The main reason is because curricular planning for teaching mixed-age classes over a two-year cycle does not provide sufficiently for the development of pupils' geographical understanding and skills.
104. During the inspection, only one lesson of geography was seen. Judgements are based on this, on analysis of pupils' work and on discussion with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are beginning to sort the physical and human features of a locality into lists. They identify some things that people can do at the seaside and are beginning to develop an awareness of climate by listing the different clothes needed for holidays in Spain and Norway. At this age, there is little written work. In discussion, the level of understanding of recent work was appropriate for pupils in Year 1, but was unsatisfactory for pupils in Year 2.
105. In Year 5 and Year 6, pupils have been investigating rivers with a particular focus on the River Rhone. They have acquired knowledge of some key geographic features and use the appropriate terms, such as 'source', 'gravity' and 'irrigation'. They are less confident in explaining the significance of such features. Pupils have access to maps and atlases and know how to use them and to read map symbols. The school provides pupils with useful opportunities to visit a local environmental centre, where they carry out activities related to several subjects, such as science, art and geography. Pupils have learned a range of facts about the topic studied. They do not have sufficient understanding of how to apply this knowledge in order to form a view of the larger geographical picture of places and environments. For instance, pupils are not sure of the kind of geographical questions to ask, nor of how to explain how key features and processes affect the lives of people.
106. Too little teaching was seen to form a judgement on its quality. Overall, teachers make creative links with other subjects, such as English and art. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils enjoyed making a model of a river, rising in mountains and flowing down to the sea. This class has also written very imaginative poems about rivers. In the Year 3/4 class, the map work on Australia linked well to the study of Aboriginal culture. However, overall, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in geography are too low.
107. There is no ongoing assessment of pupils' geographical knowledge, understanding and skills and too little monitoring of standards. This makes it difficult for teachers to track pupil's progress in the subject and to plan their teaching to match all pupils' needs. The school relies on the scheme of work set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, from which it selects units of work. Teachers need now to identify clearly the expected standards for each year group and to plan for the continuing development of skills and understanding, whatever the topic selected. This is particularly important in mixed-age classes when the time available is limited and where the units of work alternate termly with history.

## **HISTORY**

108. Standards in history by Year 2 and Year 6 are below those expected for pupils of these ages. This shows a slight drop since the previous inspection. The main reason for this is that curricular planning and its related assessment do not adequately identify the differing needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.
109. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of differences between the past and the present by looking at old and new toys. In a lively lesson, pupils identified some of the materials of which toys were made in the recent past and now. They sorted toys into old and new categories and were able to pick out pictures of old and new toys



and say why they did so. The work was well matched to the needs of Year 1 pupils, but did not extend the Year 2 pupils' historical understanding sufficiently, in spite of a slightly extended writing task. The teacher's use of real toys and the practical activity involving pupils in selecting and sorting toys was good. All pupils were interested and keen to take part.

110. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils showed some understanding of the life of the poor in Tudor times. They had previously made models of Tudor houses, showing the kind of materials they were constructed from. In the lesson, they recalled facts about how Tudor houses were constructed and about the treatment poor people often received. Through acting out dramatic scenes, they reinforced some knowledge about crimes and punishments. Their ability to draw inferences from this evidence and to explain some of the causes of the conditions of the poor was under-developed.
111. No history lesson was seen in Year 5/6. From the work seen in pupils' books and from discussion with Year 6 pupils, it is evident that pupils have acquired some knowledge of life in ancient Egypt. They recall information taught and seen on videos about how the pyramids were built and on how the Egyptians mummified bodies after death. They had made some large-scale, painted models of mummies and decorated them attractively in the style used by the Egyptians. In written work seen, pupils were unable to apply their limited knowledge about life in Egypt to answer a question on what made Egypt so successful as a civilisation.
112. The very limited evidence of the teaching of history shows that teachers are imaginative in trying to bring to life aspects of the past. They use resources and different teaching strategies well to stimulate pupils' interest. Pupils respond well and are interested in what they learn. However, pupils' knowledge about the periods studied is too limited and they see history as related to isolated topics. There is insufficient discussion of what historical understanding can be derived from the evidence provided, so that pupils find it difficult to explain the causes of key features and the consequences of principal events. They are not developing independence in selecting sources of evidence and of evaluating its usefulness. Pupils' grasp of chronology is weak.
113. There is no ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in history against National Curriculum criteria and too little monitoring of standards. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan adequately for all age groups in a class, especially as the curriculum is planned as a series of topics on a two-year cycle. The school now needs to review its use of the scheme of work and to plan for progress in developing historical understanding and skills across all years. Clear expectations of the standards to be achieved in each year need to be shared with pupils so that they too can work to specific goals.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. The standards achieved by pupils by Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations at these ages. However, there is no evidence of pupils working at higher levels. Boys' and girls' work is of similar standards
115. By Year 2, pupils program a computerised device, giving it instructions to move and turn, making good links with elements of mathematics. They use a simple graphics program to produce work related to shapes. They have some experience of simple word processing. They do not have experience of using information and communication technology to sort and classify information.
116. By Year 6, pupils use questions to find information in a database and understand how they can refine their searches by carefully structuring the questions. They have satisfactory skills with the use of computers for measurement, for example, of temperature and then

interpreting the data produced in the form of graphs. Pupils use computers for controlling devices, such as an on-screen image, but this is at too low a level for higher attaining pupils. Pupils make some use of e-mail for communication, but this is not fully developed. Older pupils have used a digital camera to record images, which are incorporated in the school Internet web site. Other aspects of the curriculum on presenting information to particular audiences are under-developed.

117. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning. However, in the one lesson observed, with a small group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, the following strengths and areas for development were noted:
- very good planning and provision of suitable resources enabled pupils to make good progress when learning how to glean information from a database;
  - the teacher's enthusiastic approach led to pupils' very good attitudes to learning and, as a consequence, they made very good progress during the lesson;
  - time was used well throughout;
  - the main area for development was that insufficient use was made of opportunities to make links with relevant work in mathematics.
118. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The provision of resources has improved since the previous inspection. There is now Internet access in each classroom and a good ratio of computers to pupils. However, the deployment of computers does not always lead to their efficient use. The school is considering alternative arrangements to improve this, such as grouping the machines together so that larger numbers of pupils can be taught at the same time. There is an assessment system in place, but this is not used as a basis for planning to take account of pupils' prior levels of work, which particularly affects higher attaining pupils. There is insufficient direct monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching. Some pupils benefit from an after-school club run by a parent, for example, by using appropriate software to make greetings cards.
119. There is some use of information and communication technology in other subjects; for example, in mathematics, pupils used a program to give them practice in estimating angles. In science, pupils use equipment to record data and translate this into graphs. Pupils with special educational needs make good use of computers to improve their basic English and mathematical skills. However, opportunities are not always taken for the use of information and communication technology to develop through other subjects and to support them. For example, in science, pupils do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology for recording the results of their investigations.

## **MUSIC**

120. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 meet expectations for seven- and eleven-year-olds. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, including those of the pupils with special educational needs. No lessons were seen in the Year 1/2 class, so no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching and learning for those age groups or about the quality of provision for the pupils with English as an additional language. Inspection evidence for Years 1 and 2 was obtained from talking to the Year 2 pupils about their previous work.
121. By Year 2, pupils have a reasonable repertoire of songs which they can demonstrate. These are mostly well-known rhymes and the songs and hymns they practise daily in assembly. They sing in tune and with appropriate expression. They know the names of a range of percussion instruments and demonstrate how to play them. They use a range of techniques to create different effects, such as playing a cymbal with a hard or soft beater, and using the fingers or palm to play a tambour. They use musical terms correctly, such

as 'pulse' and 'rhythm'. They demonstrate careful listening skills when copying a musical pattern.

122. Pupils continue to make steady progress through Years 3 to 6. In a lesson seen in the Year 3/4 class, the pupils built on their knowledge of playground games and rhymes. They demonstrated these confidently and sang in tune. They maintained a steady beat where appropriate, remembered to perform repetitions where they were needed and added actions to their songs. They were quick to learn and perform the alternative versions of the games that were given to them by the teacher, whose positive and encouraging manner promoted their progress well. They commented on the origins and purposes of the songs.
123. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 practised a demonstration of the tonic sol-fa using song and hand gestures. They performed this in two parts accurately. In a later presentation of the song to the whole school, they showed a good awareness of their audience and a sense of occasion. Discussions with some of the oldest pupils showed that they play a range of tuned instruments and a few learn to play the recorder in lunchtime lessons. They have a satisfactory knowledge of musical terminology. Their books show that they have had opportunities to listen to and appraise a range of European music from different periods, such as that of Britten, Handel and Wagner, although their recall of the names of these pieces and of their composers is vague. They remember vividly the concerts and performances in which they have participated, such as the story of 'Baboushka'.
124. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are satisfactory overall. The school is supported well by the contribution of a county peripatetic music teacher who works with each class for the equivalent of a term each year. This teacher has very good expertise and, during the inspection, led a well planned lesson in which the pupils made good progress. The main reason for the success of the lesson was the teacher's frequent interventions to discuss and improve the pupils' understanding and techniques. The school's permanent teachers benefit from the support of a good quality published programme of work; this has been introduced very recently so that its impact cannot yet be judged. Good use is also made of pre-recorded music to support singing in assembly.
125. The subject is managed satisfactorily as a 'team effort' led by the headteacher and involving all the school's teachers and the peripatetic teacher. Together they have devised appropriate planning and ensured adequate resources. One of the part-time teachers teaches the recorder to interested pupils in Years 5 and 6. Several of the staff are pianists but the school is unable to make full use of their expertise at present. There is no piano and the only 'hall' space is small and far from ideal, with insufficient room for the whole school to gather in comfort. There are plans to provide a large keyboard instrument soon. The assessment of pupils' progress is informal at present, although the new programme of work includes assessment materials that are being considered for use. The school takes opportunities to invite visiting musicians to the school to broaden pupils' experiences.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. No physical education was being taught during the inspection, so no judgements can be made about pupils' attainment or the quality of teaching and learning.
127. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The recently reviewed planned curriculum takes account of all of the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the different needs and different ages of pupils in mixed-age classes. This is linked to detailed documentation produced by the local education authority, indicating how elements can be planned and taught. Although some monitoring of teaching takes place in the summer term, there is insufficient monitoring of how the full range of the subject is taught.

128. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not have its own hall, but makes good use of the large gymnasium at a nearby centre. Pupils are taken off-site for swimming lessons and all are able to swim at least 25 metres by the age of 11, which is the national expectation. The school field provides a good facility for outdoor games and there is a good range of resources for games. The school also benefits by taking part in a loan scheme for sports equipment.
129. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, plus tournaments undertaken in conjunction with other schools. Pupils have been very successful in these tournaments, being either winners or runners up in a range of sports in the past two years. Some pupils are due to benefit from an off-site visit that will give them some training in dance.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. It was not possible to see any lessons in this subject during the inspection to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence of pupils' standards was obtained by examining their previous work, by looking at teachers' plans and from talking to groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. On the basis of this, pupils reach the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Their achievements are satisfactory.
131. By Year 2, pupils have covered a sound range of topics. They have explored the place of spirituality in their own lives - for example, by making a mini-book 'About Me' and describing people, places and things that are special to them. They have talked about emotions, such as anger, happiness and sadness. They know about the local church and some of the major events in Jesus' life that are remembered at Christmas and Easter. Their understanding of other faiths is limited, but it is acknowledged that most of the work on these planned for the current year is yet to take place.
132. Pupils in Year 6 have a reasonable recall of their work, although, at times, they confuse the religions they have studied. They have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity, have visited the local church regularly and describe the major rituals and festivals that are held there. They understand the importance of Jesus to Christians and talk about some of the figures that Christianity and Judaism have in common, such as Moses. They recall stories from the Bible, such as the parable of 'The Good Samaritan'. They describe recent work on Sikhism well, retelling the story of Guru Nanak, explaining how Sikhs worship and the symbolic importance of the '5 Ks' in their religion. The pupils understand that Sikhism is a major religion of Asia, but is also practised in modern Britain, mainly in cities, such as London or nearby Ipswich. The pupils also record their work in personal and social education and this supplements and consolidates their understanding of aspects of religious education.
133. While a typical range of work is recorded in pupils' books, presentation varies considerably across the school. The younger pupils' work is too often untidy and undated. Across the school, work is often unmarked or marked cursorily. As a result, pupils are unaware from written sources of how well they are doing in the subject. Teachers do not use effective methods of assessing progress or communicating success to the pupils.
134. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator shows a commitment to the subject and ensures that the school is well informed – for example, about the most recent planning materials that are produced by the county. There are useful documents to support teachers, including an overview of how topics have been allocated across the school as a whole and how the mixed-age classes will be taught on a two-year programme. Assembly themes promote pupils' understanding of the subject in addition to lessons, such as the one on the theme of peace seen during the inspection. Attractive displays enhance pupils' understanding, such as a current one on a pupil's first

communion. The nearby church is used regularly for visits, services and concerts and the school receives valued help from the rector who is a governor. Visits have been made to the cathedrals in Bury St Edmunds and Southwark by older pupils in recent years, but there are no regular opportunities for pupils to visit the places of worship or meet representatives from the range of other faiths they study. The co-ordinator ensures that resources are available, either from the school's own stocks or from a central resource base. While the planning and resourcing of the subject are satisfactory, the subject leader does not monitor sufficiently the teaching and learning in lessons or the standards achieved by the pupils.