

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's RCVA Primary School
Lowestoft

LEA area : Suffolk

Unique Reference Number : 124780

OFSTED Inspection Number : 187746

Headteacher : Miss B Edwards

Reporting inspector : Mr M J Ingham
OFSTED Inspector Number : 6636

Dates of inspection : 1-4 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707818

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

Type of control : Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils : 4 to 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Kirkley Cliff Road
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Appropriate authority : The governing body
Address as above

Name of chair of governors : Mrs Janet Brooks

Date of previous inspection : 22-25 April, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M J Ingham, Registered Inspector	Science Design and technology Art Music	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school Under fives
Ms M A Gledhill, Lay Inspector		Attendance Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Mrs S Ditchburn	Mathematics History Geography	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Special educational needs Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Miss J Crook	English Information technology Physical education	The curriculum and assessment Equal opportunities

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average and in science they are above average
- Teaching is mainly good and this good teaching occurs throughout the school. There are particular strengths in the consistently good teaching in Reception and in mathematics. There is very good teaching in Year 1 and in the teaching of Literacy throughout the school
- Children make very good progress in English and mainly good progress in mathematics and science. Very good progress is made in history at Key Stage 2
- The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher together provide good pastoral and educational leadership, and they are well supported by staff and governors
- Children's behaviour is mostly very good and their attitudes to learning are good. These combine to have a positive impact on their learning
- Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, as are relationships in the school
- Good provision is made for children with special educational needs.
- Children's welfare and guidance and the school's partnership with parents are very good. Attendance is very good
- Significant improvements in teaching and children's progress have been made since the last inspection, and the school is now in a good position to move forward
- Overall the school gives good value for money.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment and progress are unsatisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT) in both key stages
- II. Progress in art beyond Year 1, and in history across Key Stage 2, is unsatisfactory.
- III. The monitoring and support of teaching by subject leaders is not helping to eradicate unsatisfactory teaching where it occurs

The school has many strengths and a few weaknesses. These weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well but will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

In relation to the key issues for action identified in the last inspection:

- IV. Progress throughout the school in music, design and technology and geography is now satisfactory. Good progress is made in physical education (PE) at Key Stage 2.
- V. Investigative skills in science are often good and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is helping to improve children's mental skills.
- VI. Significant improvement in the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- VII. More consistency in curriculum planning, though there are still minor weaknesses.
- VIII. Improved monitoring by the headteacher and by subject leaders in English and mathematics but insufficiently systematic or focused beyond this. A good system for appraisal has been developed.

Overall, good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school is in a strong position to make further improvement.

• **Standards in subjects**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
English	A	A	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> <i>well below average</i>
Mathematics	A	A	
Science	A	A	

- IX. Standards in English and mathematics are well above average at the end of both key stages and in science they are above average.
- X. Children who are under five are making good progress and are well on track to reach or exceed the standards expected by the time they are 5 years old.
- XI. Very good progress is made in history at Key Stage 1. Good progress is made in geography in Key Stage 1 and in PE in Key Stage 2.
- XII. In ICT attainment is below that expected and progress is unsatisfactory. Progress in art beyond Year 1 and in history in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Very good	Very good	Very good
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science		Good	Satisfactory
Information technology		*	*
Religious education			
Other subjects	Good	Good	Satisfactory

* Insufficient evidence of teaching in this subject.

Teaching is good overall and this occurs throughout the school. More than 9 out of 10 sessions are satisfactory or better and over 6 out of 10 are good or very good. Very good and outstanding teaching occurs in over a quarter of lessons. Strengths are in the consistently good teaching in Reception, the very good teaching in Year 1 and in Literacy throughout the school. There is consistently good teaching in mathematics. Less than 1 in 10 sessions is unsatisfactory and occur where staff have an insecure grasp of the subject they are teaching.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	The children's behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly very good and has a positive impact.
Attendance	Very good. The school acts to deter unnecessary absence.
Ethos*	Relationships are very good. Children show a strong commitment to their work.
Leadership management and	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good pastoral and educational leadership well supported by staff and governors.
Curriculum	Sound overall. Its breadth and organisation are satisfactory but there are some imbalances.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision is made for all aspects of children's personal development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sound overall. The good number of staff work very well as a team. Resources are sufficient, apart from in ICT, and the library is small.
Value for money	Good value for money.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>XIII. the way the school is approachable and responds immediately to any concern</p> <p>XIV. extremely pleased with standards and progress;</p> <p>XV. the caring, family atmosphere where everyone helps each other</p> <p>XVI. the very good relationships;</p> <p>XVII. the values promoted by the school which parents strongly support</p> <p>XVIII. the high expectations of behaviour;</p> <p>XIX. good communications and the amount of homework provided</p>	

The inspection findings support the very positive comments expressed by parents at the meeting and in the questionnaires returned.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to make further improvement the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- i) Raise attainment and progress in information and communications technology by: (paragraph numbers 146 and 147 refer)
 - improving staff expertise and confidence in teaching the subject; and
 - increasing the level and quality of resources available, including time for teaching.
- i) Improve progress in art and also in history in Key Stage 2 by: (paragraph numbers 127 and 140 refer)
 - raising staff expertise in teaching the art curriculum; and
 - ensuring sufficient time is available for teaching history in Key Stage 2.
- i) Strengthen the impact of the support and monitoring roles of subject leaders by ensuring that they: (paragraph numbers 32, 53, 106, 117, 123, 127, 133, 140 and 158 refer)
 - raise staff expertise and confidence in the teaching of ICT and art as well as in those subjects where insecure knowledge contributes to unsatisfactory teaching;
 - monitor planning and teaching in their subject to ensure coverage and appropriate challenge; and
 - look at children's work in their subject to check on progress.

INTRODUCTION

· **Characteristics of the School**

1.St Mary's is an average sized primary school with 195 children on roll. The school has seven classes, one for each year group in the school. The average class size is 28 which is slightly above average for infant and junior schools nationally. There are 27 children currently in the Reception class. These children entered the school full-time in September and are therefore under five. This is in accordance with the school's admission policy.

2.The school serves a widespread catchment area based upon the parish. Many of the children travel to and from school by bus. The proportion of children eligible to a free school meal is declining and is broadly in line with the national average. There is a low proportion of children for whom English is an additional language (1%) or who are drawn from ethnic minority groupings.

3.Recent baseline assessments (over 3 years) indicate slightly below average attainment on entry to the Reception class. The number of children in the school with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.

4.The school's mission statement, aims and objectives set out the school's intention to prepare children spiritually, emotionally and academically for their future lives.

Current priorities include:

- introducing the National Numeracy Strategy;
- raising teachers' confidence and competence in ICT;
- promoting children's spiritual development; and
- using assessment data to help improve planning and raise standards.

1.Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	14	13
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	29	29	28
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (87)	97 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	29	29	29
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (90)	100 (97)	100 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	8	18	26

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	7	7	8
	Girls	17	16	16
	Total	24	23	24
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	92 (92)	88 (92)	92 (92)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	88 (92)	88 (83)	88 (92)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	27
Satisfactory or better	91
Less than satisfactory	9

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

5. Under fives

2. Overall, children make good progress in Reception and the majority of children are already well on track to meet or to exceed the objectives set out for this early stage in their education. This success is due to consistently good teaching, a well-structured curriculum, accurate assessment and good relationships with parents and the rest of the school. There is little variation in progress for boys and girls.

3. Children make good progress in their personal and social skills. The majority of children are already confident in the class, listen and concentrate very well, share space and resources and take their turn. In language and literacy and in their mathematical development, progress is good. Their ability to listen in a large group is very good and they are acquiring a good knowledge of stories, vocabulary and the relationship between sounds and letters. Many children already have a grasp of shape, positional language and numbers up to ten. In other areas, particularly in their growing awareness of their local environment, in their manipulative skills and general movement, progress is good.

Key Stage 1 (the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT.)

4. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen dramatically since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is well above the national average in reading and writing. National standardised test results confirm that standards have been rising steadily for three years. In 1999 all seven year-olds reached the required level with two thirds achieving level 3 in reading and one third in writing. Progress in English is very good. In the present Year 2 children are developing very good speaking and listening skills. They read confidently, many with understanding and expression, and are writing simple sentences with the majority confident to spell words using their knowledge of phonics, which is good.

5. Attainment in mathematics over the past three years has been well above average. The percentage of children achieving a level 3 rising to well over a third, which far exceeds schools nationally and those which are similar. The present Year 2 show good knowledge of shape and space, a grasp of fractions and different strategies for mental calculation. They are making good progress in these areas and also in learning number facts and in their practical work.

6. In science attainment and progress are good overall. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 have shown a well above average proportion of children attaining level 2. Last year an above average number of children were assessed at level 3 for the first time. In Year 2 children are developing a good scientific knowledge and level of skill in investigation and recording. There is no difference in attainment between boys and girls. Progress in Year 1 is very good and satisfactory in Year 2 where, in acquiring subject knowledge, progress is good for average and below average children.

7. Children's attainment and progress in ICT is unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen since the last inspection and children in Year 2 have only limited competence in word-processing, typing in text and editing, though they cannot alter font size. They have little computer experience beyond word-processing and cannot set up their own programs.

Key Stage 1 (other subjects)

8. Progress in history is very good and in geography it is good. Satisfactory progress is made in all other subjects apart from in art where progress is unsatisfactory beyond Year 1. The very good progress in history is in acquiring understanding of different times (rationing during the Second World

War and holidays in the past). Good progress is also made in comparing similarities and differences and in looking at a range of evidence. In geography children progress well in knowledge about physical features of, for example, islands, and also in acquiring and using specialist vocabulary to discuss climate, food, clothing and employment.

Key Stage Two (the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT)

9. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average in all aspects. Progress overall is very good. In speaking and listening children express themselves clearly, considering the views of others when responding and justifying their opinions clearly. Very good progress is made in this area throughout the key stage. In reading children progressively tackle a wider variety of texts successfully. They can use an index, glossary and contents page by Year 4 and by Year 6 nearly all children read fluently and accurately with good understanding. Their writing continues to improve from Key Stage 1. By the end of the key stage children are able to write complex stories and can respond thoughtfully to text, for example writing a literary criticism of a poem.

10. Attainment in mathematics as seen in national test results has been well above average for the past three years. Boys have been particularly successful in these tests. Good levels of skill have been acquired in measuring angle, in their knowledge of the four rules of number, as well as in their confidence in solving mental calculations. The progress being made across the key stage is good in computation, in children's immediate recall of number facts and in manipulating numbers when solving problems.

11. In science attainment is above average overall. Progress has been good over time, though currently there is some unevenness due to variation in the teaching. The proportion of children gaining an average level in the end of key stage tests was well above average last year. This was also the case for children achieving an above average result. Children demonstrate good scientific knowledge, observe accurately and explain and justify their predictions clearly based on their knowledge. They do not devise their own experiments and their recording is limited. Progress in gaining scientific knowledge and in carrying out investigations is good. Progress in recording their work is uneven with an insufficient amount done in the latter part of the key stage.

12. Children's attainment and progress in ICT is unsatisfactory. Though children can word-process at a basic level, they are not able to cut and paste text or to edit their work. Though they can access information from a range of programs and also construct graphs, they are not sufficiently competent at interrogating the information or questioning its reliability.

Key Stage 2 (other subjects)

13. Progress is satisfactory in music, geography and design and technology; in PE it is good. Progress in these subjects was criticised in the last inspection and therefore current progress signifies a marked improvement. Progress in history and art is unsatisfactory. In history children have very little recall of the periods of history they have covered. The time allotted to history is limited due to the inclusion of non-statutory subjects in the latter part of the key stage. There is at best uneven progress in art but overall this gives rise to attainment which is below expectation by the end of the key stage.

14. The very good literacy skills and the developing numeracy skills for children in both key stages provide a good basis, particularly where these skills are required in other subjects.

15. Children with special educational needs are achieving either at, or just below, nationally expected levels. Progress is good particularly in English and in subjects where reading and writing is a component. Children make very good progress in their reading.

19. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

16. The children's behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly very good and has a positive

impact on their learning. Incidences of low level disruption are usually dealt with effectively. The children play with each other very well indeed at lunchtimes and the older children enjoy looking after the younger ones.

17. Before and after school the children are well behaved. After school the teachers wait with their classes in the playground until it is time to board the bus and they expect the children to wait quietly and sensibly. Each child has a designated seat on the bus and any behavioural difficulties arising, which are few, are dealt with effectively by the headteacher. At playtime and lunchtime the children play well together. The children in Year 6 have the privilege of using the courtyard as well as enjoying the responsibility of looking after the Reception children. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. The children are very welcoming to visitors, enjoy making conversation and are keen to ask and answer questions. The children behave sensibly at all times and enjoy the lunchtime responsibilities of wiping and stacking the chairs. The children behave well and move around the school sensibly.

18. Children show a strong commitment to their work. In almost all lessons the children respond positively to their teachers and to the work set for them. In the school as a whole the response from the children is generally good and often very good. The children's response was unsatisfactory in only three of the fifty-five lessons observed. However even in some good lessons there were episodes of low level disruption which affected the other children's learning.

19. There are very positive relationships between the children and the teachers. The children listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They work together capably and concentrate well. They answer questions eagerly and are keen to ask their own. They settle quickly to their work and follow instructions carefully. When children respond best, they actively join in with discussions and show initiative, independence and a willingness to take responsibility. The standards of independence in the Reception class are good and this provides a valuable beginning for the children as they move through the school. The children take pride in their work and the quality of presentation is good.

20. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour in lessons and the children react positively. It is usual for most children to work quietly in lessons. In most lessons the teachers reinforce their expectations and praise those children who behave appropriately. However there are episodes of low level disruption. This is generally addressed appropriately and with consistency. However on occasion this low level disruption is not checked by the class teacher, resulting in a drop in pace of the lesson and a negative impact on the quality of learning. The low-level disruption is sometimes the result of an over long introduction to a lesson or the task set not providing enough challenge for the children.

21. There has been a significant improvement in the children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development since the last inspection, when it was a key issue for action.

Attendance

22. Attendance is very good with very little unauthorised absence. There are clear guidelines on the school's expectations on attendance and parents co-operate well with the school on this. Procedures are in place to monitor and discourage any lateness. There is generally a prompt start to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

26. Teaching

23. Throughout the school teaching is good overall. More than 9 out of 10 sessions seen were satisfactory or better, with over 6 out of 10 being good or very good. Very good and sometimes outstanding teaching was seen in over a quarter of all sessions observed. Particular strengths are in the consistently good teaching for children who are under five, the very good teaching in Year 1 and in the teaching of literacy throughout the school. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall, with half of the sessions seen being good, with some very good and outstanding teaching in

Year 6. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in both key stages and was not particular to year groups or to subjects. Less than 1 in 10 sessions were deemed unsatisfactory. The main reason for this is that teachers have insufficient knowledge and confidence in the subject they are teaching. The teaching of children with special educational needs is good in literacy and in other subjects.

24.The impact of teaching has a particularly positive impact on the progress of children who are under five, the very good progress for children in Year 1 and in developing children's literacy skills throughout the school. Satisfactory and good teaching in mathematics and science ensures mainly good progress in these key areas. Insufficient direct teaching of ICT was observed. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies, particularly the clarity of objectives within the planning and the structure of lessons, is having a positive impact on teaching.

25.There has been significant improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection, where 15% of lessons were deemed unsatisfactory and only a small proportion (under 4%) were judged to be very good or outstanding. This significant improvement is a strength.

26.The mainly satisfactory and good teaching in the school is characterised by the following features. Staff have sufficient and often good knowledge of the content of the subjects and expectations appropriate to the children they are teaching. Planning gives sufficient detail, identifying objectives for the learning and also sequencing and timing the teaching, for example in literacy and numeracy sessions. When working with the whole class explanations, instructions and demonstrations are well set out. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to contribute through discussion, prediction (in science) and also in reflecting and evaluating at the end of the session where the key objectives of the lesson are returned to. In sessions where questioning is used effectively, the degree of difficulty of the questions is gradually increased. Questions are posed both generally, for example when requiring recall of number facts, and in a targeted way when checking for understanding from individuals or extending thinking, for example when children are being asked to explain features of the text in literacy, their methods in numeracy or the experiments they observe in science.

27.In more than a quarter of sessions observed where teaching is very good or outstanding, the following characteristics are present. The very secure grasp of the content to be taught is coupled with a very firm understanding of the children's existing attainment. The purpose of the session is clearly set and previous work referred to in order to set the context. At all points of the session very high expectations are set, for example in Reception where in a mathematics lesson children were expected to watch and listen and also to explain the notion of 'one more than' in front of others. Similarly in Year 6 in a personal, health and social education (PHSE) session on responsibility, where the context for discussion was quickly set and could then include children developing strategies for taking responsibility, as well as expressing their views and grievances. Very high expectations of children's response in terms of the behaviour, their involvement in discussion and the depth and accuracy in their thinking are evident, irrespective of the age group taught. The teachers are challenging but also sensitive to any mistakes being made, being able to include them to strengthen the understanding for the group. Within these very good sessions there is generally a balance between developing children's thinking skills (involving observation, discussion, prediction and evaluation) and also in developing practical skills, including written recording. The organisation of children into groups provides very good opportunities for very focused teaching, for example in Year 1 science where two groups were organised so that the teacher could closely monitor and develop children's skills in investigating light and dark. The demand for thoughtful responses, accuracy in their recording and independence contributes significantly to why there is no low-level disruption in these sessions. Adopting an energetic style and maintaining a brisk pace by occasionally switching the direction of the questioning or task also contributes. These highly motivated sessions are also punctuated occasionally by the teacher drawing the whole group's attention to the main focus of the session and involving children in taking a lead in this. These key features of very good teaching are particularly evident in the teaching of literacy throughout the school where good use of discussion, modelling of texts and very precise planning ensures good progress is made.

28.Where there are unsatisfactory features in lessons, and in particular where the weaknesses

outweigh the strengths, teachers possess insufficient subject knowledge. This leads to introductions where explanations and instructions are unclear and include some inaccuracies. Questions are not stepped sufficiently, with the use of too many closed questions which narrow children's responses. In some sessions the work is pitched at too high a level, partly due to the lack of subject knowledge, but also of the children's attainment within that subject. At points during discussions there is a lack of confidence in how to develop children's ideas. This leads to too much teacher talk and as a result children become restless because they aren't being sufficiently challenged or are too inactive. In Years 2, 3 and 4 there are instances of low level disruption by boys. Where the planning does not help to focus the teaching sufficiently and where the teacher works with individuals rather than with groups, this leads to inefficient use of the teacher's time. These areas of unsatisfactory teaching need to be addressed. Subject leaders should provide better support where teachers have gaps in their subject knowledge and therefore lack confidence and direction in their teaching.

The curriculum and assessment

29.The curriculum is broad and covers all areas of learning for the under fives, all subjects of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2, religious education and French. The organisation of the curriculum is generally satisfactory, but it is not balanced. Information technology across the school and history and geography in Key Stage 2 are not given sufficient time due to the constraints placed on the timetable by the teaching of the non-statutory subject of French and the high proportion of time devoted to religious education (RE). The English curriculum is, however, a strength of the school. Time is used effectively across the week to deliver the literacy hour as well as providing opportunities for writing workshops and extended writing sessions. Children also benefit from the way swimming is organised within the curriculum, where Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 swim for one term each year.

30.Health and sex education are taught through the science curriculum. A specific sex education programme is taught in Years 5 and 6. A programme for personal and social education has been set up this term based on good guidelines produced by the Local Education Authority. Specific sessions in the timetable have been identified to deliver this. The National Literacy Strategy was very successfully introduced last year and the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented this term. Children's literacy skills are being promoted well across the rest of the curriculum, with many opportunities to extend their vocabulary and reading for information.

31.All children have equal access to curriculum. All special educational needs children are fully integrated into the classes. Of the twenty-nine children on the special educational needs register there are seventeen children who are at Stage 1 of Records of Support. The needs of these children are being addressed through differentiated tasks or additional support provided by teaching and non-teaching staff. The teachers are well aware of the children's needs and they assess their progress regularly. Those children who have behavioural difficulties do not have detailed behaviour management plans with specific targets.

32.The curriculum is enhanced by a number of visits linked to the curriculum. For example, Year 6 make a residential trip to Sherwood Forest as part of their geography work and Year 5 visit Kentwell Hall as part of their history work on Tudors. Many of the children have the opportunity to take part in competitive sport. A parent helper trains a Year 5/6 football team who have had the opportunity to compete in and win tournaments. In previous years, a netball team has been trained and offered similar opportunities. During the summer term the older children have the chance to take part in tennis coaching and to swim competitively in galas. Year 4 have entered tournaments in "Kwik Cricket", skittle ball, athletics, football and "Unihoc". There are no other specific extra-curricular clubs at present, but a parent helper is in the process of establishing a computer club.

33.Curriculum planning is satisfactory overall with individual subject strengths and weaknesses. There are policy statements for each subject. Long-term plans are in place for all subjects except information technology (IT) and geography. These ensure coverage of the Desirable Learning Outcomes for under fives and of the National Curriculum, but some of the plans for the foundation subjects are not sufficiently detailed to guarantee that progress will occur from one year to the next. For example, the

PE co-ordinator is working on this at the moment, to ensure progression in gymnastics. Medium-term plans are in place for each subject and are generally written by class teachers. These plans detail the skills and knowledge to be taught in each year group along with suggested teaching activities. In history, geography and IT these plans consist of the published guidance written by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), which is in the process of being modified for the school's use. Teachers' daily plans are good and usually outline clear learning objectives.

34.The school's assessment policy provides guidance for teachers on what is required of them. The marking policy is useful and generally has a positive effect on the standards achieved. Some teachers' marking is excellent and in these cases it encourages individual children and sets them specific, challenging targets towards which to aim. Teachers generally assess children effectively during lessons. They check that work is appropriate, question children to determine their understanding of key concepts, use praise regularly and give advice on how individuals can improve their work. They keep good records and set regular assessment tasks to check progress. They use information from tests to group children and set targets. However, much of this information is not passed formally to the new teacher at the end of the year, and so is not used effectively to plan the children's next stage of learning. Very little moderation of work is carried out by subject leaders or groups of staff in order to set standards and confirm judgements.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

35.Overall, the school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its children.

36.The very strong parish links underpin the spiritual provision within the school. Through the regular routine of prayer, which takes place, for example, at the start and end of school and before lunchtimes, time is well used to provide children with the opportunity to stop and reflect on the events of the day and what is taking place around them. Opportunities are also created, often at assemblies and during lessons, for children to think and reflect on their own lives and beliefs as well as those of others. For example, during a drama lesson the meaning of Guy Fawkes was explored in a way that allowed children to reflect on the deeper meaning of an annual event.

37.The school's behaviour and discipline policy is carefully written separately for both parents and children to underline the importance the school places on self-regulation and knowing right and wrong. The youngest children are carefully guided and supported to become increasingly aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Older children are encouraged to think about and make moral decisions on how they behave towards, not only their peers, but also towards those younger than them. Staff provide good role models in and around the school and often use, for example, well-chosen bible stories and real-life examples to emphasise the importance of moral values.

38.Very good relationships exist in the school. The message that everyone is valued, is used very well as a framework for promoting social development. Many well-planned opportunities are provided for all children to take responsibility within the school community. This is especially so with the oldest children where all Year 6 are prefects and have their own assigned jobs that have been negotiated. These jobs include not only areas like tidying up during lunchtimes but also involve sitting at table with the youngest children in order to help them.

39.Culturally the school provides many opportunities for children to learn about and appreciate the traditions of this country. The opportunities provided by the close proximity of the Seagull Theatre are used well. Also visits to arts centres like the Sainsbury Centre are used to support lessons such as art where children used ideas gained to design African Masks. Through music the under fives explored, and talked about, the sounds of Indian drums. The school recognises the importance of providing multicultural opportunities for the children. Through its Home-School Communication document, it urges parents to help their children develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and traditions.

Overall the children experience a rich and varied cultural diet.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

40.The very strong sense of community and the many opportunities provided for parental involvement with the school result in staff getting to know all the children well and many from a pre-school age. Consequently children are very well supported and any problems that arise are dealt with quickly. The school has recently reviewed its curricular provision for personal, social and health education and introduced a new policy, together with additional teaching time for this subject area. A good start has been made this term across the school to deliver the programme cohesively. This needs to be carried through and monitored to ensure that what has been begun is built upon.

41.There are many formal and informal structures which work well to monitor and feedback the day-to-day academic progress children make. Children with specific learning needs are well supported and outside agencies are used appropriately as required. There is a very thorough, well thought out induction programme for all parents and children when starting school. However, arrangements for children who go on to the main feeder high school are still evolving. In particular there is, at present, little curricular liaison to help the smooth transition to the high school.

42.Very effective but non-intrusive procedures exist to promote discipline and good behaviour. Opportunities are continuously used to reinforce the importance of good behaviour and how it can positively impact on everyone within the school community. Any bullying is viewed seriously and acted upon immediately.

43.Health and safety inspections are carried out regularly with feedback to the governing body. There is a named person for child protection and the procedures are understood by all staff.

Partnership with parents and the community

44.The school works hard to keep parents very well informed about what takes place at the school. Through frequent newsletters and other written communication, as well as events like curriculum evenings, parents agree that they not only know about the many events taking place at the school, but also about what their children are learning. Staff are approachable and make themselves available to parents both through formal consultation evenings and also informally as the need arises in order to discuss children's work and progress. The pattern of the formal meetings varies to take into account the individual needs of different year groups, as well as particular groups of children, for example those with special educational needs.

45.Parents are made to feel very much a part of the school community and many events are held to enable them to come into the school and to also involve their pre-school children. There is an active Parents' Association which last year raised a very considerable sum of money which went towards resources for literacy and numeracy. Parents are also welcomed into the school and classrooms to help in many ways. Reading diaries and homework diaries are used well, not only to enable home/school communication, but also to let parents know the quantity and type of homework that has been set and how they can best help their children.

46.Links with the community, especially the immediate parish community, are very strong. Opportunities within the wider community and also through local businesses are also used well when appropriate to enhance what takes place within the classroom. For example, Year 4 prepared and took part in an exhibition for Science Week that was held at Sizewell. The school is also part of the Family Literacy Scheme and recently also linked up with the 'Caring for Education' project which results in seven volunteers from a local company coming in regularly to hear children read.

47.Overall, the strong supportive partnership which the school enjoys with parents, the parish and the local community impacts positively on children's learning.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

48.The headteacher and deputy headteacher together provide good pastoral and educational leadership. There is a clarity and purpose in the work that they do and they complement each other well. Governors are well aware of the strengths of the school but are not complacent. As a result of being well informed, and because they are consulted about future developments, they have clear views about where the school is heading. They are keen to support the school even more effectively and are led well. The school has already demonstrated significant improvement in important areas since the last inspection and is now in a strong position to make further improvement. The headteacher has taken responsibility to monitor and support teaching throughout the school. This has been successful and she has taken a definite lead in this area. Staff and governors are given sufficient opportunity to contribute to deciding priorities, though the headteacher is able to make decisions. The school has recognised that there is scope for the deputy headteacher to take on increased responsibility. Through specific training, for example in managing the budget and appraisal, this is now beginning to happen.

49.The headteacher takes responsibility for keeping a check on planning, looking at children's work and their performance in tests and also in observing directly in classrooms. This strong lead given by the headteacher has had a positive impact through the support to individual teachers and in identifying areas for individual improvement. The appraisal arrangements in the school are good and support this work well. Although subject leaders take an effective lead in planning and resources, their work in supporting classroom practice in their subject and also in monitoring the actual work of children and their test results is under-developed. The school has sensibly focused much of its monitoring recently on the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Identifying ICT as a priority in the School Development Plan reflects accurate self-evaluation.

50.Governors possess a wide range of experience and a good level of expertise which is used well to support the school. There are frequent visits to the school by individual governors who gather a range of information which they are able to share productively with the full governing body. In order to ensure that it has sufficient time to discuss issues facing the school, the governing body has sensibly decided to have more than one full governing body meeting per term. Governors are led well in their work and the chairman is well aware of the challenges which face the school, the progress the school has made and the direction the school needs to follow.

51.The school's aims and values are good. The mission statement helps to give a strong lead, is well known and has a positive impact. Parents are very supportive and recognise that the influence of the school extends beyond the working day. Staff form a good team and appreciate the support they receive from each other. There is a genuine humility and generosity which combine to ensure that relationships are very good and that a very positive and secure environment is provided for the children.

52.The school's development planning process involves sufficient levels of consultation with staff and governors. The priorities are clearly set out and match the needs of the school well. Success criteria are appropriate and, overall, the plan is a useful document in directing the work of the school. Currently the responsibilities tend to rest with too few people and the plan does not help to develop the role of the subject leader sufficiently. The emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT is appropriate, though the development of ICT needs to be accelerated.

53.Children are involved in everything the school has to offer and staff have a good awareness of children with different social and cultural backgrounds. The provision for special educational needs is effectively managed and is good overall. Broadening the scope and impact of the work of subject leaders is an area that needs to be addressed by the school.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

54.The staff are hard working and committed to the school and supportive of each other's work. All staff have additional responsibility for subjects of the curriculum, except for the newly-qualified teacher for whom the school has made suitable arrangements. Other staff new to the school are provided with necessary documentation and resources and given additional support from the headteacher. All teachers have relevant job descriptions which are updated annually.

55.There is an enthusiastic and caring team of support staff made up of classroom assistants, administrative staff, caretaker, mid-day supervisors and kitchen staff. They have a wealth of expertise and effectively complement the work of the teachers. The mid-day supervisors are very caring and have a good understanding of the expectations of the school. They have high expectations of behaviour and know the children well. There is an impressive number of mid-day staff which ensures the children are well cared for, especially when an injured or sick child is escorted to the office by an adult.

56.Those staff who work in the classrooms are involved in all aspects of teaching and learning from planning to assessment. The classroom assistants are well briefed by teaching staff and demonstrate good use of initiative. They interact and manage groups of children very well and their effective questioning has a positive impact on the children's learning and development of independence. The classroom assistants generally support those children who require additional help in literacy, although some support is given in numeracy lessons. The classroom assistant who provides additional literacy support (ALS) in Year 3 is particularly effective. The support provided by classroom assistants in the Reception class is also effective in encouraging the children to gain independence and in developing their personal and social skills. Good communication systems and positive relationships ensure all members of the team feel valued.

57.A good system of appraisal exists within the school. The staff value this process and consider it a positive opportunity for professional development. They are committed to this being carried out on an annual basis, which is beyond statutory requirements. This process addresses the needs of staff linked to national initiatives such as numeracy, individual teaching needs and specific subject expertise development. Further training is organised by the headteacher as is appropriate. The literacy training, coupled with the teachers' existing expertise in English, has had a positive impact on the standards; and the numeracy training, together with a trial run of the numeracy strategy last year, is also improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. However the training relating to information technology identified in the School Development Plan has yet to be organised and this is having a detrimental effect on the provision for this subject. The use of specialist teaching is having a positive impact on standards within the school but is limiting the professional development of the class teacher as a whole. Some class teachers are gaining immense expertise in one area with other areas of the curriculum being neglected.

58.The school building and grounds are attractive, well maintained and clean. Areas used for storage of resources vary. Some areas are well organised and resources are more easily accessed than in other areas which are untidy and need labelling. Classrooms are light and spacious and have purpose-built storage space for resources. Resources in the classroom are well looked after, and children make good use of them and are expected take responsibility for them.

59.The library is too small for the number of children who need to use it.

The efficiency of the school

60.In the main, the resources the school has available are used efficiently and effectively. The experience and expertise of the staff are made good use of within the class but not always in their roles as subject leaders. Through a well-structured appraisal system there are both shared and individual targets for improved performance. These have some links with the School Development Plan priorities, for example in implementing the numeracy strategy. The School Development Plan is also used

effectively to identify other general areas for improvement, for example raising staff confidence and competence in the use of ICT. Governors' expertise and experience are harnessed well through their involvement in working parties on finance and premises. The school has made very good use of expertise, for example in a recent risk assessment undertaken.

61. Staff expertise in English, design and technology, PE and music is used productively in teaching. Good use is made of the non-contact time available from additional staffing, this helps to support work in monitoring, planning and professional development for individuals. The majority of staff benefit from this additional resource. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the work within classrooms. They are well prepared for this work and give generally good support throughout the school. Support for children with special educational needs generally, and through the ALS, are good examples of this, as are the classroom assistants working with children in Reception. Other adult support, including assisting children in the library and with computers, makes a positive contribution. Administrative, caretaking, kitchen and lunchtime supervisory staff work effectively to ensure that teaching and learning benefits from their combined efforts.

62. The range of learning resources available in the school is generally used well. Though there are minor problems with storage, resources are mainly easy to access, which helps make their use more efficient. It was not possible during the inspection for the library to be used normally, though there was evidence that children were able to retrieve information from non-fiction books. The ICT provision adjoining the library is new and is yet to have significant impact on attainment and progress.

63. The school's accommodation is managed well, though there are some shared areas which need to be better organised. In lessons little time is wasted and only where low-level disruption interrupts the teaching or where activities are given to occupy the children is this not the case. At regular points throughout the year governors are made well aware of the budget position. The headteacher and administrative assistant provide essential information to both the finance working party and to the governing body. Priorities in the School Development Plan are carefully costed and spending patterns, as well as the financial position, are kept under close scrutiny. Subject leaders are also made aware of the budget position for their subject at regular intervals. Presently there is a sensible distribution of finances according to the priorities set out in the development plan. An appropriate proportion of the budget is on reserve and overall there is sufficient flexibility in the budget due to good financial control and careful financial planning.

64. As a result of the high level of good and very good teaching, leading to generally good progress by the children, above average standards in English, mathematics and science and the mainly effective use of teachers' expertise, the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

65.The school admits all the Reception group at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection the 27 children in Reception were under five.

66.The school has used the Local Education Authority (LEA) Baseline Assessment for the past three years; this has shown that the intake on entry into Reception is slightly below average.

67.Planning for the under fives is based securely on the Desirable Learning Outcomes and also the Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1. This helps to ensure that there is sufficient breadth in the curriculum and due emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills alongside their personal, social and emotional development.

68.Overall, children make good progress in Reception and the majority are already well on track to meet or to exceed the objectives set out for this early stage in their education. This success is due to consistently good teaching, a well-structured curriculum, accurate assessment and good relationships with parents and the rest of the school.

72. Personal and social development

69.Children make good progress in their personal and social skills. Most are confident in their responses to staff and to each other. They listen, particularly to their teacher, and concentrate very well, and generally show respect for each other and any adults who work with them, for example when listening to the African visitor who shared her experiences and culture with them.

70.The majority are already able to share space and resources, work independently and also to take their turn to answer questions or when carrying out a task. Many can play together, for example when acting out the story of Goldilocks, though a number still play in a solitary manner. Eagerness to please characterises much of the children's response. They enjoy the challenges set them particularly in early literacy and numeracy skills. There is no fear of asking questions or expressing their feelings and the behaviour is very good indeed. They are developing sensitivity towards others in the group, and perseverance.

71.The quality of children's personal and social development stems from good teaching. The group is very well managed and good opportunities are provided for children to enjoy a range of activity and choice. The demands placed on children to listen and follow the routines and conventions of the Reception class are very well established even at this early stage. High awareness of the group, a sensitive and stimulating use of language and a generally lively and good humoured approach to the teaching builds confidence and security for all the children in the group.

75. Language and literacy

72.The majority of children in the group are well on the way to meet and exceed Desirable Learning Outcomes for language and literacy by the end of Reception. Their ability to listen in a large group to stories, explanations, instructions and questions is very good. They are already acquiring a good range of sounds and are beginning to link sound with symbols. Their vocabulary is developing well and the higher attaining children write clearly with some accurate spellings already in evidence. Pencil control is very good for the majority, their awareness of books is good and most recognise their own name. A characteristic of the group is their confidence to speak, both when responding to adults and when initiating conversations.

73.The teaching of language and literacy skills is very good. Very high expectations of children's listening and in the precision with which they use language are constant features. Good opportunities are used to involve the children in discussion, to target them with questions which help to include them

and challenge them to use language in a variety of ways. The systematic teaching of phonic knowledge is enhanced by the lively approach adopted, for example using a PE session to reinforce the alphabet and hopping in the playground to reinforce the sound 'h'. Children are kept well motivated, even when undertaking difficult tasks.

77. Mathematical development

74. At this early stage children already have a grasp of shape and space and positional language. Most recognise numbers up to 10 and the higher attainers can identify quantities up to 3 without counting. They are also able to count on one more and say what the difference is. The majority has confidence with number and are well on track to reach the numeracy objectives at the end of Reception.

75. In the teaching within this area of learning, language is emphasised very well. Good explanations and questions are used to help children move beyond simply recognising number, for example when helping children to match boys and girls one to one when lining up to illustrate 'one more than'. The balance between practical and recorded work is appropriate and the organisation into two major groups to enable the teacher to focus on the mathematics task is effective. Some unnecessary colouring in of the worksheets detracted from the overall quality of the teaching.

79. Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The majority of children in the Reception class talk about themselves, their families and their environment with sufficient knowledge and understanding. During the inspection their knowledge of the world was extended through contact with a visitor, originally from Nigeria. As a result children had a much greater idea of the similarities and differences in lifestyle, for example that weddings and baptisms do take place in church but that the clothing worn is very different. This experience also developed in children a real understanding that there is a multi-cultural dimension to Lowestoft. Children's use of construction toys is confident. Their knowledge of the changing nature of the seascape, which is in very close proximity to them, their outside environment and the changes which occur because of the weather is also being well established.

77. Very good opportunities are presented to children to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world through not only, for example, visiting speakers but also through the use of very good questioning and the encouragement to observe closely. Children are developing quite sophisticated notions of lives in other countries and the meanings of special events. The teaching of music involved appropriate reference to the festival of Diwali and the use of the Tabla as part of the festival.

81. Physical development

78. Children are making good progress in their ability to handle and control a range of implements and apparatus. In physical education sessions they show confidence and control as well as co-ordination and versatility in their movements. They are developing a good awareness of their body within space, for example when moving themselves and rolling balls in a confined space set out in grids in the main hall. Good dexterity is evident in children's use of construction toys, in cutting, in using paint to fill drawn shapes and in their pencil control for drawing and early writing.

79. Teaching, particularly for PE, shows real adventure in the demands set for the children. They are given good opportunities to explore space and how to work co-operatively. Children are prompted to work hard in improving skills and to identify where progress is being made. These are good features of the teaching.

83. Creative development

80. Children are able to express themselves in a variety of ways. They can create their own movements to music, crouch and extend their movements following instructions. In the large-scale drawings of the African visitor they show they are able to respond with bolder marks when representing

characteristics of the person they met and the costume she was wearing. This adventure in their drawing was untypical and most other drawings were of small scale and less confident. The painting produced by the children is well controlled but again of small scale and often limited in scope. Paint is applied carefully, for example in the matching of colours to leaves which were well executed. In music children listened carefully to different musical sounds, have some knowledge of rhymes and are beginning to develop knowledge about different instruments, for example the use of the Tabla in preparation for an assembly on Diwali.

81. Although there are mainly sufficient opportunities for creativity particularly in the areas of movement and music there is some lack of adventure in the opportunities in drawing and painting. The planned curriculum for this area, however, does include an appropriate range of two- and three-dimensional work.

85. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

English

82. Standards in English have risen dramatically since the last inspection, and the subject is now a strength of the school. By the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, children's attainment is well above the national average in reading and writing. National standardised test results confirm this judgement, and show that standards have been rising steadily over the last three years. In 1999, the school achieved excellent results. All seven year-olds in the school reached the required level in both reading and writing. Two thirds reached the higher level 3 in reading and a third reaching this level in writing. All eleven year-olds reached the required level in reading, and two-thirds of them reached it in writing, with a higher proportion than average reaching the higher level. Standards in speaking and listening are very good across the school.

83. Throughout Key Stage 1, all children make very good progress. Overall, most children in Key Stage 2 make very good progress, with the best rate of progress being made in Years 3 and 6. Children with special educational needs make very good progress in reading and good progress in writing. Children across the school make very good progress in speaking and listening.

87. Speaking and Listening

84. Teaching strategies within the literacy hour and opportunities provided in other subject areas have helped the children develop very good speaking and listening skills. In Key Stage 1, they listen well during whole-class sessions and respond appropriately to the ideas of other children and questioning by the teacher. They are challenged to use technical terms such as rhyme, modifying 'e' and alliteration, and do this confidently. In Year 1, while discussing the book "Owl Babies", the children talked enthusiastically about the work of the author and illustrator, explained the meaning of words in the text and suggested their own alliterative animals, such as "orange ostrich" and "elegant elephant".

85. In Key Stage 2, children become competent in communicating their ideas clearly and are able to consider the views of others when responding. They express their opinions confidently and give reasons for them. In Year 4 children can explain the difference between fact and opinion and are able to suggest ways of writing a newspaper article to hold the attention of the readers. In Year 5, children are able to express their preference for different poems and to explain their choice. Children in Year 6 are encouraged to ask questions as well as answer them, and are developing the skills to challenge the views and opinions of others.

89. Reading

86. By the end of Key Stage 1, nearly all children can read simple texts with understanding. Most children can confidently read a range of texts independently and with good expression. The structured reading scheme and associated books, along with the enlarged texts used during the literacy hour are used very effectively to teach children to read. As a result, most children confidently tackle new text

and are particularly good at using phonics skills to sound out unfamiliar words. Most children read confidently and with enthusiasm. By Year 2, some children are able to name favourite authors and can explain the difference between fact and fiction books. Parents support children's progress by hearing them read on a regular basis at home.

87. In Year 3, children continue to read with confidence and enthusiasm, and tackle a wider variety of texts. By Year 4, they can use an index, glossary and contents page and know how to find books in the library. By the end of Key Stage 2, nearly all children can read fluently and accurately, with a good understanding of themes, events and characters. They have clear preferences in their choice of reading material, and are given the opportunity to pursue these. Many children can use significant pieces of the text to discuss particular issues and are able to retrieve information from a range of sources, including CD ROM; for example, a Year 6 child was able to use an encyclopaedia to find out further information about Lord Shaftesbury.

91. Writing

88. Children in Year 1 are able to write simple sentences, sometimes with a full stop at the end. They confidently attempt to spell words using their knowledge of phonics, and correctly spell the words they have learnt using the look, say, cover, write, check method. They form most letters correctly and learn to join their writing, which improves rapidly in consistency and neatness. By the end of Year 2, their handwriting is fluent and joined and of a very high standard. They are able to write in sentences and to compose simple poetry. They are confident spellers and attempt complex words using appropriate strategies. The higher attaining children use exclamation marks, apostrophes and commas correctly.

89. Throughout Key Stage 2, children's writing continues to improve both technically and imaginatively. For example, in Year 4 children are able to write in the style of a newspaper reporter and to use interesting adjectives to describe a story setting. By Year 5, they are able to use paragraphs to organise their writing and to use similes in poetry. For example, in writing animal poems, a group of children had used phrases such as "claws like breadknives" and "the dolphin was as shiny as brand new silver". By the end of Key Stage 2, the children are able to write stories which include action, description and dialogue. One child had written a story entitled "Desert Disaster" which introduced conflict between characters and an element of surprise, as well as being written with carefully chosen vocabulary such as "reassured" and "affirmed". They respond thoughtfully to poems and are able to write literary criticisms. For example, they are able to compare two poems by Blake, discussing their structure, characters and intended audience.

93.

93. Other Aspects

90. Children's response in lessons is good. Children listen attentively during the whole-class sessions, and are keen to answer questions. They settle quickly when working in groups on independent tasks. They concentrate well during these sessions and demonstrate a high level of independence and commitment to their work. They are keen to share their work and listen well during plenary sessions.

91. The quality of teaching is at least good, and in half of the lessons observed was very good. All teachers have a good knowledge of the features of texts used and the correct technical vocabulary, and are able to model good practice. They have high, but realistic, expectations of what children can achieve. During the whole-class sessions, teachers use questions effectively to challenge the children's thinking and regularly assess their understanding. Tasks set during the group work session are appropriate and relevant. The tasks are explained clearly to the children, and they are taught how to work independently. Even when working with a specific group, teachers usually manage to maintain an overview of the work of all children, assisting them when necessary. When the teaching is very good, the teachers manage time very effectively and set clear targets for individual improvement. This is particularly evident in the marking of children's work, which is excellent in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6. This results in children making clear progress towards these targets, and achieving a very high standard of presentation.

92.The planning framework for literacy is good. It is continually improving as tasks become more finely tuned to the differing abilities of the children and formal assessment tasks are built in. The resources for the subject are good and are used effectively. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in implementing the literacy hour successfully and in setting high standards by teaching in both Year 2 and Year 6. She provides clear guidance and support for staff and has undertaken some monitoring of teaching and learning. This now needs to become more focused and rigorous so that her impact can be even greater. She acts as an excellent role model and advocate for the subject through her subject knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment.

Mathematics

93.At Key Stage 1 the standards achieved over the past three years have been well above average with almost every child gaining level 2, which is in line with national expectations and far exceeds the national or LEA averages. The percentage of children gaining level 3 over the past three years, which is above the nationally expected levels of achievement, has steadily risen from 0% in 1996 to 38% this year, and once again far exceeds both the national and LEA averages. These results are reflected in the standardised tests which the school provides for the children in Year 2. These have improved year on year and are well above the county mean.

94.At Key Stage 2 the standards over the past three years have been well above both the national and LEA averages. Boys in particular have been successful, achieving well above the national average in the end of key stage tests. Results of standardised testing delivered in Year 4 and Year 6 also indicate a significant increase in achievement for all children, but especially the boys. The target set for Year 6 in 1999 was met and the target set for the number of children attaining level 5 was exceeded. This was an increase from the previous year.

95.By the end of Key Stage 1 the children can name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes such as square, circle, triangle, hexagon and octagon and cube, cuboid, sphere and cylinder. They can tell the time to the nearest five minutes and some children can use the 24-hour clock. They have an understanding of halves and quarters and are confident in applying strategies to work out half of 78 by halving seventy and then halving eight and then adding the two together. The children can gather information using tallying and represent this on a graph. They understand and can use all four rules of computation.

96.The children make good progress at Key Stage 1 particularly in two- and three-dimensional shape, computation in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and gathering and presenting data in graphical form. Progress in mental calculations is good and children are able to quickly solve addition and subtraction of two-digit and three-digit numbers. They make good progress in learning multiplication facts and have recall of 2, 3, 5 and 10 times tables. Good progress is also made in fractions and children have an understanding of $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$, $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{3} = \frac{2}{3}$. The practical work associated with weight, length and capacity and the related problem solving reinforces their understanding of these concepts and the children make good progress. The children can recall the metric measures of weight, capacity and length.

97.By the end of Key Stage 2 the children are able to measure an angle using a protractor to the nearest 5 degrees and identify acute, obtuse and reflex angles. The children use their knowledge of number well and can apply the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are confident with mental calculations and can quickly work out problems involving fractions or percentages such as 25%, 50% and 10%, as well as use of decimals, and can apply these correctly to capacity, weight, length, volume and money.

98.At Key Stage 2 progress is also good. The children make good progress in computation and have immediate recall of all multiplication facts to ten and are able to confidently manipulate four-digit numbers. Work on place value relating to tens of thousands underpins the work on decimals and good progress is made. Good progress is also made in problem solving as many opportunities are provided for the children, such as an investigation into the fibonacci series and also into prime numbers. The children can apply their knowledge of the twenty-four hour clock and money to plan and cost a holiday

for a family of four using timetables and holiday brochures. Greater emphasis needs to be given to developing the ways of presenting and interpreting data. There is evidence of progress being slow in this area with some repetition of bar graphs and tally charts, particularly at upper Key Stage 2.

99.The children at both key stages respond well to mathematics. In good lessons the children are confident and eager to answer questions, particularly in the mental maths sessions. They enjoy this part of the lesson and are confident in explaining their own strategies and techniques. They listen carefully to the input and enjoy working in a group. Their delight in solving a problem correctly is infectious and spurs others on to do the same. When given an individual task they settle quickly and work independently with sustained concentration. They respond quickly to the teacher and follow instructions implicitly. On occasion there are episodes of low-level disruption when children have lost interest or there is a drop in the pace of the lesson.

100.The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. The numeracy strategy is being implemented effectively and the lesson structure reflects this. Where the quality of teaching is good the lesson is detailed with specific learning objectives which are shared with the children. The work is differentiated to meet the needs of all the ability levels within the class. In good or very good lessons, the mental maths sessions are brisk and rapid in pace. There is suitable reinforcement of multiplication facts and number bonds as well as an emphasis on developing the child's own method of working. In such lessons the teacher is secure in the subject knowledge and has high expectations of the children. The activities match the ability and maturity of the children. The effective penetrating questioning challenges the children's thinking and is also used effectively for assessment purposes to inform planning. The teachers interact well with the children and provide opportunities for collaborative work. Opportunities are seized to further the children's learning. For example in Key Stage 1, when children are sharing a range of shapes made with elastic bands on a pin board, the pattern arrangement is also highlighted and reinforced by the class teacher; or, as in Key Stage 2, by the class teacher demonstrating in a fun but concrete way, using the children in the class, that 3 squared equals nine and not 6 as initially thought by some children. Praise is used with good effect especially when children are using a range of strategies. Higher attaining children are challenged, especially in upper Key Stage 2.

101.In unsatisfactory and some satisfactory lessons the learning objective is not always specific or shared with the children. The work presented to the children does not always challenge or match the ability level and greater emphasis needs to be given to differentiation, especially for the more able child. The quality of the mental maths session lacks pace and questioning is often too challenging for the children at the outset of the session, which also impacts on the progress. Questions are not always appropriately targeted to include all ability levels. On occasion specific terms are not explained clearly, such as congruency or multiples, and instructions require greater clarity. There are episodes of low-level disruption where the work does not match the ability of the children or where the mental maths sessions lack pace. At these times some children lose interest. In some lessons the plenary session is not always used effectively to reinforce concepts taught or for assessment purposes.

102.The subject leader is secure in her subject knowledge and has gained additional expertise through attending the 20-day mathematics course and also the recent numeracy strategy training. She has led this training with staff on the non-pupil days, and the medium-term plans from the numeracy strategy have been adopted, and are being implemented across both key stages. The subject leader is given the opportunity to monitor mathematics each half term. At times the headteacher also supports this level of monitoring. Books are scrutinised and written feedback is given, whilst verbal feedback is given, when the quality of teaching and learning is monitored. Each class is split into three ability groups and the names of these groups, pentagons, squares and triangles, are consistently used throughout the school to aid monitoring of progression and continuity. The subject leader is deployed in Years 2, 4 and 6 to teach numeracy. There is a lack of monitoring of this specialist teaching by the school, which at Key Stage 1 may this year impact on outcomes. Resources are satisfactory and mainly housed in the individual classrooms.

103.The quality of teaching, the rate of progress, the children's attitude to mathematics and the

standards achieved at both key stages clearly demonstrate a considerable improvement in mathematics since the last inspection, which was a key issue for action.

Science

104. Attainment in science is good at the end of both key stages. Progress has been good overall, though currently there is some unevenness in progress due to variation in the teaching at both key stages.

105. For the past two years teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown a well-above average proportion of children achieving the expected level for their age group. The proportion of children assessed at level 3 (in advance of national expectations) was above average last year, though early in the school year the majority of children in the present Year 2 are likely to achieve the expected level in science.

106. Already children in Year 2 are developing a good scientific knowledge of healthy eating and different types of foods, as well as electrical devices. Their investigation into washing hands shows that they have acquired appropriate skills in recording their observations and experiments. Higher attainers are beginning to acquire the notion of what constitutes a fair test. There is no difference in attainment between boys and girls, either in the teacher assessments over the past two years, or in their class work.

107. In Year 1 progress in science is very good. Children are already acquiring a good knowledge about themselves, including parts of the body, how animals change as they grow and how to keep healthy. In their present study of light and dark the majority of children are learning well and beginning to understand what is and is not a light source. Higher attaining children are able to justify why they have changed their mind about a light source, based upon their observations of a controlled experiment. In Year 2 progress is satisfactory overall and, in terms of acquiring subject knowledge, progress is good particularly for children of average and below average attainment.

108. The proportion of children gaining an average level (level 4) in science in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has been well above national figures for the past two years. These results are above the average when compared with schools nationally and also similar schools. At the end of last year the proportion of children gaining an above average result (level 5) was well above the national figure. This showed an improvement from the previous two years. Though both boys and girls do well in science, boys are doing particularly well.

109. Though early in the year, the majority of children in Year 6 demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of, for example, the properties of food (energy, protein, preserving), micro-organism and measurement using newtons and grams. In their written work higher attainers show more accuracy in their presentation of data and depth of understanding in their explanations of experiments carried out. In their current study on dissolving solids, the majority of children can both observe accurately and explain the differences between a solution and the suspension. The separation of the suspension through filtration was explained well by higher attainers, who also predicted the best methods for separating a solution. Though the majority of children are confident in carrying out investigations they do not devise their own experiments or confidently apply the knowledge that they already have about, for example, fair testing. Though their recording is well organised and generally of good quality there is insufficient quantity for this stage in the school year.

110. Progress in Key Stage 2, though it has been good over time, is currently satisfactory due to some unevenness in the teaching. In Year 3 progress in recording is good. It has moved on from Year 2, is well organised and the majority of children are confident in using a variety of ways to record observations and experiments about healthy eating and the function and cleanliness of teeth. A good

amount of work is produced, particularly by higher attainers, who draw conclusions from their observations. In their current work on the properties of plastic, higher attainers are also able to see that plastic can come in both rigid and flexible form, whereas the remainder of the group simply describe the properties. The amount of work recorded progresses into Year 4, though more worksheets are used. Progress in knowledge is also steady with children acquiring a good level of knowledge about electrical circuits and the basic organs of the human body. Higher attainers know about switches and conductors, as well as resistors and serial and parallel circuits. By Year 5 children's approaches to investigation have developed, higher attainers showing greater facility for prediction and making generalisations in their work, for example in their class work about sound and how it can be altered by using a range of insulators. The amount rather than the quality of recorded work in Year 5 does not progress sufficiently. This is also the case in Year 6, where good progress is made in conducting investigations, predicting based upon their knowledge and observations and drawing conclusions which are consistent with the evidence, for example in their work on dissolving and separating solids.

111.Children's responses in class are mostly satisfactory and occasionally very good or unsatisfactory. Where very good (in Year 1) children sat and listened very intently and were then very eager to be involved in the activities. Their willingness to take turns, to make observations about the investigation and their good collaboration in the tasks were key features. More generally children do concentrate well on knowledge being imparted by the teacher and the instructions being given. The majority of children are confident to ask questions, settle quickly to any task which involves recording and maintain their interest throughout the session. Unsatisfactory responses occurred where a lack of interest developed during the session and resulted in some low-level disruption by a few children interrupting the teaching and learning. Where children lacked confidence in some science sessions they contributed little to discussion.

112.There is some contrast in the teaching of science across the school, though in the main it is satisfactory. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 1 and good teaching in Year 6. Only in one lesson was the teaching deemed unsatisfactory overall, though there were some unsatisfactory features in other lessons. In the very good teaching observed in Year 1 strong subject knowledge was coupled with an understanding of the children and how to get the best responses from them. Questioning based upon close observation of materials and the impact of complete darkness was used extremely well to guide children to good levels of understanding. A good balance between practical investigation, observation and recording were features of the majority of lessons. In the good teaching in Year 6, good opportunities were provided to predict the likely impact of dissolving coffee and clay in water. Children were left to make their own observations and conclusions and the main focus of the teaching was returned to ensure that all children went away with appropriate knowledge and understanding of the process. Any unsatisfactory features of teaching in science related to a lack of knowledge and confidence in presenting the scientific content, in responding to children's questions, giving unproductive tasks and in the general pitch and pace of work.

113.Two recently appointed subject leaders have made a good start in managing provision for the subject throughout the school. Resources are at least sufficient, accessible and used well, particularly for investigative work. Curriculum planning has recently been aligned to the QCA guidance with additional reference to the LEA guidance. This has been a sensible move and is helping staff to pitch work at the appropriate level and ensure balance and coverage within the science curriculum. The common format adopted for planning is well thought out but is not being used consistently. Some support is being given to staff who lack confidence and subject knowledge but this needs to be developed further to help to improve teaching. The monitoring of planning, work produced by the children and the actual teaching and learning is currently not in place. This is an area of development which needs to be addressed.

114.There have been improvements in developing investigative skills since the last inspection and these are currently progressing well.

OTHER SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Art

115. Progress in art beyond Year 1 is unsatisfactory. This judgement is based upon the work seen on display throughout the school, on the samples of work scrutinised and on two observations in Key Stage 2. These observations gave insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about the quality of teaching and children's responses in art.

116. Progress from Reception into Year 1 is satisfactory. Chalk drawings in Reception and also the recent larger-scale drawings of a visitor in African costume show their ability to make marks confidently and in a controlled way. In work on matching the colours of leaves their skills are appropriate for their age. Skills in painting and drawing progress into Year 1 where their drawings show increased accuracy and detail. Children manage a wider range of media including fine models of clay figures, using IT to produce decorated names and in making the stained glass windows in their science work on light. In Year 2 relatively little work was seen on display or in the sample. There was some development in the use of tone in the observational drawings of electrical devices but overall the range and quality of work does not progress sufficiently.

117. There is satisfactory progress into Year 3 where, although there was still a limited amount of work in the sample, there was evidence of development in painting. Children were able to produce a graded wash for work on a silhouette skyline with some effective use of primary colours in mixing paints to produce warm colours. In Year 3 there are also some reasonable examples of illustrative work in other subjects. By Year 4 most work was small scale, apart from some posters produced in felt tip pen. The drawing generally in Year 4, albeit at the beginning of the school year, is below expectations for the age group. Some interesting lino cuts were being attempted during the week of the inspection. In Year 5 a set of drawings of shoes shows appropriate use of half tone and line. These drawings are similar in style but the detail is sufficient. Ceremonial papier mache masks being made in response to a visit to the Sainsbury's Centre include both African and Egyptian elements and a reasonable level of skill. Overall the quality of drawings in Year 5, including pastel drawings of bottles, are below expectation but have progressed from Year 4. In Year 6 much of the work produced shows little progression either in drawing or painting from that seen in Year 5. Much of the work, including aboriginal painting and the paintings in the style of L S Lowry, involve colouring in drawings but little adventure, imagination or technique. At this early stage in the school year, children's skills in painting and drawing are well adrift of the expectations for the end of Key Stage 2.

118. The documentation and planning for art has merit. Planning in Years 1 to 4 provides reasonable structure, sequence for the teaching and general learning objectives. This is not currently the case for Years 5 and 6. There is insufficient subject expertise being brought to bear and thus support for teachers in carrying out the plan and also in monitoring results of the teaching and learning in art are under developed.

119. Improving progression in art throughout the school by raising subject expertise through closer monitoring and support of teaching is a key area for the school to address.

Design and technology

120. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one session of design technology. Judgements are therefore based on the evidence produced during the first half of the Autumn Term, as well as photographic records of past work. Based on this evidence progress in design and technology is satisfactory at both key stages.

121. In Key Stage 1 children make progress in their use of tools and techniques. In Year 1 the design brief to make a new outfit for the teacher involved careful measuring and the generating of ideas. In the designing and making of sandwiches in Year 2, children developed a rudimentary idea effectively producing a final product, designing some of the components of the sandwich and also evaluating their

efforts. The picture frames and plate puppets produced during Year 2 demonstrate that they can use a variety of materials and techniques.

122.Through Key Stage 2, children's designing and making skills are broadened and include the construction of a mouse toy that moves over different surfaces. This involved a higher degree of precision, following more closely the design brief. This precision in assembling their products is also evident in Year 4, for example in the making of the electronic game involving paper engineering and electronic circuit making skills. These were well constructed and with reasonable attention paid to the quality of the finished product. By Year 6 children's designing and making skills have developed sufficiently to enable them to tackle more complicated design briefs, for example making a tower for morse code. The teacher assessments of these design briefs show that children have acquired appropriate skills and knowledge in using information from books to aid their designs, how to build free standing towers from art straws and how to use an electrical circuit with a switch to produce a flashing light.

123.The curriculum for design and technology is well constructed. The time available for design and technology is sufficient. Children are provided with a good range of experience and resources. Activities are carefully designed so that designing and making skills are developed progressively. Planning is based securely on both the QCA guidance and also the Local Education Authority's very detailed guidance utilising progressively more complex design briefs. The subject leader has good subject knowledge, is well organised and has started to provide a good level of expertise for her colleagues. This needs to be maintained and developed further, particularly in areas where staff lack knowledge.

Geography

124.Three lessons were observed at Key Stage 2 during the inspection. Judgements have also been made on the evidence of the scrutiny of children's work and discussion with the children themselves. The progress at Key Stage 1 is good and is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement from the last inspection.

125.The children in Key Stage 1 have learned about their own route to school and can give their address. Using the children's story 'The Two Grandmothers' by Mairi Hedderwick, the children have compared and contrasted their own locality with that of an island off the coast of Scotland. The use of literacy to develop the children's understanding of geography has been successful and they have gained an understanding of what an island is, and extended their vocabulary using such words as ocean, sea, mountain, weather, tide, croft and pier. The children have also compared their own locality with Jamaica and demonstrated an understanding of the similarities and differences in physical geography, climate, food, clothing and employment.

126.The children at lower Key Stage 2 have learned about life in an Indian village and have a knowledge of the monsoon season and its implications, the Himalayas, rice paddies, the River Ganges and the population of India. The children have made use of information technology to gain some of this information. They have also learned about the water cycle, the Beaufort scale, wind direction, types of clouds, such as nimbostratus and cumulonimbus, and know the type of weather with which they are associated. The children are developing map work skills by using aerial photographs and a series of maps which date from 1856 through to 1980s, as well as learning how their local 1980s, environment has changed over time. The children have learned about the variety of people's jobs through interviewing parents and presented this information in the form of a graph. In upper Key Stage 2 the children have learned about the need for clean water and can identify areas which for political or geographical reasons are not as fortunate as ourselves. They also know the implications of drinking unclean water. The evidence base for upper Key Stage 2 is very limited and the time constraints which arise as a result of teaching a non-statutory subject has a negative impact on the rate of progress. At lower Key Stage 2 the rate of progress reflects that of Key Stage 1 but then tails off at upper Key Stage 2, resulting in satisfactory progress overall.

127.The children at both key stages have a positive attitude towards geography. The children listen well to the input and eagerly answer questions. The children are confident about expressing their own point of view and do not simply focus on the 'right answer'. Once the task is set they settle quickly and work with sustained concentration.

128.The quality of the teaching in all three lessons observed at Key Stage 2 was at least satisfactory and one lesson was good. In the good lesson the methods and organisation of the class were appropriate and the initial brainstorming session with children on what life might be like in India was thought-provoking and challenging. The class teacher used this activity as a useful assessment tool to inform planning. Resources were prepared well and to hand. The class teacher has good subject knowledge and responds well to the children's ideas and questions. Points of view and contributions from the children are valued. The teacher has high expectations of the children.

129.The resources for geography are at least satisfactory and in some areas good, for instance the range of maps available for the children to use to compare the changes in Lowestoft over a period of time and the number and variety of aerial photographs, not only showing Lowestoft, but also towns and villages with key features. In Year 6 the children go on a school journey to the village of Eyam which focuses on developing several geographical skills. Teachers are responsible for their own medium-term planning and they are using the recent QCA guidance for this. The geography subject leader has only recently taken up the post and there has been very limited opportunity to monitor the planning or quality of teaching and learning. The role of the geography subject leader needs developing further.

History

130.Three lessons were observed in history, one at Key Stage 1 and two at Key Stage 2. The judgements made are based on these observations, scrutiny of the children's work and discussion with the children themselves.

131.In Key Stage 1, in the lesson observed, the progress was excellent. The children gained a real understanding of the story of Guy Fawkes and had an appreciation of opposing factions. From the scrutiny of work and in discussion with children they have an understanding of holidays in the past having compared photographs of their own holidays with those of their parents and their grandparents. This work has also been related to looking at photographs of old Lowestoft. The children have also learned about the second world war and talked animatedly about rationing and how this actually worked. They were very serious when discussing the prospect of not being able to get more than one's own ration of sweets even if one had the money. The children were encouraged to interview grandparents and other relatives about this period and one child was excited to receive a fax from his grandmother detailing many aspects of the war and how she was affected. They recalled the work they had carried out on shopping in the past which they shared with the class. The children talked excitedly about the display of this work and the artefacts such as old pre-decimal money which they handled.

132.The progress of the children's learning throughout Key Stage 2 is varied and unsatisfactory overall. In the lesson observed at lower Key Stage 2 the progress was satisfactory although the low-level disruption and over-long introduction was having a negative effect on this. The over emphasis on reinforcing literacy skills also had a negative impact on the rate of progress as the children were losing interest. At upper Key Stage 2 the progress in the lesson observed was unsatisfactory. At the beginning of this lesson the children could already identify the Victorian artefacts presented on a worksheet and correctly suggest how they were used. By the end of the lesson they had learned very little. The evidence base of work for Key Stage 2 is very limited and the discussion with children in Year 6 indicated they have very little recall of the periods of history they had covered. When asked about the Tudor period they remembered that people were executed and that they also had comfortable chairs. The children were also aware of the differences in construction of homes of poor and rich families. In relation to this year's work the children could not remember a great deal about the Victorian era except that they had no electricity and that school was very strict.

133.Children's responses in class varied considerably. At Key Stage 1 the children were spellbound by

the lesson on Guy Fawkes. They were completely involved in the story and when questioned were passionate about the views of their group and could justify them. When the children realised that the reason for 'fireworks night' is to remember and celebrate the work of Guy Fawkes their eyes lit up in wonder and it was a golden moment in their learning. In the classroom the children worked independently and confidently and were totally engaged in their work. They worked with concentration and excitement in each activity which was presented. At lower Key Stage 2 the children initially listened intently to the class teacher, although there was soon some fidgeting and restlessness. Some children were able to remain on task and were keen to answer questions whilst others talked or moved seats. Once given the written activity they eventually settled and worked with sustained concentration. The support given to many children by the teacher helped them to remain on task and work appropriately. At upper Key Stage 2 the children had a lack of urgency about their tasks and some children were behaving inappropriately. The children lacked interest in the task presented.

134. Teaching in history varied in quality. In Key Stage 1 the lesson observed was excellent. The teacher was extremely well prepared and had made props to enhance the re-enactment of the story of Guy Fawkes. The children were encouraged to consider the viewpoints of both sides - for and against the king - and cheered or jeered accordingly. The questions asked were thought provoking and the children's contributions valued. The teacher used her voice most effectively to create exactly the right atmosphere of tension and caution when Guy Fawkes was about to attempt to carry out the deed. The class teacher had a positive relationship with the children and consistently found opportunities to praise good work and effort and also appropriate behaviour.

135. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching in two lessons observed varied. One lesson was good, the other unsatisfactory. When good the teacher had high expectations of behaviour and of the children's learning. The work was well prepared and matched the planned programme of work. Questioning was effective to ensure understanding. The teacher was consistent in dealing with the low-level disruption. Where unsatisfactory, the teaching was lacking in challenge for the children and was not intellectually stimulating. The lesson lacked pace and the activities prepared were of a very low level and a poor match for the age and ability of the children. The input to the lesson lacked a sharp focus and aspects relating to experiences outside school, such as watching a television programme about the Victorians, excluded some children.

136. There has been an improvement in the quality of the resources since the last inspection. There is now a range of good quality books in topic boxes, relating to the periods of history being covered, which are housed in individual classrooms. There is still a lack of artefacts which was a point for action in the last inspection. There is a long-term plan for history and the recent QCA guidance is being followed. The subject leader monitors the medium-term plans which are written by each teacher but as yet has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in both key stages. The time given to history at upper Key Stage 2 is limited as a result of a non-statutory subject being introduced at Years 5 and 6. Future plans for the history curriculum are embryonic at present. The role of the history subject leader needs developing further.

Information technology

137. No direct teaching of information technology was observed during the inspection week, although some groups of children were working on computers as part of their literacy hour work. Evidence from observation of these groups, discussions with teachers and pupils and scrutiny of work indicates that attainment in IT at the end of both key stages is below national expectations. Standards have fallen since the last inspection and progress is now unsatisfactory for children of all abilities. This is largely because children have not covered all elements of the subject in sufficient depth. This is a key issue for action.

138. By the end of Key Stage 1, most children can use the mouse and keyboard confidently to complete simple word-processing tasks. They can type in text and edit their work by cutting, pasting and deleting but cannot alter font size and style. They can amend a piece of work by adding capital

letters and full stops. They have little experience in using graphics, control or data handling programs. They are not able to switch the computers on or find specific programs. Children in Year 1 have used a modelling program to explore information about themselves and to match shapes in mathematics. They have learnt how to write their names in different fonts, colours and sizes.

139. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining children are able to type in text and alter the font and size. They are not able to cut and paste text to edit their work or to combine different forms of IT information. They have used a desktop publishing package to produce a simple banner and invitation. All children have used a control program at its simplest level to draw shapes by typing instructions for distances and angles, but have not used simulation or modelling programs. They are beginning to learn how to use data handling programs and are able to input information and draw graphs from it. For example, Year 5 have produced graphs of water usage in their homes and Year 6 have used a program to create a database for property for sale in the local paper. However they are not sufficiently competent at interrogating the information or questioning its reliability. Most children are competent in searching for and extracting information from CD ROM. They use Encarta and Micropaedia for general reference and have used specific CD ROMs on the Ancient Greeks and the human body to seek information in history and science.

140. Throughout the school the attitudes and responses of children to IT are generally satisfactory, if a little hesitant. When they have the opportunity to use computers, most children enjoy using them and concentrate well. Some find it difficult to work together and take turns in using the equipment, with the higher attaining children dominating. A few children are not confident in using the computer because of their lack of experience.

141. IT is a priority on the school and pyramid development plan this year, but many of the success criteria have not yet been met. For example, staff have not been trained with the necessary skills to implement the whole of the IT National Curriculum. There is no long-term or medium planning in place for IT, but teachers are attempting to implement the QCA guidance for their particular year group, through a number of curriculum areas. There is no time set aside on the timetable for the teaching of specific IT skills or to give children opportunities to practise them. This year, the school has built in IT activities within the group work of the literacy hour, which has gone part way to addressing the problem. However, in some classes, insufficient time is given within the literacy sessions to teach and assess these skills. Some groups working on computers are under the supervision of non-teaching staff, but their progress is not sufficiently monitored by the teachers. Other groups struggle with tasks because they do not have the necessary skills to complete them independently. During the inspection week, IT was not observed being taught or used in any other subject area.

142. Although the school has recently installed three new computers with Internet access in a communal area, resources for IT are still unsatisfactory. Some hardware is outdated and there is insufficient software for control and modelling. Some children work on computers in separate shared areas, which makes monitoring their progress difficult. Two parent helpers have recently volunteered to help supervise IT work and to develop children's skills. This has resulted in the setting up of a computer club, due to start the week after the inspection and the withdrawal of small groups of children to learn to use the Internet. One of these sessions was observed during the inspection, with the expert knowledge of the parent having a very positive impact on the children's attainment and confidence.

143. The co-ordinator has maintained and developed the resources for IT, and has drawn up a three-year development plan for the subject. She is aware of the need for staff development and the lack of time for teaching IT skills. She has had little opportunity to monitor standards and progress in IT, either through observing teaching or collecting and scrutinising work.

147. **Music**

144. Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to collect sufficient evidence during the inspection to make reliable judgements about teaching and children's responses in Key Stage 2. From

the video and audio tape evidence, some written work and the two lessons observed in Key Stage 1, satisfactory progress is being made in music across the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

145. In Year 1 children make music confidently and with growing competence. Already they are using simple notation to direct their performances. They identify tempo and dynamic in their playing of untuned percussion instruments, which they readily choose. The sounds produced show control and imagination for example in producing the sounds of rustling trees and rain. Children in Year 2 are developing a keen sense of rhythms. They play rhythms accurately and also use their voices to sing and to create other effects, for example firework noises. The more accomplished are able to describe characteristics of a piece of music and improvise more readily. Children's singing makes satisfactory progress.

146. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There is a steady increase in the quality of performance in vocal and instrumental work. The percussive work in Year 3 on a space theme shows more adventure in use of rhythm. Children can repeat and maintain these rhythms accurately using a range of instrumentation (glockenspiel, xylophone, keyboards and drums). A similar space theme used in Year 4 shows a step up in performance in using the sound of instruments to evoke feelings. This creation of mood is also evident in their musical stories which are well performed. Chanting, street cries and singing in different rhythms (calypso) are used effectively in Years 5 and 6. Singing skills progress appropriately and culminate in some clear, mainly accurate and enthusiastic singing in school performances. The complex rhythmic patterns used in their responses to 'Phil The Flutter's Ball' and 'New Bones' chants are well performed and show an increased level of skill. By Year 6 most children understand basic notation. Children who play recorder have more advanced skills in reading music.

147. In the two observations in Key Stage 1, children show genuine enjoyment in their music making. They listen well and readily join in discussion, listening and performing. Children demonstrate control and care in their use of instruments, enthusiasm only very occasionally getting the better of them.

148. The teaching observed has strengths. Good preparation of resources (instruments, recordings, space etc), the variety and balance of activities and the good focus on developing skills being typical. Children are managed well. The curriculum for music is clearly set out at both key stages and provides helpful guidance to non-specialist teachers. The use of the published scheme in Key Stage 2 and the augmenting of subject expertise by using a part-time specialist teacher is having a positive impact on progression. This appointment was made subsequent to the previous inspection when the progress in music was unsatisfactory. Progress in music is now satisfactory.

Physical education

149. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe swimming, gymnastics, dance and games lessons, so judgements will be made on these areas only.

150. In Key Stage 1, progress is satisfactory overall, but very uneven. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in gymnastics. In the Year 1 lesson, children make very good progress while using small and large apparatus. They are able to control their body movements well and are very aware of space. They can perform controlled balances and are developing the strength to perfect these. For example, during an observation, a child performed a balance upside down while holding on to two ropes, while another balanced perfectly on one leg. They are able to select different ways of moving between apparatus. All children were very motivated during the lesson. They were challenged effectively by the teacher to improve their work and gained a good deal of physical exercise from the activities. In the Year 2 lesson observed, the children made unsatisfactory progress. They explored the apparatus and expended physical energy, but were not challenged to control their movements in a precise way or to improve their performance. A few children demonstrated their ability to balance and jump.

151. In Key Stage 2, progress is good overall, but varies by sport. Progress in dance is good and in

games it is satisfactory. During dance lessons children learn to use their bodies to express themselves in response to themes and to music. By the end of Year 6, they create original movements in sequences and are able to work collaboratively to share and generate ideas. The children learn a large variety of skills in games lesson and are given the opportunity to use these in many different games. During the inspection, the children were observed practising netball, touch rugby and tennis. By the end of Key Stage 2 most children can throw, catch and hit balls accurately and are developing the skills of playing together as a team.

152. Most children enjoy their PE lessons and behave well. They persevere with activities and are keen to improve their skills. They are given the opportunity to take responsibility for equipment and apparatus. The Year 1 class were observed moving large equipment correctly and sensibly with great attention to safety. Children have the opportunity to take part in many competitive sporting events to supplement the curriculum. PE is well resourced, and good use is made of the hard area, playing field and local pool.

153. Overall the quality of teaching is good, but it varies from unsatisfactory to very good. When it is good, teachers have a good knowledge of the specific skills that need to be taught in order for the children to make progress. They demonstrate and explain techniques clearly and have high expectations of what the children will achieve. Assessment is a key feature of the lessons, with the teacher checking that each child is developing the necessary skills, and giving further advice when necessary. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' subject knowledge is weak and expectations are low. In these lessons, children are not assessed effectively or given clear targets for improvement.

154. The planning framework for the PE curriculum is satisfactory and ensures a broad coverage of all the statutory elements. However, more detail is needed in order to ensure children build on and develop their skills as they move through the school. The co-ordinator, who is new to the post, has already begun to address this. At present she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching across the school, so is not able to provide the appropriate support and guidance needed for less confident members of staff.

158. Swimming

155. Standards in swimming at the end of Key Stage 2 are good. By the end of Year 5 most children are able to swim at least 25 metres and many are good long distance swimmers who are learning survival skills. Progress in swimming is very good. Children learn to improve their technique in a variety of strokes, including butterfly for the higher attainers. The lower attainers also develop confidence in the water. All but one child in the lesson observed during the inspection could swim at least 10 metres and submerge their faces confidently.

156. In the one session observed taught by the instructor, teaching was satisfactory overall. Knowledge of how to teach swimming technique was appropriate. Floats were used appropriately to help perfect strokes and demonstrations were used effectively.

157. The swimming curriculum has a secure place within the PE provision in the school. The use of specialist instruction helps to ensure the good progress and standards attained.

158. The organisation of swimming where children from Years 1 to 5 swim each year for one term is a strength of the PE curriculum and is reflected in the high levels of attainment achieved.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

162. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

159. During the inspection:

- 56 lessons or parts of lessons were observed;
- discussions were held with staff;
- children were heard to read and asked about their work in different subjects;
- assemblies and activities outside lessons were observed;
- school documentation, including policies, planning, the school's brochure and development plans, were analysed;
- attendance registers, records and reports were scrutinised;
- the school's budget and most recent auditor's report were examined;
- discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors;
- the Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 29 parents where their views on the school were sought;
- 60 responses to the parents' questionnaire were examined.

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Reception – Year 6	195	0	29	23

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Reception – Year 6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.16:1

Education support staff (Reception – Year 6)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	63.0

Average class size:	27.9
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Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	311,730
Total Expenditure	308,245
Expenditure per pupil	1,518
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,047
Balance carried forward to next year	25,532

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

130

Number of questionnaires returned:

60

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	60.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	61.7	35.0	1.7	1.7	0.0
The school handles complaints from parents well	34.6	42.3	21.2	1.9	0.0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	45.0	51.7	3.3	0.0	0.0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	54.2	37.3	6.8	1.7	0.0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	66.1	27.1	6.8	0.0	0.0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	39.7	37.9	13.8	6.9	1.7
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	53.6	35.7	13.8	1.8	0.0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	75.0	23.3	0.0	1.7	0.0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	78.3	20.0	1.7	0.0	0.0
My child(ren) like(s) school	73.3	25.0	1.7	0.0	0.0