

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. ALBAN'S CATHOLIC (AIDED) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110841

Headteacher: Mrs. V.E. Pye

Reporting inspector: C.D. Loizou
18645

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 November 2002

Inspection number: 252107

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lensfield Road Cambridge Cambridgeshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr. D. Livesey
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18645	C.D. Loizou	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage Curriculum Educational inclusion Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9146	M. Brennan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30144	E. Hastings	Team inspector	English Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8867	E. Russell	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	

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The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a Catholic (Aided) primary school near the centre of Cambridge. It serves the needs of Catholic families in three different parishes across a wide area of the city. The school is average in size and admits up to 32 children into its Reception year. There are 197 pupils on roll between the ages of four and eleven and they are taught in eight classes. Nearly all of the pupils are white and have English as their first language with less than one per cent that also speak another language. Attainment on entry to the Reception year is above the standard expected of four-year-olds. Two per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The school has identified seven per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs, which is well below average. Less than one per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. There have been many staff changes in the last two years and the school employs two part-time class teachers and a part-time music teacher. Nearly all the staff, including the headteacher, joined the school after the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education and the pupils achieve well. They achieve high standards in English by the end of Year 6 but could achieve higher standards in writing in the infant years. They achieve well in mathematics, enabling them to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. Although the pupils achieve above average standards in science, they could do better. The teaching is good with particularly effective teaching in the junior classes. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors but communication with parents could be improved. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve high standards in English by the end of Year 6. They achieve well above average standards in mathematics.
- The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress.
- The teaching is good, well planned and effective. It is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where the pupils make very good progress in most subjects.
- The curriculum is good. The school is successful in providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum.
- The teachers monitor the pupils' progress effectively. The good analysis of test results is helping teachers to plan an appropriate curriculum which builds on the pupils' previous learning.

What could be improved

- The quality and range of the pupils' writing in the Reception year and infant classes.
- Science standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. More could be done to provide work that is closely matched to the pupils' capabilities in science lessons.
- The way in which the school communicates with parents.

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 July 1998 and has made satisfactory progress since then. The school has improved the Foundation Stage curriculum and raised standards in information and communication technology. It has also been successful in improving and enriching the curriculum. Schemes of work

and long term plans now guide the teachers' planning. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained and the school now uses very good procedures to monitor how well the pupils are doing in all subjects. However, there is still a lot to do to improve communication with parents and, in this area, the school has not made enough progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	B	A*	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	A
Science	B	D	B	C

Key

well above average and in the top 5% of schools A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

(The "similar" in the table above refers to the percentage of free school meals and not the size of the school.)

The 2002 tests for Year 6 show that the school's results were well above average in English and mathematics. In English, results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in the current Year 6 are well above those expected in English and mathematics and above average in science. Although science standards are above average they could be higher. Teachers are not always providing work that is closely matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities in science lessons.

Most children enter the Reception year with above average attainment, especially speaking, listening and communication skills. They make good progress in the Reception year in all areas of learning except in writing where they could make better progress. Similarly, infant pupils make good progress because the teaching is effective but teachers need to provide more opportunities for the pupils to write independently and for a range of purposes to improve handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading are above those expected and in writing, they are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2. The pupils make good progress in mathematics, and standards are above expectations by the end of Year 2 and well above those expected by the end of Year 6. In science, standards are just above those expected by the end of Year 2 but could be higher. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and standards are rising as the staff become more confident and resources improve. Standards in other subjects are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and 6, except in art and design and design and technology, where standards are average. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive good support and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes are good. They try hard and enjoy learning, applying themselves well to the tasks set for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils are well behaved. There is an orderly, positive and supportive working environment. There was very little temporary exclusion last year.
Personal development and relationships	This is good. The pupils are independent and mature. Relationships are good throughout the school. Older pupils support younger ones and the school operates a school council that involves the pupils in helping to manage and improve the school.
Attendance	This is satisfactory and is in line with the national figures. There is some unauthorised absence but this is improving each year.

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.

The teaching is good overall and ranges between satisfactory and excellent. It has improved considerably since the last inspection. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning, although more could be done to improve the pupils' writing in the Reception year and infant classes. The teaching is well planned to meet the needs of most of the pupils in most subjects except that in science, the activities and tasks planned for the higher attaining pupils could provide more challenge. Teachers use assessment very well in most subjects so that their planning takes account of the progress made in previous lessons. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective, resulting in high standards by the end of Year 6. Information and communication technology is well taught across the school and good use is made of the school's much improved computer resources. The pupils have regular access to computers and the teachers make good use of new technology to support learning across a range of subjects. The teaching of music is very effective. The pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in lessons and, as a result, make good progress. The school provides good support for the increasing number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. There is a good range of practical and relevant tasks and good opportunities for the pupils to use computers. It is a rich and balanced curriculum that includes high quality music provision. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including French lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils receive good support. They are identified early and make good progress. There is also good provision for those pupils identified as gifted and talented.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A small number of pupils speak an additional home language and this is usually another European language. Good assessments of their needs are made and they are supported well in lessons. These pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall and is supported by a very good range of activities that promote the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The pupils are also developing a good understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a good level of care provided for the pupils and there are very good procedures to assess how well they are doing in English, mathematics, science and other subjects of the curriculum. More could now be done to use these assessments in science to provide more demanding work for the more able pupils.

A significant minority of parents believe that the school could do more to provide extra-curricular activities and specialised instrumental music support. Generally, parents are pleased with the progress their children are making but a significant minority do not feel comfortable approaching the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership. The deputy headteacher and senior staff work closely with her to monitor lessons, pupils' work and their progress. The management of the school is well focused on improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides good and effective support. They work closely with the school and its staff and have a clear understanding of their role in managing and supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good because the governors and staff have established clear priorities in the school development plan. There has been a thorough process involving audits, monitoring and evaluations of the pupils' performance in national and optional tests. There is a need to

	communicate the school's achievements more clearly to parents.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. There are targets which are matched to spending priorities. The school manages its finances well, ensuring best value for money when committing the school's available funds.

The school's accommodation is satisfactory and well maintained. Lunchtime supervision is good and well managed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good and sets high expectations. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority do not feel comfortable approaching the school and say they are not being kept well informed. • To work more closely with parents. • The leadership and management of the school and communication. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Although inspectors believe the school is well led and managed, they do agree that more could be done by the headteacher and governors to improve communication with parents. This can only be achieved if the school takes steps to ensure that all parents feel comfortable approaching the school. Extra-curricular activities are generally satisfactory but inspectors agree that there is potential to improve in this area. Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed by the parents. The contribution that parents make to children's learning at home is good and there is a positive willingness amongst the parent body to support and work with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Inspection evidence shows that, on entry to the Reception year, the majority of the children's attainment is above that expected for their age. The good teaching in both the classes with Reception children ensures that the children make good progress in most areas of learning. By the time they start Year 1 the proportion of the children reaching the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world has improved and standards overall are above those expected. The children have also made good progress in their physical, personal and social development, with the large majority of children exceeding the standards expected for their age. Year 1 pupils are taught alongside Reception children. They continue to make good progress, particularly in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics so that standards by the end of Year 1 in English and mathematics are above those expected. From the Reception year writing progress is only satisfactory and ought to be better. The school has not adopted a consistent policy towards the teaching of writing in the early years and writing is not given sufficient emphasis in the self-selected or teacher-directed activities which accounts for the variation in standards between reading and writing.
2. Standards by the end of Year 2 in reading are above those expected, but in writing, standards are average and ought to be higher. There are inconsistencies in the pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Reading standards are higher because the pupils are taught to recognise letter sounds from an early age and reading activities are more frequently represented in lessons. Infant pupils make good progress in mathematics and reach standards that are above those expected by the end of Year 2. Basic numeracy skills are well taught and the pupils have gained a good understanding of shapes and measures. In science the pupils make satisfactory progress and could do better. They achieve standards above those expected by the end of Year 2, but the more able pupils could exceed the standards expected for their age if the work provided for them was more challenging.
3. By the end of Year 6, English standards are high and the pupils have made good progress in both reading and writing. In the junior classes, teachers teach literacy effectively, ensuring that the pupils develop both their reading and independent writing skills equally well. English lessons provide opportunities for the pupils to use extended forms of writing and the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, read widely with understanding. Standards in mathematics are well above those expected by the end of Year 6, building on the good start made in the infant years. A higher than average proportion of pupils exceed the standards expected for their age. Science standards are above those expected by the end of Year 6 but ought to be higher. Given that the same pupils achieve so well in English and mathematics, a larger proportion of pupils should be reaching and exceeding the standards expected for their age. Like the infant classes, the teaching is not as sharp in providing challenging tasks for more able pupils in science lessons. This is having a negative effect on overall standards in science. Previous national test results also reflect this, as standards in science have been lower than those in English and mathematics for the past three years.
4. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are being well supported by learning support staff who are sometimes deployed to work alongside these

pupils, especially in basic literacy and numeracy lessons. Their progress is monitored well and they make good progress towards their individual learning targets. These targets are challenging and appropriate for all the pupils with special educational needs. The school has a small number of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. None are in the very early stages of English language acquisition and most speak another European language. These pupils also make good progress in lessons and they are set appropriate targets along with other pupils.

5. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection which found standards to be too low at that time. The pupils make good progress in all the strands of the information and communication technology curriculum, for example, word processing, graphics, control technology and data handling. In word processing, they make very good progress in the junior classes where the recent introduction of laptop computers has enhanced the school's provision and helped the pupils to use a broader range of skills when editing and preparing their writing across a range of subjects.
6. The pupils in both the infant and junior classes make satisfactory progress in art and design and design and technology where they achieve standards that are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In other subjects, the pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are above those expected for their age. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in most subjects and good progress in information and communication technology. Teachers set accurate and challenging targets for the pupils in most subjects but more could be done to raise standards in writing in the Reception year and infant classes. In science, more could be done to raise standards by matching the work more closely to the abilities of the pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good and continue to be a strength of the school. There are many occasions when the pupils demonstrate enthusiasm, particularly in lessons, when they are usually eager to answer questions. They show high levels of interest in the activities which the school provides. Behaviour is good. In the vast majority of lessons it was good or better allowing the teachers to concentrate on teaching rather than maintaining control. Outside the classroom in assemblies, the dining hall and the playground, the pupils sit quietly, wait patiently in line and play well together. No incidents of bullying or harassment were observed and interviews with parents confirmed that such incidents are rare. There are currently no exclusions but there were three fixed term exclusions last year.
8. In school assemblies and during class circle times, when the pupils discuss personal issues or topics of interest, they appreciate the impact of their actions on others. There were many examples during the inspection where the pupils demonstrated respect for others. Of particular note was the Year 6 class assembly performed in front of the school and the Year 6 parents. The pupils listened quietly to the performances of their peers and then applauded, with great generosity. It was all very uplifting and was enhanced by the musical performance of a pupil who played the trumpet to a high standard.
9. The opportunities provided by the school for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility are good. Year 6 pupils manage the rota for the organisation of laptop computers ensuring that they are charged every night and are distributed to the relevant class on time. They also look

after younger children in the playground, act as prefects and volunteer to tidy the library. There is a School Council but older pupils expressed concern that many of the suggestions they had made had not been adopted by the management of the school. There are good relationships and the pupils are extremely polite and courteous to visitors. During lunchtimes older pupils mix with younger ones, making lunchtime a pleasant social occasion. The pupils also have good relationships with their teachers, for whom they express considerable affection.

10. Attendance is satisfactory and is an improvement on the previous year. Registers are completed correctly so that there is no longer inaccurate reporting of unauthorised absences, as was found at the time of the last inspection. The school is fortunate in having a pro-active parent body who are keen for their children to attend school and ensure that they do so. There are, however, a small number of persistent late attenders. In order to address this the school has recently introduced weekly awards to encourage better punctuality and this is beginning to have an impact.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. The teaching is good and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. A small number of lessons were of high quality, either very good or excellent. These lessons were mainly observed in the junior classes. Eighty-six per cent of lessons were good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Since the last inspection, the teaching has made good improvements, especially in its impact on sustaining the high standards in literacy and numeracy and also in improving standards in information and communication technology. Teachers manage and organise their lessons well. Specialist music teaching is excellent and is responsible for the above average standards in music, but class teachers are not improving their own skills in teaching music. Learning assistants are deployed to support the pupils with learning difficulties. Many resources are tailor-made by the staff according to the topic focus or individual learning needs of the pupils.
12. During a difficult period when the school has had to deal with a high turnover of teaching staff, the governors and headteacher have put in place clear policies related teaching and learning to maintain stability and standards. This has helped to maintain standards, especially in literacy and numeracy, but the teaching of writing in the Reception year and infant classes has been inconsistent. This has resulted in the pupils using a variety of handwriting styles, some with irregular formation and inaccurate spelling and punctuation. The teaching of science, although satisfactory overall with some good features, could be more challenging for specific groups of pupils. National test results show that science standards ought to be higher even though they are above average overall by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils' science work shows that most of the lessons planned involve similar activities for all of the pupils with few examples of work that will challenge the more able pupils.
13. Inspection evidence shows that the proportion of good lessons has improved compared with those found at the time of the last inspection. The teaching has improved well since the last inspection, resulting in effective targeting of pupils, including those with special educational needs. There are good assessment procedures used by teachers in English, mathematics and all other subjects so that teachers are able to monitor their pupils' progress closely and this informs their planning further. More could be done to sharpen this process in science so that more work is planned specifically for pupils of different abilities. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to have a clear idea of the learning

outcomes of the lessons taught. These are shared with the pupils so that it is clear to the pupils what is going to be learned and what comes next.

14. The teaching in the Reception year is good overall with some very good features. Nearly one in eight lessons seen in the Foundation Stage were very good. Two out of three of the lessons seen were good and the rest (nearly one in three lessons) were satisfactory. The children learn to settle quickly to routines and make good progress in their personal and social development because adults respond well to the children providing them with a structured curriculum with practical and stimulating activities. All the adults work very hard to provide resources and plan activities for all the children that challenge, stimulate and evoke language. There are a few occasions, however, when some children would benefit from more direct supervision to engage them in early independent writing. The learning support assistants provide good support but they have to divide their time between four class bases. When learning support assistants are timetabled to work with teachers, the children benefit from effective support that enables them to make good progress in the acquisition of early language and numeracy skills. The children sing rhymes and count, follow shapes and choose to match shapes with numbers or pictures to letter sounds. Effective learning is taking place because adults are continually monitoring, assessing and supporting the children. An increasing number of children enter the school who are learning to speak English as an additional language. These children are fully integrated and well provided for.
15. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is also good. Four out five lessons observed were good with one excellent music lesson observed and the rest were satisfactory. The teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils in all year groups have work that is matched to their capabilities. However, more could be done to provide opportunities for the pupils to write independently and for a broader range of purposes. Science teaching does not always incorporate different activities which challenge the more able pupils. The pupils respond well to the teaching. They listen carefully to instructions and during class discussions they offer thoughtful answers and responses. They persevere with tasks, for example, when investigating electricity in science in Year 2 or when doubling numbers to calculate different problems in mathematics in Year 1. The teaching is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. There are clear rules and classroom routines which provide a secure learning environment for the pupils. The introductions to lessons make it clear what is expected and the learning objectives are always shared with the pupils, for example, in mathematics lessons where counting skills are reinforced regularly at the beginning of each lesson. However, in some lessons observed, teachers missed opportunities to extend the pupils thinking further because the activities provided were sometimes too easy or not challenging enough. In a science lesson for example, the introduction and planning were good but the main activity and discussion did not extend the more able groups of pupils when investigating food groups. The most effective lessons in the infant classes set more challenge in the middle part of the lesson with more evidence of this in mathematics lessons. Good use is made of computers to support the pupils' learning, especially when timetabled to work the nine laptop computers together with class based computers.
16. In the junior classes, the teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Ninety-six per cent of the lessons observed were good or better, including over half of the lessons which were judged to be very good or excellent. The teachers prepare challenging and interesting tasks that motivate and sustain the pupils' concentration, enabling them to work hard and persevere with the tasks set. In all of the lessons seen, there was a good structure so that time was provided for the pupils to ask questions and explain their methods, as for example, in two very good history lessons. Year 5 pupils studied the character of Henry VIII

using a very good range of writing to describe different facets of his life. Year 6 pupils focused on the lives of women during the Second World War. Very good use was made of computers to support the pupils' understanding further and they used these to make notes and record their research. Year 3 pupils were successfully solving number problems using their knowledge of number facts to help them with more complex problems using extended numbers. In another very good English lesson, Year 4 pupils were taught to identify speech marks in a piece of text and then use them to improve their own narrative writing and this was done to good effect. Teachers throughout the junior years challenge the pupils to think carefully. Consequently, the pupils are able to explain the methods they use to work out complex addition and subtraction facts presented as practical problems in mathematics or read aloud their descriptive or imaginative writing in English lessons. Very effective teaching of problem solving in mathematics is helping the pupils to make good progress in their science work but the teaching is not as sharp in providing specific work for pupils of all abilities in science compared with that in English and mathematics. The effective use of language and the support provided by specialised staff is helping all pupils to improve their language skills. Overall, the effective teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is having a positive impact on pupils' learning in other subjects.

17. The teachers use good assessments to monitor the pupils' progress in all subjects. Effective marking of the pupils' work contains helpful comments to guide the pupils. Work is usually marked up to date and is clear so that the pupils know what they have to do to improve further. There is consistency in the way teachers use assessment to monitor the pupils' progress. Teachers keep good records having tested what the pupils know and this information is used to prepare annual reports to parents about their children's progress. Individual learning targets are set for all pupils and these help to predict what levels the pupils will reach at each stage.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good. Teachers are sensitive to the pupils' individual needs. They plan individual and group work carefully and they use the information gained through detailed assessment of their progress in literacy and numeracy to plan the pupils' next stage of learning. For example, pupils with special educational needs in Year 5 work with their group teacher to extend their reading and writing skills. This was planned as a result of the teacher's assessments of the pupils' progress. The pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good support from learning assistants and teachers provide them with many opportunities to improve their spoken English during class and group discussions.

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

19. The school provides a good curriculum. It is broadly based and enriched with a range of activities that are relevant to the needs of all the pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and those identified with the potential to achieve high standards. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and planned thoroughly, especially where classes have pupils of mixed ages. However, more could be done in science to plan work that more closely matches the abilities of the pupils. There are effective policies in place to guide the teaching and learning. In addition, the school includes in its curriculum a good programme of personal, social and health education. All the planning is regularly monitored and reviewed, and appropriate consultation takes place with staff, governors and parents so that the topics and subjects the pupils are studying are communicated well.

20. Subject co-ordinators draw up detailed plans for each subject and ensure that there are good links between subjects. These links include activities that are aimed at improving literacy and numeracy skills, although more could be done to improve writing in the infant classes. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now well established, and in literacy in particular, teachers are beginning to use a more flexible approach to ensure that teaching matches the needs of all the pupils. The school has adopted the Early Literacy Strategy for infant pupils and the Additional Literacy Strategy for junior pupils. These intervention strategies make a positive contribution to improving the learning of these groups of pupils but the focus for improvement should now be on raising standards in writing in the infant years. The Springboard Mathematics project provides effective support for a target group of junior pupils to ensure they reach at least the required standard in numeracy by the end of Year 6. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now much improved compared with the quality of provision found at the time of the last inspection. The appointment of a member of the support staff, and the purchase of a bank of laptop computers have made a positive impact on how well the pupils learn new ICT skills and use ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects.
21. The overall development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils' spiritual development is very good and a strong Christian ethos pervades the school. A well-planned curriculum ensures that the spiritual aspect of every subject is highlighted and there are many opportunities for the pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of school work which is an important part of most school assemblies. A personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson in Year 5 demonstrated clearly how the pupils learn to think about issues such as 'Friendship' and the way in which they begin to show compassion and concern for others. The atmosphere within the school encourages the pupils to value hard work, strive for high standards and be proud of their achievements. The school recognises the need to reward children and give encouragement. There are weekly assemblies where certificates are given to pupils who work hard, show kindness or are helpful.
22. The school very strongly promotes the moral development of its pupils and there is a clear code of behaviour which is consistent throughout the school. 'Respect for each other' is the mission statement of the school and this is reflected in its work and ethos. Lessons take place in well-ordered classrooms where there is mutual respect between the pupils and teachers and courtesy is an expectation. The pupils learn to stand up for the rights of all groups of people through their lessons in 'Citizenship'. They take part in 'One World Week' and discuss issues such as 'Fair trade' in Ghana. They learn to think with consideration of people less fortunate than themselves.
23. The social development of the pupils is good and there are many contacts between the school and the wider community, sports matches with other schools, the Cafod Harvest Appeal, the Shoebox Appeal and Walk to School Week. Every effort is taken to foster a spirit of independence. Older pupils lead the play of younger pupils at lunchtime. Year 6 pupils are trusted to help with assemblies by working the overhead projector and the sound system. Year 6 pupils distribute and set up laptop computers in various classrooms as required. Duties are performed efficiently and willingly. In all lessons there are many examples of children working harmoniously together in pairs, groups or as a whole class. Each year the oldest pupils go to the Hilltop Centre in Sheringham for a residential visit and learn to live and work together away from their home environment.
24. Provision for the cultural development of the pupils is good. Through the school curriculum and using outside agencies, experience is gained in drama, dance, art and design and music.

They take part in the Cambridge Festival and put on performances such as ‘Peter Pan’ for parents and friends. Visiting artists are invited to perform or work with the pupils in school. These have included a troupe of Indian dancers and the poet and author, Fred Sedgewick. All classes are taken to visit local museums and galleries when it is appropriate to the current topic. Through work in history, geography, art and design, religious education and literature, pupils learn about other lands, cultures and beliefs and begin to understand and value the richness that this brings to their lives. The school has in place an effective race equality policy.

25. Extra-curricular provision, although limited, does provide a satisfactory range of activities relative to the size of the school. In addition to daily after school club, the pupils can engage in sport, chess, French and music. The amount of activity has been reduced temporarily whilst awaiting the appointment of replacement coaching staff, and clearance of other staff through the criminal record checks. Otherwise, the provision is reasonable in the circumstances.
26. The pupils benefit from good quality specialist music teaching. All classes make visits in support of aspects of the curriculum they are studying. Year 6 pupils go on a residential visit to Norfolk where they engage in a wide range of outdoor adventurous activities as well as coastal studies. In school, visiting Tudor and Victorian workshops, cultural workshops, a local poet and author, and the astronomy road show enriches the curriculum. The pupils participate in the Cambridge Community Festival, and the national ‘Sport in the Community’ project. The school has links with Cambridge United Football Club and the pupils take part in activities that enhance their sporting experiences. The school chaplain makes regular visits to develop aspects of worship and liturgy and in conjunction with the church raises money for charities. The Parents and Friends Association give very good support to the school through the provision of considerable additional resources. A number of parents give their time voluntarily to support the work of teachers in the classroom. Currently the number is limited due to the time it is taking for the national checks on adults working in schools. Joint in-service training sessions are held with another local Catholic school, but due to the nature of the wide area pupils come from there are no strong links with any of the local secondary schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. This is a school in which the academic and social needs of pupils are well looked after, supported by a healthy and safe environment. Teaching staff spend much time supporting the pupils’ emotional development by acting as good listeners. Systems for monitoring and improving academic performance are very good with excellent tracking systems for each pupil now in place. Procedures for monitoring the pupils’ personal development are satisfactory.
28. Arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher is the recognised child protection officer and she has recently attended a two-day training course to keep her up to date with the recent. Knowledge of her role amongst the staff is good. All staff were involved in the recent review of the Child Protection Policy which follows the procedures outlined by the Local Education Authority. Arrangements for health and safety are also good. A health and safety working group, comprising the headteacher, site manager and two members of the governing body, carry out half-termly audits of the premises. Minor concerns are rectified by the site manager. Risk assessments have been carried out for each class and these have been well documented. The staff are also encouraged to report any concerns to the headteacher. Good use has been made of the local fire department to check the premises. Following a recent visit an external fire escape, which had been causing concern, was

removed. There are three staff qualified in the use of first-aid and first-aid boxes are prominently displayed outside the secretary's office.

29. The support and guidance given to pupils is good. The work of the learning support assistants is valued by both teachers and pupils but their impact could be improved by allocating them to areas of greatest need. Provision for pupils identified with special educational needs is good and their progress is monitored well ensuring they make good progress towards their individual learning goals.
30. Overall, systems for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Responding to a concern raised in the previous inspection over the incorrect recording of unauthorised absences the school, in conjunction with its Education Welfare Officer, underwent a training course to rectify the problem and improve procedures. Class teachers do the bulk of the day-to-day attendance monitoring. Unusually, the school's secretary has not been assigned this role, other than to take calls from parents whose children are absent. Putting the staff in charge of daily attendance monitoring places an additional burden on them and makes it difficult to carry out first day telephone checks on unreported absences. Attendance records continue to be collated manually, creating further work when calculating the overall level of attendance. Some thought should be given to giving the secretary more responsibility for monitoring attendance on a daily basis and to computerising the records.
31. Systems for monitoring behaviour are satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils behave well which means that in lessons and around the school little time is spent having to maintain discipline. Behaviour is managed with a balance of rewards and sanctions. At the beginning of each year the pupils, guided by their class teacher, draw up their class rewards system. Therefore there is plenty of opportunity for the pupils to receive stickers for good behaviour. In addition, the headteacher's special award is presented at the weekly awards assembly to one pupil from each class who has, in the opinion of their class teacher, behaved or worked in a manner worthy of particular praise. When pupils misbehave the class teacher is initially responsible for dealing with this. Should it persist the infant or junior co-ordinator is involved and if behaviour continues to be unacceptable the headteacher takes responsibility by informing parents and dealing with the matter further. Only where there are serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour is a record kept. When such incidents occur the parents are consulted. The absence of oppressive behaviour is very much the result of the swift way in which the school handles such occurrences. Although rare when they do occur the headteacher deals with them very quickly making provision for this aspect of the school's work good and effective. Parents are informed immediately and their involvement usually marks the end of the matter.
32. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good and have improved well since the last inspection. The results of tests are used to assist teachers in their planning. The senior management team meet on a regular basis to set targets for each pupil based on the results of end of year tests in English and mathematics. These targets, which are written into the English and mathematics books, are shared with both parents and pupils and, where necessary, support is given to ensure that they are achieved. Samples of assessed and levelled work are kept in files so that staff become familiar with the different levels of attainment in the National Curriculum programmes of study.
33. The arrangements for monitoring the pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Circle Time and weekly class assemblies provide teachers with an opportunity to monitor personal development. Merit stickers and certificates provide recognition of non-academic

development. The annual pupil reports sent to parents contain a general comment on personal development and the pupils also comment on how they feel they have progressed during the year. This is good practice and, together with these reports, pupils and parents are invited to comment on how well the pupils are doing.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The parents' perceptions of the school are unsatisfactory because a significant minority of them have expressed concern about a number of aspects of the school's work. These views were most clearly expressed in the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire where particular concerns were raised about the quality of information that they receive about their child's progress; the difficulty they find in approaching the school with concerns; the manner in which the school attempts to work closely with them; some aspects of the leadership and management of the school and the provision for extra curricular activities. Concerns were also raised through correspondence to the inspection team, at the parents' meeting and in conversations with parents during the week of the inspection. However, inspectors believe that the school has begun to improve communication with its parents but has yet to convince a significant minority that the school does well for their children. Inspectors judge that the quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory and that the school is well led and managed.
35. The headteacher and governors accept that these parental perceptions must be addressed and recognise that they must take effective steps to improve relations with parents. The inspection team judge that the school has gone some way to improve information. The school is well led and managed, resulting in the pupils achieving well and reaching high standards in English by the end of Year 6 and well above average standards in mathematics. Not all the responses and comments in the questionnaires were negative, with the majority of parents expressing satisfaction with the standard of education the school provides, the standard of behaviour and the fact that their children like the school. That said, it is clear that there is a significant minority of parents who are unhappy with many aspects of school life but will need convincing that the school is doing well for their children.
36. The effectiveness of the links which the school has with parents are unsatisfactory because a significant minority do not perceive that the school has done enough to improve its communication with them. The school now needs to communicate to parents the measures it has taken to improve communication. For example, the regularity with which newsletters are sent out has been increased from monthly to weekly. Coffee mornings have been introduced by year groups to which parents are invited to find out about the topics that will be covered during the coming term. An additional parent consultation evening has been introduced. The homework policy has been sent home outlining when homework will be set and when it should be completed. Most parents confirmed that these initiatives have been an improvement and inspectors agree that these measures should alleviate the concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents. Each week parents are invited to attend the class assembly by their child and twenty parents turned up during the inspection week to see the Year 6 class assembly. The headteacher is also visible in the playground at the start of the day to meet with parents. However, despite these measures and activities, one in three parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires feel that the school does not work closely with them. One in four parents feel uncomfortable approaching the school with a concern. This indicates that, for all the improvements and measures taken since the last inspection, a significant minority of parents feel that the school does not sufficiently respond to parents. Although the information

the parents receive is satisfactory, more could be done to involve them and consult them about changes to ensure that the reasons for change are more fully explained.

37. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. There are currently four parents who have received clearance to work in school and more will follow. They primarily help with reading, art, craft and cooking. There is a very active Parents and Friends Association (PFA), with over 30 members, which raises significant sums of money through a range of social and fund raising events. The money raised has been used to provide, for example, the Year 6 residential visit and special visits to the school by the "Astronomy Road Show" and a noted poet. Parents and members of the local Catholic Parish also help to run the St. Alban's Foundation, which is another successful fund raising arm and money raised through this has been used to buy laptop computers. The numbers of parents involved in these activities demonstrates the commitment which parents have towards the school and the goodwill embodied in these organisations has the potential to be harnessed further. Many parents spoke to inspectors about the potential the school has for involving parents, either through the St. Alban's Foundation and PFA, or through more effective liaison with the parent body so as to bring together a school community that has so much potential.
38. The quality of information provided by the school is satisfactory. Annual reports to parents are appropriate in that they meet statutory requirements. The reports allow the pupils to comment on their progress, thereby giving them a degree of responsibility for their own learning. The prospectus is pleasantly presented with plenty of relevant information about the school. Both it and the Governors' Annual Report to Parents meet statutory requirements. There are now three parents evenings a year, offering more than enough opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress.
39. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home is good. At the beginning of this term parents were issued with a homework policy informing them when it would be set and should be completed by. Conversations with parents confirmed that this is an improvement on the previous school year. Year group coffee mornings have been introduced at which parents are given information on the topics to be covered during the coming term. Attendance at these events has ranged from six to twenty parents. Support in the home is good. For the parents, education comes high on their list of priorities and this means that they help their children at home, facilitating and complementing the homework provided by teachers. The vast majority of homework is completed and handed in on time.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The headteacher provides good leadership and sets high expectations. However, more now needs to be done to improve parents' perceptions of the school with a significant minority of the parent body who believe that the school could do more to involve parents and communicate with them. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher and senior management team and together they are an effective management team. Much of the focus for school improvement since the last inspection has been in maintaining high standards and improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. To a large extent this has been achieved through close monitoring of lessons and the effective use of assessment to check on the pupils' progress. The headteacher and governors now need to take effective steps to convince all the parent body that standards are improving and that their children are performing well at school in most subjects. This is largely a public relations exercise which, it seems from the reaction of a significant minority of parents, has not been addressed successfully in the past. The previous inspection also reported some dissatisfaction amongst

the parents, which was aimed at the previous headteacher and governors. The school development plan and action plan refers to improving communication. It seems that although there are good management systems in place, the task of the headteacher and governors is to restore confidence by improving relations with parents.

41. All the staff and adults who have day to day contact with the pupils, reflect the school's stated aims well, ensuring that they support and are committed to maintaining strong working relationships and include all pupils in all activities. This commitment to an inclusive education is clearly reflected in all the work done in the school.
42. The headteacher and senior staff have a good grasp and understanding of how to measure and improve the effectiveness of the teaching. They assess how well the pupils are doing using standardised tests and then analyse results to provide realistic and challenging targets at different stages of the pupils' time in school. Co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning as well as pupils' work to assess how well they are doing in their respective subjects. Consequently, the school has accurate and realistic targets for improvement with every pupil being monitored closely. Teachers are certain about what they are going to teach and what they are aiming for. Curriculum co-ordinators prepare good reports and action plans for their own subjects. These feed into a thorough audit of resources and staff training needs which feeds into the school development plan. There is both a short-term and long-term plan which fully takes account of changing trends in the school roll or, for example, the fact that many pupils joining the school have specific learning needs or language needs. Resources have improved well since the last inspection, particularly in information and communication technology but more could be done to improve music resources and recording equipment.
43. The governors are knowledgeable and experienced and committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. They provide good support and help the headteacher to manage the school well. Formal and effective monitoring procedures ensure that governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff and, as a result, they have a good understanding of the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses. The governors visit the school and receive regular reports from senior staff. The headteacher prepares thorough reports to be presented at governors' meetings and very clear position statements keep the governors fully informed. The governors' annual report to parents is thorough and well presented. However, the governors must also play their part in ensuring that the school works more closely with parents who have expressed an eagerness to be more involved in the school. The school development plan is used to steer the work of the school. The process leading up to the production of the school development plan involves all the staff and governors, and is put together by the senior management team when deciding priorities for school improvement.
44. There is a good mixture of experienced and well-qualified teachers and support staff. The latter could be better deployed to support groups of pupils who have particular learning difficulties, especially in the infant classes to support the pupils' writing development. Carefully targeted in service training has improved the quality of teaching, especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. There are some missed opportunities to extend this to other subjects, for example, music where the specialist teacher takes every class each week but class teachers do not always work alongside her to improve their own skills in music teaching. The staffing for pupils with special educational needs is good. The careful deployment of a part-time teacher in the juniors to support and extend literacy skills for those pupils who have learning difficulties is very effective.

45. The deputy headteacher was appointed to the school at the start of this school year and has also taken on the role of special educational needs co-ordinator. She has made a good start by re-organising provision and is now looking at how best to deploy support staff to help pupils with moderate learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. There has been good monitoring of the school's provision for special educational needs pupils by checking their individual learning targets, the activities provided and the involvement of outside agencies. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good. The pupils can access a good range of classroom resources. When withdrawn to specialist teaching areas for small group work, such as that for the Additional Literacy Strategy, there is good access to a range of suitable materials.
46. Resources are well managed and subject co-ordinators check teachers' planning to ensure that there is appropriate work being done. This needs to focus more sharply on improving writing in the Reception and infant classes and ensure that the work in science in both the infants and juniors is better matched to the pupils' needs and abilities in order to raise standards further in science. The school's finances are well managed. There are efficient and effective procedures to track spending and determine priorities for resources in the school's management plan. Specific grants are used well for their intended purpose and the headteacher and governors monitor spending closely. Governors and senior staff report on the effectiveness of spending and the priorities set in the school development plan. In this way the governors are committed to establishing best value when committing resources. New computer resources, for example, are having a large impact on raising standards in information and communication technology across the school. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and the pupils have good access to hard play surface areas but there is no grassed field for major games so the school uses the facilities of a local secondary school. The cleaning and caretaking staff provide a healthy working environment for staff and pupils to work in.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- * **Improve writing standards in the Reception year and infant classes to raise standards by the end of Year 2 by:**
 - establishing an effective writing policy which is adopted from the Reception year and is built on in Years 1 and 2;
 - teaching a consistent style of handwriting with more attention placed on improving independent writing from an early age;
 - improving the pupils' spelling and punctuation so that more pupils achieve or exceed the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2.(Paragraphs: 1-2; 6; 12; 14; 53; 62; 66; 69)

 - * **Raise standards in science by providing more work that is closely matched to the abilities of the pupils to ensure that more pupils reach or exceed the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.**
(Paragraphs: 2-3; 6; 12-13; 75-80)

* **Develop relationships with parents to improve communication and address any perceptions they have by:**

- ensuring that the school receives all parents in a way which makes them feel comfortable approaching the headteacher and staff;
- putting in place further steps to ensure that parents are well informed about school events and the achievements of their children;
- developing the way the headteacher, staff and governors manage and deal with parents to improve their confidence and to work together with the whole parent body to improve the school further.

(Paragraphs: 9; 26; 34-39; 40; 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	23	6	0	0	0
Percentage	7	27	52	14	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two 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)	197
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
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	4

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	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

If there were fewer than twelve boys or girls in any category listed below the tables of results do not show the number of pupils but percentages are indicated.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	18	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	29	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (92)	88 (92)	97 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	28	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (92)	97 (97)	94 (95)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002		

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	23	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (76)	96 (80)	100 (84)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	22	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (80)	91 (80)	100 (80)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	175	2	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	24.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.5

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	442,808
Total expenditure	457,543
Expenditure per pupil	2,200
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,091
Balance carried forward to next year	17,356

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	44	3	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	49	7	3	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	2	3	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	13	3	3
The teaching is good.	43	43	6	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	51	22	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	29	44	21	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	47	7	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	12	49	26	9	4
The school is well led and managed.	16	40	15	19	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	55	6	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	28	29	30	7

Other issues raised by parents

Although the parents are pleased with the progress their children make and the standards they achieve, a significant number of them have spoken to inspectors and written to the inspection team expressing concern about the ethos of the school. They are particularly concerned that the school does not communicate effectively with them and do not believe that the headteacher and governors do enough to address their concerns or queries.

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

48. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The children are taught in one of two classes. There is a mixed-age class where older Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils and the rest are taught in another Reception class. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection and is based on the appropriate areas of learning. Overall the teachers and support staff provide the children with a good range of learning opportunities. There is a wide range of focused experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall.
49. The attainment of most children when they first start the Reception year is above that expected of children of this age. The teaching is having a positive effect on children's learning. As a result, the majority of children will exceed most of the expected early learning goals by the time they begin Year 1. The children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress. They are well supported by teachers and learning support staff who are effectively deployed to support individuals and groups during lessons.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. The children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority in both classes. This ensures that the children make good progress and are on target to reach the early learning goals before the end of the Reception year. Relationships are positive and the children enjoy coming to school and happily become involved in the range of activities available to them. They are eager to learn new skills and put effort and concentration into their tasks. Good emphasis is placed on helping the children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong and the children respond well to the rules and routines of school life. The children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as role-play, dance, music and outdoor play. Older children in the Reception year work independently for sustained periods of time and the activities provided for them are often challenging. All the children respond positively to tasks, such as writing their names or drawing a picture but more could be done to develop early writing skills by providing more opportunities for the children to write their own sentences. There are well-planned opportunities for the children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of their own uniqueness and the wonder of the world around them. Lessons build effectively on this as children consider their own place in the family and the importance of friendship and being kind to each other. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

51. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. As a result, the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 with most achieving them well before the end of their Reception year. Early writing skills are being developed systematically as the children learn to recognise letters and the sound they make. However, the school needs to develop a writing policy which begins in the Reception year and is built in on subsequent years to raise standards further in writing.

52. In both classes communication, language and literacy are given a high priority and the children are provided with a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend their language skills. Emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the adults in order to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. The children listen attentively and follow the teacher's instructions as she encourages the children to recognise words and letters on the "Big Book". They enjoy listening to well-told stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. Emphasis is placed on children sharing conversations with adults and challenging questions and comments are used effectively to promote their thinking. Good adult interaction encourages the children to make choices. For example, when the children were questioned about, "Things that give us light?", they responded with thoughtful answers and the teacher gave them time to think and construct a sentence when answering. The importance of using language to develop ideas in structured play situations, such as the story of "The Billy Goats Gruff", encourage the children to use imaginative vocabulary as they create their own dramatic situations. They are learning to use language effectively to express feelings or persuade each other to take on a particular role or describe characters in a story.
53. The activities provided for the children are interesting so that they are becoming confident speakers who enjoy sharing conversations with adults and friends. In the mixed Reception and Year 1 class, the children are often encouraged to 'talk and tell' so that even the most reluctant of children are encouraged to talk about 'their own special bear' when planning a bear hunt. Clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards in both Reception classes help to develop early reading and writing skills. Most children can recognise their names and make good attempts to write their names. The children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they work in the role-play areas but more opportunities for independent and creative writing linked to stories and role-play could be provided to encourage writing from a very early age. In all the English lessons observed the children explored sounds, letters and early writing but the school has not provided a continuous programme of writing which links to the work that the children will do in Year 1. This affects the overall quality of independent writing as well as affecting the consistency of handwriting in the early years and throughout the infant classes. The children draw detailed pictures and are beginning to write simple sentences and make books about family events and topics using familiar letters, sounds and words. Emphasis is placed on the learning of sounds and the sound of the week with the effective use of a story books and sound cards to develop the children's understanding of letter sounds. Many higher attaining children are learning to recognise rhyming words and can successfully build their own three letter words.
54. The children are becoming very confident readers. They understand about authors and illustrators and higher attaining children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar and high frequency words. All the children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a positive effect on their progress in learning to read. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Mathematical development

55. The teaching of mathematics is good. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 and most will achieve them well before the end of their Reception year. Both Reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. The children learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, such as when looking at number lines to find one less than and one more than. The staff use number rhymes well to reinforce the children's understanding, such as 'five little

speckled frogs’ and ‘ten green bottles’. These effectively develop children’s ideas of early addition and subtraction. Problem solving is developed as the children work out directions and positions when making models.

56. In both classes the children have good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. The children are becoming competent with numbers up to 50 and beyond. They respond positively to challenging tasks involving ‘big’ numbers and higher attaining children take great pride in being able to count backwards and forwards by placing dough cakes in a line and removing or adding to work out how many there are. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with two and three-dimensional shapes, small toys or emptying and filling containers in the sand play area. However, in some lessons a lack of additional adult support in some activities results in missed opportunities to extend knowledge and understanding in mathematics even further. There has been good progress in this area of learning since the last inspection.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. In this area of learning, the teaching is good. Consequently, the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 with a significant number achieving them well before the end of their Reception year. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences. Early scientific skills and knowledge are developed as children explore light sources and are asked what objects produce light. Their recording skills are developed well as in one lesson the children sorted objects into sets using large coloured hoops arranged on the carpet. In this way the children reinforce their understanding of light sources and also question why some objects are not sources of light.
58. In previous work covered, the children’s observational skills are developed further as they carefully examine the differences in materials and record their findings in an appropriate way. The celebration of festivals such as Christmas and Divali help the children to develop an understanding of their own culture and those of other faith systems. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. There are good examples of children having well planned opportunities to develop their skills of designing and making. Resources are well organised and adult interaction encourages the children to choose from a wide range of materials. The children work independently to cut, fold and join a range of materials. The computer is a popular choice and many children are competent in using the computer mouse and different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Physical development

59. Effective teaching ensures the majority of children will meet the early learning goals well before they move into Year 1. The teaching is good. The children’s natural exuberance and energy is catered for well. A well planned and imaginative outdoor play area provides the children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. There is a good range of wheeled toys, which children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and planned obstacles. A topic about “themselves” helps the children to develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Structured physical education, including dance and music lessons promote their physical development well. In these lessons the children are developing

good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond well to their teacher and to the added stimulus of music and music playing using instruments. Most children display a suppleness and agility as they become more aware of their own bodies. Good teacher intervention encourages the children to improve their gross motor skills by moving with control and co-ordination showing awareness of space, themselves and others around them. Emphasis is placed on developing children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials and they are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care. There has been good improvement in this area of learning since the last inspection. However, the deployment of support staff could be reviewed to ensure that during physical education lessons an additional adult is present to support individual children who need one-to-one supervision.

Creative development

60. The teaching is very good in this area of learning, largely as a result of the involvement of the school's part-time music teacher who teaches the Reception year music every week. This is a very effective session which is helping the children to appreciate music as well as play a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1 with a significant number achieving them well before the end of their Reception year.
61. Overall, the children enjoy a good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. The staff provide the children with a good range of opportunities to use their imagination. In some lessons opportunities for imaginative play are less well developed and there are missed opportunities to enhance the children's imagination and extend their language and creativity in this area of learning. Structured music lessons and a very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes throughout the Foundation Stage, help to develop the children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. In a very good lesson, the children were learning to distinguish between 'loud', 'medium' and 'quiet' sounds by listening to the "magic box" (an ordinary plastic box representing a vessel that could hold music and release it with varying degrees of 'loudness') which the music co-ordinator used to help the children listen for their turn and play their instrument quietly and loudly, depending on how the box is 'opened'. The children listened with intensity and natural curiosity as they played a range of instruments including triangles, shakers, drums and tambours. In both classes there are many activities available for the children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. The staff provide materials with interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. Their understanding of colour is developed well when they mix their own shades of paint to create high quality pictures of teddy bears or self-portraits containing interesting detail. Malleable materials such as 'gloop', play dough, sand and water are available for children to explore on a daily basis. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

62. Standards in English dipped during the last two years, but they have returned to the same high level as they were in 1999. The pupils are now achieving well and make good progress. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well in the development of their speaking and listening skills and reading, but only achieve average standards in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected in English. Writing standards are high by the end of Year 6 but they ought to be higher by the end of Year 2.

63. The school has worked hard to ensure that the pupils achieve the standards they are capable of and recognises that standards are not yet high enough in writing in the infant classes. The incorporation of intervention programmes and the monitoring of teaching and learning is having a beneficial effect. The National Literacy Strategy is used well and is now firmly rooted in daily practice. It is being used more flexibly to meet the learning needs of all the pupils, particularly to facilitate greater opportunities to develop writing skills. High priority is also given to reading and a wide range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books are provided to encourage the pupils to become keen and capable readers. There is strong support from home that reinforces the work the school is doing in encouraging the pupils to develop good reading habits and to extend their skills.
64. Teachers provide many planned opportunities for the pupils to extend and develop speaking skills through discussions, expressing their feelings and opinions, and through their response to questions during lessons. The pupils display well-developed vocabulary and are able to express themselves in a clear and often articulate manner. For example, pupils in Year 1 can offer words to describe feelings such as moody, excited and happy, and they know that some words have similar meanings to others like 'cross' and 'angry'. Year 2 pupils are able to explain the expression 'in their hands' in relation to the role of the doctor. By Year 6, the pupils are able to participate in debate and to offer clear arguments and points of view for and against a subject or topic. Their opinions about books they have read are clearly expressed, and they provide detailed explanations and answers to questions about their work. They achieve standards in speaking which are well above those expected for their age. The pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported by learning assistants, especially during class discussions. This enables them to make good progress and is helping them to become confident speakers.
65. The majority of pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and achieve high standards. They display confidence in their own ability, and read with fluency and expression. This is evident in the infant classes during the lessons when the whole class read together from a 'Big Book' or when they read individually to an adult. In Year 2, they demonstrate good word building skills using the sounds of letters, although some lower attaining pupils do not always tackle polysyllabic words with confidence but are making good progress. The pupils often correct their own mistakes when reading aloud. Each class has a good selection of books that pupils take home to read to their families, and from the detailed notes made in their reading journals it is clear that they receive very considerable support and encouragement from their parents and guardians. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are well above those expected for their age and this is reflected in the high standards achieved in national tests. The pupils are very expressive and responsive readers and are able to convey the full meaning of the text when reading aloud. They are able to select books that match their own particular interests, and they have read a considerable selection of good quality children's fiction, including the work of both classical and contemporary authors. In discussion with the pupils they identify their own favourite authors and the books they enjoy reading the most. They are able to discuss literary devices such as setting, plot and character, and write cogent reviews when they have finished reading a book. However, the pupils' own independent research skills are currently under-developed and the school could do more to develop this further.
66. Although standards in writing for pupils by the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected for their age, the pupils are not achieving their full potential in this area of English. Writing is usually well presented although only a few pupils currently are joining their letters. Handwriting is usually well formed and regular practice is undertaken. They write for many purposes and audiences, and construct sentences that are showing a growing grammatical

awareness and containing essential punctuation. During lessons they have learned how to write letters and holiday post cards, instructions and imaginative stories. Sometimes a book they have read will be used as a stimulus for writing imaginatively, such as 'Amazing Grace' when 'you can be anything you want'. The pupils make suggestions and write interesting stories using their imagination about a superhero, an adventure, or a crook. However, the quality and range of writing in the infant classes is affected by inconsistencies in the quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Given that the same pupils do very well in speaking, listening and reading, standards in writing are not high enough by the end of Year 2.

67. By the end of Year 6, standards in writing are well above those expected for their age. The pupils have experienced a good range of writing activities, and have been taught skills to enable them to write journalistically, biographically as well as in other styles and forms. They use their skills very effectively in other curriculum areas, as for example in history when they write at length about life in Britain since 1930. They collect answers to questions and use them to write biographies and autobiographies on themselves and other pupils and use creative and imaginative language to add effect. For example, one girl wrote, "..... describes herself as a circus, full of colour and energy, and crammed with different talents." When producing poetry pupils look for ways of making the words have impact and use devices like metaphors to great effect, as when one pupil wrote, "God is a grassy hill on a warm summers day." The majority of pupils write interestingly in a range of styles to capture the reader's attention. Handwriting is not always joined, but spelling, grammar and punctuation are usually accurately used.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers know their subject well and this has a positive effect upon the pupils' learning. Generally, the teaching is stronger in the junior classes, and is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils' progress is accelerated, enabling them to attain high standards. A high standard of planning ensures that the full ability range is catered for, including those pupils identified with special educational needs and those who have the potential to achieve very high standards. Generally, across the school, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and manage them well. Where there is good pace to lessons learning is usually more effective. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, and this results in good progress for this group of pupils. However, on occasions these assistants are not always deployed most effectively where they are needed and this affects the quality of learning for some pupils. Target setting is used very effectively in all aspects of the subject, and this enables pupils to know what they have to do next to improve their learning. Teachers assist pupils further in this respect by further reinforcing learning through the sharing of their objectives at the start and end of lessons. Overall, the pupils learn well and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. They enjoy their lessons and show a keen interest, a developing ability to work independently and, as a consequence, they make good progress.
69. A new subject co-ordinator has only recently taken over the management of English. Good subject management has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy has been firmly established in the school, that the curriculum is well planned and developed, and good quality resources have been provided. Very effective target setting and assessment procedures have been put in place to ensure that standards of attainment are monitored closely. The English co-ordinator is very aware of the need to raise standards in writing in the infant classes and this is reflected in the school's management plan where this has been given high priority.

MATHEMATICS

70. By the end of Year 2 attainment in mathematics is above the standards expected and the pupils are making good progress. The pupils make very good progress in the junior classes. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected. Throughout the school, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good.
71. Younger infant pupils are able to count, order, add and subtract numbers to twenty and beyond. Many are able to divide numbers into tens and units and, in the lesson observed, they show an understanding of the value of each digit in larger numbers beyond 100. In Year 2 a well planned lesson on ordinal numbers tested the pupils' ability to double and halve numbers mentally and to count ordinal numbers from different starting points. Work in mathematics books covers a wide range. The pupils read, write and count numbers to 100 and beyond, sequence numbers to 100, repeat patterns in number, add and subtract numbers to 100. They recognise different coins and are able to change one coin into others of equivalent value. They learn the names of common two-dimensional shapes like squares, triangles and circles, and measure in non-standard and then standard units of length. An understanding of three-dimensional shape begins and work in measurement is extended to telling the time. Some experience is given in collecting and recording data in simple symbols and diagrams. There are many examples of simple problem solving.
72. Younger junior pupils demonstrate a good understanding of multiplying and dividing numbers and memorizing tables in order to be able to work mentally and at speed. The pupils in Year 3 for example, enjoyed a very brisk session of questions being fired at them to test their recall of multiplication facts and Year 4 quickly responded to more complex problems by doubling and halving numbers to reach an answer. An excellent mental arithmetic session in Year 5 was observed where the pupils quickly worked out how to calculate the perimeter of a rectangle using algebra. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge of the specific properties of different quadrilaterals and have a clear understanding of how to classify them according to different criteria. Basic skills are rapidly developed throughout the junior classes as pupils move on to more complex work in number, develop their understanding of vulgar, decimal and percentage fractions, become involved in more advanced problems in space and shape and extend the range of work covered in data handling. In both the infant and junior classes, the computer is used well to facilitate, enrich and challenge the pupils' learning.
73. The quality of teaching is good and is never less than satisfactory. In the infant years the teaching varies between satisfactory and good. In the junior classes the quality of teaching is good with very good teaching being observed in Years 5 and 6. There are many strengths in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan their work with great care to ensure that tasks match pupils' differing abilities. Assessment tasks are used successfully to measure and monitor the pupils' progress to ensure good progression as they move up the school. Where support staff are involved, they are clearly briefed about their role and this has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. The teachers' very well developed questioning skills enable them to probe and challenge the pupils' understanding. In Years 5 and 6 the pace of work is often excellent and the highest standards are demanded of all the pupils at all times. In all lessons teachers use the mental session at the start of the lesson very effectively. The pupils' response in lessons is good and in those lessons where the pace is brisk and expectations are at their highest, it is excellent. The pupils remain on task, demonstrate a willingness to work hard with enormous enthusiasm and strive for the best results. In some classes the pupils would benefit from additional adult support and teachers would be enabled to focus more clearly on those who need their help most.

74. Mathematics is well led and managed and has benefited from being a focus for development in the last two years. The co-ordinator assists colleagues by giving advice as required, overseeing all curriculum planning, monitoring assessment procedures, feeding back to staff on relevant courses and where needed, giving demonstration lessons. He is part of the senior management team, closely involved in setting targets in mathematics for each pupil and in monitoring their progress towards achieving these goals. Resources are ordered through an effective staff consultation process.

SCIENCE

75. Standards in science could be higher. The work provided for the pupils is not always challenging enough and does not always meet the needs of the pupils who have the potential to achieve higher standards than expected for their age. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above those expected and, by the end of Year 6, they ought to be well above average. Given that the pupils achieve higher standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, science standards are not rising fast enough when compared with the national rate of improvement. The teaching is stronger in the junior years but evidence from the pupils' workbooks shows that it varies across the school. The teaching is currently strongest in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils make good progress, but taken as a whole, the teaching is satisfactory.
76. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above those expected. The teaching in the infant classes ranges from at least satisfactory to good. A satisfactory lesson was observed on investigating food and how this is consumed by the body. The lesson led to good discussion with the pupils showing curiosity and answering clearly. However, the work provided did not provide opportunities for higher attaining pupils to work at a more advanced level. The pupils made satisfactory progress but the tasks could have been more challenging. The pupils identified with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported. However, more could be done to provide a differentiated programme of activities for pupils of different abilities. Science lessons in the infant classes are planned with clear learning objectives and good use is made of the "Big Book" to provide a focus for discussion. In Year 2, the pupils were observed labelling electrical appliances around the classroom. The teacher provided a good range of activities for different groups of pupils so that some looked at battery powered toys while others investigated simple electric circuits to make a light bulb light. The work was appropriate for the age group and built on previous lessons. However, more could have been done to get the best out of higher attaining pupils by probing and questioning their knowledge further. For example, the pupils could have investigated reasons why some circuits do not make the bulb light and why different intensities of light in a bulb are affected by the power source. If more advanced work is being planned for future lessons, teachers need to balance this with the specific needs of higher attaining pupils where more challenging work could begin sooner when planning a series of lessons for each class.
77. Throughout the junior classes, teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to explore and question but the pupils' recorded work in science lacks challenge for higher attaining pupils who have the potential to reach higher standards. Throughout, teachers put a high emphasis on the nature of fair testing so that the pupils are aware that only one variable can be changed in any one experiment if causal connections are to be discovered. This understanding is reinforced and used to good effect in Years 5 and 6 where recent staffing changes have had a

significant impact on science teaching. The pupils draw effectively on their background knowledge about living things and the qualities of materials. The pupils in Year 5 for example, have gained a good understanding of the physical process of evaporation and are able to explain clearly why some substances evaporate more quickly than others. Good use is made of laptop computers to support lessons, for example, a group of pupils were observed learning how to annotate pictures and diagrams. In a good Year 4 lesson, the pupils investigated how different factors affect the growth of cress. The pupils could explain how the environment affects plant growth but some pupils were a bit confused about the use of the 'control' in an experiment.

78. The pupils achieve satisfactorily but with a more focused approach to planning for the needs of different abilities, the pupils could be making better progress in science. Recent staffing changes have strengthened science teaching, particularly in the junior classes and the school now needs to take steps to address the issue of providing more challenge for more capable pupils to raise standards further by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils record their predictions and have a clear understanding of the experimental process and usually act on their own initiative using manageable steps to carry out their investigations. In the lessons observed, teachers planned appropriate activities for the pupils that enabled them to investigate and explore further. Year 4 pupils, for example, were able to explain why seeds grow quicker in some environments compared with others. They measured the rate of growth, recording their findings in a systematic manner. Conclusions were drawn from the evidence and linked back to the accuracy, or not, of their predictions. Other topics are not neglected, with pupils studying nature phenomena ranging from the solar system to micro-organisms, and investigating the behaviour of sound and the structure of the food chain.
79. The overall quality of teaching of science is satisfactory with good features. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their management skills are also good. Lesson planning is good as far as it goes but more could be done to plan work for higher attaining pupils sooner in the cycle of work being planned over the longer term. Boys and girls are equally motivated by the learning opportunities provided. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are effectively drawn into the learning process by the teachers, together with support staff when these are available. All the pupils support each other and point out significant features in experiments so that those identified as having special educational needs make good progress. A register of gifted and talented pupils also helps teachers to identify those who have the potential to achieve high standards. However, these pupils are not always being provided with work at the start of lessons which sufficiently challenge them. This is evident in their workbooks, where most of the teaching starts from the same point for all the pupils.
80. The subject co-ordinator has just taken over her role. She has managed to assess the needs of the school well and has identified appropriate areas of development. Leadership of the subject is good, leading to a balanced curriculum and good lesson planning, including the effective emphasis on enquiry approaches to learning. The curriculum also carries a strong focus on health education, supporting learning in aspects of personal and social education. The use of information and communication technology is being systematically enhanced with the introduction of computers in science lessons. The on-going assessment of the pupils' progress, with its potential for finer tuning of learning opportunities, is well established. The school is aware that the early identification of more capable pupils could inform teachers' planning better. The subject co-ordinator is fully aware of the strengths and areas for development in science teaching. Both the headteacher and senior management team analyse test results, including those following optional tests for each year group from Year 3 onwards. They

recognise the need to raise standards further in science to bring them in line with the standards achieved in English and mathematics.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Although during the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson being taught, evidence from this lesson, work on the walls around the school, scrutiny of teachers' planning and a discussion with the curriculum co-ordinator indicates that art and design is an important part of the school curriculum and is used effectively to link other subjects through an appropriate range of topics and tasks. Standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
82. In the lesson observed in Year 4 the pupils showed great interest in creating a 'rubbing page' by designing a raised pattern using black and white card. The teacher used skilful questioning to ensure that the pupils had a clear understanding of what they were expected to do and resources were well prepared and readily available. The pupils, demonstrating well-developed skills of cutting and sticking, worked steadily and with great concentration. The tasks were carefully planned to interest and excite them. The quality of the teaching seen was good.
83. There are numerous examples of interesting work on display around the school many of which enhance work in other areas of the curriculum. In the infant department, lively self portraits show a sensitive use of colour mixing and a careful attention to detail. There is attractive work in collage to celebrate the Mass. In junior classes, paintings of Roman and Celtic costumes enliven work in history. Displays of writing in English are frequently illustrated with pencil and crayon drawings. The work of pupils is valued and carefully mounted.
84. There is a good scheme of work in place to help teachers with their planning. This has recently been reviewed and updated. Resources for teaching art and design are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. It was only possible to observe design and technology being taught in three classes. However, evidence from these lessons, a study of teachers' planning and conversations with the curriculum co-ordinator indicate that the subject has a secure place in the curriculum and pupils achieve standards that are in line with national expectations.
86. In a lesson on 'food hygiene', the pupils in Year1 were able to make sensible suggestions about where to store the various ingredients for a salad. They understood the need to wash hands and work surfaces carefully before handling food and were able to record their results successfully. The 'making' process of a previous lesson on how to prepare sandwiches was observed in Year 3 and with great excitement the pupils worked in small groups cutting and buttering bread, preparing fillings, making and wrapping sandwiches. The pupils in Year 6 are involved in producing working designs for an item of footwear which they will go on to make in future lessons. An excellent discussion took place about which kinds of materials might realistically be employed to suit the intended use of the shoes. Because the school plans to teach design and technology in half-termly blocks, there is little finished work currently on display around the school.
87. In all the lessons observed the quality of teaching is good. In the Year 6 lesson observed it was excellent. Teachers have very clear objectives, a good understanding of what they are teaching and place appropriate emphasis on developing the pupils' designing, making and

evaluating skills. This results in a high level of interest in the subject as the pupils work very hard, co-operate in pairs and small groups and develop independence in using the available resources. The recently appointed curriculum co-ordinator is very keen to work with colleagues in reviewing the subject, producing a file with examples of finished work and improving the range and accessibility of resources.

GEOGRAPHY

88. It was not possible to see any lessons taught during the inspection because of the way the geography curriculum is organised. However, based upon the scrutiny of pupil's previous work, and talking to the pupils, it is evident that they have a sound knowledge and understanding of geography and are achieving standards that are at least at the expected level nationally by the end Year 2 and Year 6.
89. In Year 2, the pupils are encouraged to use their own experiences of holidays in different parts of Europe and the World. They are able to mark their destinations on a World map and trace and mark the starting point and destination accurately to the route they have travelled. They design postcards to send home using their own knowledge of their holiday resort. They develop an understanding of their local environment, and write about transport to school commenting on both positive and negative features. They show an appreciation of traffic congestion and its causes. For example, on wet days many adults abandon their bicycles in favour of their cars, with the result that the extra traffic can make the pupils late for school. They pupils have written suggestions to help solve the traffic problems.
90. Map work is taught in Year 3 and the pupils show an understanding of the weather zones of the world, including desert, tropical, temperate and polar areas. They apply this knowledge in an interesting way by matching the profile of holidaymakers with an appropriate holiday destination. The work on weather zones is further extended in Year 4 when the pupils interpret data from a rainfall chart, comparing the similarities and differences between two places in very different weather zones. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the water cycle and of evaporation and condensation. They have a good understanding of facts about rivers and talk confidently about the source and mouth of rivers, as well as describing terms such as meander and delta. They have carried out a comparative study of a rural area outside Cambridge, as well a study of traffic and its impact on the environment.
91. Teachers have a sound knowledge of geography and teach the subject in an interesting way that often relates to the pupils' own knowledge and experiences. The pupils find the subject interesting and enjoyable and make steady progress in the development of their geographical skills as a result.
92. There is satisfactory management of the subject. Good assessment procedures are in place, and there is good support provided for teachers. They are kept informed of current developments. The monitoring role of the subject is currently satisfactory but in need of improvement if the school is to raise standards in geography. The school has rightly focused its monitoring on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and should now consider improving standards further in geography.

HISTORY

93. Only limited evidence was available in the infant classes because of the way history is organised, and Year 2 has covered little of the curriculum at this point in the school year.

Nevertheless, based on one lesson observation in Year 2 and a sample of lessons in the junior classes, it is clear that standards are at the expected level by the end of Year 2 and above expectations by the end of Year 6. The pupils are able to construct a variety of time lines to reinforce their understanding of the sequence of events in different periods of history. In the infant classes, they are able to find out about recent history in their topic on the history of toys since 1950, by speaking to their parents and bringing samples of toys from those times. They discuss the place of a rocking horse, a panda and a teddy bear in time and place them in date order on the time line. They interrogate photographs of play streets to look for evidence of games that do not require expensive resources. To demonstrate their understanding of the comparative difference between then and now, the pupils design an up to date play street of the twenty-first century.

94. This work is extended well in the juniors, and inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievement overall by the end of Year 6 is above average. This shows that standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. The pupils use information sources to answer questions about the past and show an understanding of why people in the past, the Celts and the Romans for example, acted as they did. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils shared their initial conjecture and thoughts about King Henry VIII and compared this with an evaluation they made after having researched various sources, including a CD Rom, for authentic information. The pupils work well collaboratively and record their findings in chart form so that they are able to share it with the others in the class. They are able to make sensible deductions showing that their knowledge and understanding is developing at a good rate. The pupils' books show that Year 6 work well together on gathering information about the role of women during the Second World War, and present it in a variety of ways. Some write directly onto laptops, whilst others use pictures to support their writing. The pupils make very good progress gathering and researching information, and use their skills well to improve their knowledge and understanding of this period.
95. The combination of thorough and effective planning and the teachers' own good subject knowledge ensure that pupils attain well in history. The effective use of good quality resources ensure that the pupils are motivated to learn. At times lessons leave pupils wanting to know more, such is the effectiveness of the teaching. Teachers question pupils and discuss their answers to ensure that their understanding is developing well. As a result, the pupils work enthusiastically and produce lengthy and very good quality written work.
96. There is satisfactory management of history. Although the subject leader is new to the post the history curriculum is effectively planned and resourced. Assessment procedures are new and in place but there has not been enough time to judge the overall effect on monitoring how well the pupils are doing. The monitoring role is not yet fully developed, but the new subject co-ordinator is keen to be influential in the further development of history. The school recognises the potential for improving writing in the infant classes through the use of history by providing more opportunities for infant pupils to write independently and at length.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in ICT are improving well with some current work being done by older pupils in junior classes that exceeds the standards expected. The new computers and, particularly the laptop computers, are having a positive impact on standards and enable the pupils to use ICT in a variety of contexts and for a good range of

purposes to support their learning in other subjects. There has been good improvement since the last inspection which found standards in need of substantial improvement.

98. The pupils are achieving well and making good progress. This includes the pupils identified with special educational needs and the few who are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The pupils co-operate well, sometimes working in pairs, and often working with a laptop computer as part of the lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils were being supported by a learning support assistant during a science lesson and Year 3 pupils were observed using a computer during a mathematics lessons to help reinforce number skills.
99. By the end of Year 2, the pupils can use the keyboard and mouse with confidence to operate drawing programs and access games, stories and information. Year 2 pupils were observed using a graphics and text making program with confidence to draw and label pictures and exploring the 'mark making' tools of the program. The pupils had clearly been taught well and had acquired the necessary skills to draw pictures by controlling the computer mouse. They can correct their own mistakes using the 'undo' tool and are increasingly becoming confident with computers as they load and save their work. By the end of Year 2, the pupils can control a programmable robot and make it move in different directions. By the end of Year 6, the pupils can search the Internet for relevant information on a specific topic and also retrieve information from CD-ROMs. The scrutiny of saved work and previous work covered shows that the pupils are able to use sophisticated multimedia authoring programs to refine and present information for a presentations by combining text and graphics. This work is linked to the pupils' work in other subjects and teachers are increasingly incorporating ICT specific tasks for the pupils to help them search for information, edit and refine texts and graphics as well as improve the presentation of their recorded work so that it attracts the attention of different audiences. The pupils responded very well to these challenges and know that much of the design of multi-media presentations should involve colourful and varied illustrations with carefully chosen texts.
100. The pupils have good attitudes to ICT. The youngest children in the Reception classes are making a good start and also have access to computers in the shared area outside their classroom base. The pupils behave well and they respect the equipment and all take pride in the work they complete and print out.
101. The teaching is good. The school has improved resources significantly and teachers use these well to ensure that all the pupils have access to ICT during lessons on a rota basis. There has been a systematic and well co-ordinated training programme for all the staff and their confidence is increasing as they use the facilities. Consequently, there is now some very good expertise within the school. Good links are made with other subjects such as English, mathematics, science, geography, history and design technology.
102. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has a thorough knowledge of the ICT curriculum and has the necessary expertise to lead and co-ordinate staff training. The last inspection was critical of ICT and the standards achieved by the school. Since then the co-ordinator and staff have improved standards well and ICT is now becoming a good feature of the school's curriculum. An effective scheme of work is in place to aid planning. The recording of pupils' work and test results on computer files is now well established and this forms the basis for assessing skills and progress. Resources are good and improving as the governors and staff assess the impact of the use of laptop computers across the school.

MUSIC

103. The school has a highly skilled and very well qualified part-time teacher of music who is also the music co-ordinator. She is responsible for teaching music across the school so that all classes have a structured music lesson each week. It was possible to observe a small number of such music lessons during the period of the inspection. These lessons and an examination of music planning and an assessment of the quality of singing and music playing during assemblies and other occasions, indicate that the pupils make good progress in their music skills and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language also make good progress. The subject has improved well since the last inspection and continues to be a strong feature of the school's work. However, to expand musical expertise across the school so that all the teachers have confidence in teaching their own class, the school needs to provide more opportunities for class teachers to work alongside the music co-ordinator during some of the lessons she organises. This would further enhance music provision as well as providing a cost effective staff training programme to improve general music teaching further across the school.
104. By the end of Year 2, the pupils can produce their own simple compositions based on a theme using untuned and tuned percussion instruments. The pupils recognise symbols representing quiet and loud sounds and can keep time using simple notation when playing in small groups. The pupils sing with enthusiasm and are able to keep time when singing in two or three parts. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above those expected.
105. The pupils in Year 5, during an excellent music lesson, combined melodic and rhythmic ostinato using a range of tuned and untuned instruments. They have developed confidence in playing and composing using an underlying rhythmic pattern in their music playing and are able to follow the teacher, keeping time and rhythm. Very good use is made of recording equipment to assess and refine their music. The pupils, in groups or small ensembles, read basic musical notation from "La Volta" and produce very good quality melodies which are repeated to develop an understanding of the use of ostinato. Opportunities will be given at a later date for pupils to refine and develop this further in future lessons. The pupils also take turns leading their group so that the pupils learn to follow the 'composer' to keep time. The teacher's personal enthusiasm for music playing and her enthusiasm is having a positive effect on the pupils who clearly enjoy their music lessons.
106. Imaginative compositional work in Year 6 has been created and this has been recorded on tape as an assessment tool. The pupils are currently working on Gustav Holst's 'The Planets' as the stimulus for their compositions. The quality of work is of a high standard and discussions with the pupils show that they are enthusiastic about this particular project. Pupils take pride in the music they have produced and are keen to perform these. Music is used to good effect to support other school activities and some talented pupils play a musical instrument, although they receive tuition which is organised by their parents and not the school.
107. The quality of teaching in music throughout the school is very good. However, this is largely dependent on the efforts of the specialist teacher. Opportunities are being missed to develop class teachers' music skills so they are better able to teach music to their class. The music teacher provides the pupils with the opportunity to respond to both elements of the music curriculum, listening and appraising and composing and performing with very good opportunities for the pupils to listen to and appraise the music of accepted great classical composers. Very good opportunities are given for the pupils to consider music from other

cultures and traditions. The pupils meet as a whole school in order to engage in singing practice. The pupils sing in a tuneful manner and with enthusiasm.

108. Currently the school does not offer specialist instrumental tuition outside lesson times. The subject is used to good effect in other subjects and areas of school life. The subject is very well led by the part-time music teacher who has been influential in the raising of standards in music in the school. There are good procedures in place to assess music standards across the school. Resources are satisfactory but more recording equipment would enhance provision further. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development and the overall ethos of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. The pupils make good progress in their skills in physical education and achieve standards above those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Standards in the subject are similar to those found in the last inspection. Whilst it was not possible to observe all elements of the physical education curriculum within the period of inspection, teachers' good planning for the subject indicates that pupils are given the opportunity to make good progress, and to work towards developing all the skills and knowledge required in the subject. In Year 2, the pupils were seen to be making very good progress in a dance lesson. The pupils improvised movements to recorded music on the topic of "Toys". They were able to keep good time and use a range of body shapes and movements focusing on 'fast' and 'slow' sequences. The lesson was very well planned, with the teacher enabling the pupils to assess each other's performance. The pupils clearly enjoyed appraising their dances with one pupil remarking, " I think her steps were pretty and that was the best for me".
110. The pupils in Year 4 displayed good gymnastics skills as they improved their performance by using different methods of travelling and linking a sequence together with balances. They were given the opportunity to extend and evaluate their performance further so that assessment is a good feature of physical education lessons. In a very effective Year 6 games lesson, the pupils improved and refined their netball skills. Good attention to detail helped the pupils improve their passing and receiving skills. Year 6 pupils in a gymnastics lesson demonstrated a very good understanding and competence in performing symmetric and asymmetric balance sequences. The teacher maintained a brisk and challenging pace to extend the pupils range of movement and to refine their sequences when performing in front of other in the class. As in all other lessons, the pupils displayed an effective understanding of the importance of physical activity in a healthy life-style.
111. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Lessons are well planned, organised and resourced, with teachers sharing lesson objectives with the pupils. Teachers focus on health and safety issues and provide appropriate warm-up and warm-down activities at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers give good instructions of the skills to be learned, and provide opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate good practice. Praise is well used to promote the pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. The final part of lessons is used in an effective manner to review, to share and to celebrate by showing what has been learned in the lesson. There are good, systematic arrangements in place to assess and record how well the pupils are doing.
112. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator ensures that teachers' plans are monitored for consistency and progression. There is a policy for the subject and a useful scheme of

work which guides teachers in their planning. Resources for the subject are good but in some games lessons the balls are not always pumped up or in good condition. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including football, hockey, basketball and athletics. However, there is a limited range of opportunities for the pupils to take part in inter-school competitions.