

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MEPAL & WITCHAM CE (C)PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Mepal

Ely

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110808

Headteacher: Mr R J Turner

Reporting inspector: Mrs O M Cooper  
10859

Dates of inspection: 5-9 June 2000

Inspection number: 189384

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brangehill Lane Mepal Ely Cambridge
Postcode:	CB6 2AL
Telephone number:	01353 778300
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Stuart-Menteath
Date of previous inspection	6 – 18 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs O Cooper	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve? Pupils under five
Mr R Watts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr G Timms	Team inspector	English Information technology Art Design & technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Equal opportunities Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Inspection Services Limited  
P O Box 524  
Cheadle  
Staffordshire  
ST10 4RN

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a small voluntary controlled Church of England primary school for boys and girls from four to eleven years old. It has 97 full-time pupils including 6 children under 5. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is below average for schools in Cambridgeshire and below that found typically in primary schools nationally. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is below the national average. Twenty-three pupils have special educational needs, a figure close to the national average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language.

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

This is a good school. Standards in English and mathematics are above the national average at age seven and eleven. The teaching is good throughout and enables pupils to make good progress over their time in the school. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. All teachers have responsibility for leading curricular areas and there have been developments in many subjects leading to good improvements in teaching and learning. The governors are aware of the need to develop their roles further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science during their time in the school and standards are above the national average by the age of eleven and well above average in mathematics.
- The teaching is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress towards their targets.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving teaching and learning.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good; the information gathered is being used effectively to set targets for classes and individual pupils.
- Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good.

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

- Progress in science by more able pupils at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' handwriting and standards of presentation.
- Strategic planning for longer-term school development and improvement.
- The school's partnership with parents.

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

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

The school was last inspected in September 1996 when standards were reported to be broadly average. There has been good improvement in standards, in teaching and in overcoming the key issues identified in the previous report. There is now effective leadership of the curriculum and a clearer direction for school improvement. The length of the school day meets the recommendations for both key stages. The time allocated to science at Key Stage 2 is now in line with the national norm. Curricular planning and teachers' assessments are closer to meeting the needs of all pupils of different ages and abilities. The headteacher is fulfilling his responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	C	D	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	E	A	A	
Science	C	C	A	A	

The small numbers in year groups leads to variation in results from year to year. In 1999, the school's results were well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools in English, mathematics and science at age eleven. When the three subjects are taken together, the trend in improvement in the school's results from 1996 to 1999, is better than that nationally. The school exceeded its targets in 1999 and inspection findings are that it is likely to do so again this year. Inspection findings show standards are being sustained at above national average levels in English and science and well above average levels in mathematics by age eleven. Standards are high except in science for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1; no pupils are attaining levels above those expected for their age except in experimental and investigative work.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils come to school wanting to learn, but the attitudes of a few, particularly of boys in Years 3 and 4, are unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good for the large majority; the behaviour of a small group of boys in Key Stage 2 is occasionally unacceptable in lessons and at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Most pupils get on well with each other. Pupils do not fully understand the impact of their actions on others. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their learning.
Attendance	Good; above the national average.

There is a lack of respect for adults evident in a small number of pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The behaviour of a small number of infant pupils is unsatisfactory in the dining hall.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. There is good teaching in 74 per cent of lessons, including 26 per cent that is very good. All teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teachers have worked hard to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively with mixed age classes; this has gone well and has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are strengths in

lesson planning, where learning objectives are clearly identified. The objectives are shared with the pupils so they know the purpose of the lesson. They are returned to towards the end of the lesson to check they have been achieved. Pupils are given the opportunity to identify on their work whether they feel they understand fully or need further practice. This works well where pupils are honest in their responses. Good use is made of the time available for learning, of the support staff, and of the resources available, which lead to variety in the teaching methods, more interest for the pupils and a better rate of learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons often involve completing worksheets that are the same for all pupils and do not meet the needs of the older higher attaining or the younger lower attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and they make good progress towards their targets. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged in most lessons and make satisfactory progress. Pupils in all classes make good progress in developing skills in experimental and investigative science and in developing mental strategies for solving problems in mathematics. Teachers are beginning to remedy the differences in the attainment of girls and boys evident in test results in recent years but there is further work to be done. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection; it is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and enabling most to achieve well by the age of eleven.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: a wide range of experiences and activities is provided which covers all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum for under fives includes all the areas of learning. Extra-curricular activities are limited and are charged for.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: classroom support assistants are well qualified and give good support to pupils enabling them to progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: the school has a plan for teaching these aspects but opportunities for development in lessons and at playtimes are sometimes missed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. All adults know the pupils well and this helps in meeting their individual needs. Risk assessment procedures lack rigour.

The school's partnership with parents has some weaknesses in the sensitivity in the way some letters are written. The quality of information in pupils' annual reports is unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: All staff have curricular responsibilities and have contributed to school improvement and development. All have action plans for further improvement. Very good procedures for monitoring teaching have been implemented. The longer term development and direction of the school is not clear.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Whilst there has been improvement since the previous inspection, the governors acknowledge there is still work to be done to fulfil all their responsibilities in shaping the future direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good use is made of the test results to highlight areas for improvement and to check the value added by the school to pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, learning resources, accommodation and finances are used satisfactorily for the benefit of the pupils. Decisions on expenditure are not linked closely enough to educational priorities.

There are sufficient staff to keep class sizes to 30 or less pupils. Learning resources are adequate except for library books. Accommodation is adequate in classrooms but the hall is too small for gymnastics. The outdoor accommodation is very good. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily; orders for large items are only placed after several estimates have been

received and considered. The school is beginning to compare the cost of education per pupil with that of similar schools.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school helps pupils become mature and responsible.</li><li>• Staff are approachable and willing to help.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Children make good progress.</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• More information about the way complaints have been handled.</li><li>• The behaviour of some pupils.</li></ul>

The inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive comments, the exceptions being that pupils are not always expected to produce their best work and they could be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning. Inspectors agree that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited and unsatisfactory, mainly involving sport. The activities are provided by private companies, parents are required to pay termly fees and this prevents some pupils from attending. Communication with parents about the way complaints are handled is insufficient. Inspectors share parents' concerns about the behaviour of a small number of pupils in junior classes.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are above the national average in English and well above in mathematics at the age of seven and eleven. The results of national tests in 1999 showed pupils' attainment was well above average in reading and mathematics at seven and above average in writing. The results in all tests were well above the average for similar schools. At age eleven, the 1999 results of national tests were well above the national average for all schools and the average for similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science at age seven showed that an average proportion of pupils attained or exceeded the expected level; this means that the standards in science at this age lag behind those in English and mathematics. Just over one third of the seven-year-old pupils attained the higher level in experimental and investigative science; this took attainment at the higher level to well above average in this aspect of the subject but no seven-year-old pupil was assessed as having high attainment in the other aspects of science. Standards at age eleven have improved since the last inspection when they were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science.

2. The pupils are assessed in the first seven weeks in school to determine their stage of development in reading, writing and personal and social development. The results show a wide variation in pupils' attainment, and when taken together, attainment on entry is below the average for the local education authority and below that found typically in other primary schools nationally. Only one third of pupils in the school are at the level that 80 per cent are expected to achieve on entry. Whilst personal and social skills are well developed, reading and writing skills are weaker. Their understanding of mathematical language is also weak. Over time in the under fives phase, pupils make good progress through a wide range of experiences and virtually all are on target to reach the outcomes expected soon after becoming five. The proportion of pupils on target to achieve the outcomes means that attainment is above average. The small number of pupils in the class, the level of support from classroom assistants and consistently good teaching are major factors in supporting pupils' learning and progress.

3. Inspection findings confirm standards at the age of seven and eleven are above average in English. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Pupils speak clearly and with growing confidence in the many opportunities during literacy hours and in the time at the end of lessons when they talk about their work. By the age of eleven, pupils are more reluctant to answer questions in class discussions. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and show by their responses that they have listened carefully. Pupils make good progress in developing reading skills in reception and this continues throughout the school. Reading diaries show many parents hear their children read at home and this supports their progress in school. By the age of eleven, most pupils are fluent readers, although their reading often lacks expression. They make good use of their skills when researching information, for example on history topics, using CD-ROM. The school does not have a library, although one is planned as part of the new building project. Pupils make good progress in developing writing skills and by the age of eleven are accurate writers, able to write in different styles and for different purposes. Handwriting is unsatisfactory and results in untidy presentation of work. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their literacy skills further in other lessons, particularly when worksheets are used which require only single words to be inserted into sentences. The older boys said they found worksheets boring. This is affecting their attitude to and presentation of their work. The staff have worked hard to implement the literacy hours effectively and their success has had a significant impact on the raising of standards. Girls have done better than boys and to a greater extent than found nationally in recent years. This is partly due to girls having more positive attitudes to their work.

4. Standards in mathematics have been sustained at well above average levels. Over nine-tenths of seven year olds are achieving the level expected for their age and almost three tenths are exceeding it. Inspection findings confirm the national test results in 1999 at both key stages. Standards by the age of eleven are also well above average. Over nine-tenths of pupils are reaching the level expected for their age, and over one third are achieving higher levels. Most of those achieving higher levels are girls, which is the reverse of the trend in recent years. Some pupils with special educational needs attain well and are reaching the level expected for their age. The pupils

enjoy numeracy lessons, particularly brisk introductory sessions and their interest supports their rate of learning.

5. Inspection findings in science show pupils' attainment to be average at the age of seven and above the national average by the age of eleven. Over four-fifths of seven year olds are attaining the level expected for their age and one fifth of pupils are attaining the higher level in experimental and investigative science but no pupils are reaching the higher level in life and living processes, materials and their properties or physical processes. This is similar to the teachers' assessments in 1999. Given that attainment in English and mathematics at the age of seven is above average, indications are that attainment in science should be higher. Over four-fifths of eleven year olds are attaining the level expected, with one third attaining the higher level. This proportion takes attainment at eleven above the national average. Many challenging tasks require pupils to plan their own investigations at Key Stage 2 and they respond well to the challenges set.

6. Standards in the school have improved since the last inspection when they were found to be broadly average at age eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and some of them reach the level expected nationally by the age of eleven. When taking the English, mathematics, and science results at age eleven together, the school's results over the last four years have been above the national trend. The school exceeded its literacy and numeracy targets in 1999 and is likely to do so this year. The targets set are not sufficiently challenging; they were set two years ago and have not been reviewed since.

7. Standards in information technology have improved and are broadly average. All staff have undertaken training to improve their knowledge and confidence in teaching and this has improved the rate of learning. Pupils are confident in using computers and many choose to do so during lunch breaks or before school. Skills in word processing are well developed, all other aspects are satisfactorily developed. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use computers and there is insufficient software to support learning effectively in other curricular areas.

8. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible and the messages they hold for life today. Their knowledge of other major world religions is satisfactory.

9. Standards are average for pupils aged seven and eleven in the foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards in swimming are high as all pupils have the opportunity to go swimming at some time each year. For the pupils who play musical instruments and attend tuition classes as part of their lessons, standards are above those expected by the age of eleven, particularly in their ability to read notation. Clay work in art is of good quality and is a strength in the provision for the subject.

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

10. A large majority of pupils display good attitudes towards school but, for the remainder, these could be better. A majority of parents say that their children enjoy coming to school but an unusually large minority disagrees. Almost all pupils arrive on time and are keen to get to their classrooms and work well. The younger ones, in particular, are keen to resume lessons after break, even on the sunny days during the inspection. A few older pupils, however, display signs of boredom and this is reflected in a lack of initiation of discussion in lessons. When stimulated well however, for example in a mental maths session, pupils can display greater keenness to participate and enjoyment of challenge. In lessons they are generally attentive and start work when asked. Sometimes, however, where the work is insufficiently challenging, a small number of pupils are inattentive. Whilst in some practical tasks, such as model making with clay, pupils display pride in their work, they are too often satisfied with poorly laid out work or untidy handwriting. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are not noticeably different from their peers. These pupils are well accepted by others. There are few extra-curricular activities and the majority of pupils have little chance to take an interest outside lessons. They participate enthusiastically, however, in the educational trips provided.

11. The behaviour of pupils is just satisfactory. In most lessons pupils do as they are asked and work conscientiously. Most are disciplined in putting up their hand to answer questions and refrain from interrupting others. In a few lessons, the teacher does need to remind pupils not to talk at inappropriate times. On the few occasions when unacceptable behaviour in lessons was observed,

pupils responded to admonishment. When supervised, pupils move around the school carefully. However, the behaviour of a small number of pupils at dinnertime is unsatisfactory with undue rowdiness and inappropriate language. In some of the assemblies observed, pupils were inattentive, fidgety and talked at the same time as the speaker. In the playground, apart from the odd incident, pupils play well together, for example on the climbing apparatus. Although a few parents have had experience of their children being bullied, no examples were seen and, in discussion, pupils said that this was not generally a problem. Racial harassment is not an issue because there are very few pupils from ethnic minorities. No pupils have been excluded.

12. Personal development and relationships within the school are satisfactory but in several areas, pupils show insufficient development. Through discussion of other faiths and visits to places of worship, pupils gain respect for the beliefs of others. They show care for resources and the property of others. They generally treat staff at the school with respect but on some occasions are somewhat offhand, almost to the point of discourtesy, with adults. Relationships between pupils are generally good and they can work well together, sharing resources and showing awareness of the needs of others. On other occasions, they are careless of the effect of their actions. For example, when older pupils use the cloakrooms adjacent to the reception classroom where other children are working, they have little concern about making excessive noise. Pupils have few opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.

13. Pupils' attendance is good. Overall attendance is above the national average and there is little unauthorised absence. Very few pupils are late and this allows a prompt start to the day. Good attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The inspection findings are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.

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

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now enabling pupils to make good progress in many areas of the curriculum. The teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. In 74 per cent of lessons teaching is good which includes 26 per cent which are very good. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection when there was no very good teaching and almost one fifth was unsatisfactory. The monitoring policy has had a major impact on this improvement and the benefit for pupils' learning is evident in the improvement in the school's results in national tests. Teaching is good overall for the under-fives and at both key stages. There are also examples of very good teaching throughout all key stages.

15. The teachers have a good knowledge of most subjects they teach and how children under five learn. They are confident and competent in teaching the basic skills for literacy and numeracy. Opportunities are taken to develop these basic skills in other subjects but the use of worksheets in some lessons limits such opportunities. The teachers have worked hard to get to grips with teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to mixed age groups and their efforts have been successful. The teaching enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress in learning to read and write. Pupils with special educational needs and other lower attaining pupils have tasks closely matched to their needs. For example, in a literacy lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher worked with a group of less able pupils to improve their recognition of the long 'i-e' sound, whilst the support assistant worked with the remaining pupils. The support staff are well qualified and are used effectively to support pupils' learning of the basic skills. Further specialist help for pupils and guidance for teachers is provided by a local authority support teacher. There is sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in most lessons.

16. Teachers' lesson planning has improved and is now good overall; it is consistent in format and content. Most lesson plans provide effective support for teaching. Lesson plans contain learning objectives for pupils which are shared with them and often returned to towards the end to check that pupils' have acquired new knowledge and skills, or to reinforce the key points to be learned. Teachers use this time towards the end of lessons effectively to assess how much pupils have learned so future work can be planned to meet their needs. All adults know the pupils well and this helps in planning for their needs. Where planning is less effective, this is due to the same task being planned for all pupils in a class regardless of their age and prior attainment and does not offer sufficient challenge to higher attaining pupils.

17. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods according to the lesson being undertaken.

There is a clear link between the interest of the lesson content, the teaching methods, and the behaviour of the pupils. Where lessons involve challenging practical activities which require pupils to solve problems, for example when making a working torch in Years 5 and 6, they rise to the challenge, work hard and behaviour is good. Teaching and learning in these lessons is very good. Where lessons begin with the teacher leading a question and answer session to check on prior learning, give new information and then give all pupils the same worksheet to complete, behaviour often deteriorates, especially when all pupils are required to work at the same rate filling in the worksheets. This is too demanding for the younger lower attaining pupils and insufficiently demanding for the older, higher attaining pupils. Some lesson time is taken up with discipline and pupils are held back in their learning. Teachers' expectations of pupils are high with under-fives and satisfactory at both key stages. Whilst there are high expectations of work, the presentation of it is often untidy and lacks care. Teachers allow this to go on with few comments evident in the work over the year. This is unsatisfactory. There is variation in how teachers store pupils' work and how they value it. Some keep all work in books, others keep loose sheets of paper, sometimes undated and it is difficult for pupils to refer back to previous topics or for teachers to determine the rate of learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were comparing the Great Exhibition with the Millennium Dome and needed to refer back to work on the Victorians. Discussions with pupils showed their level of knowledge and understanding is greater than written work indicates.

18. The management of pupils is good with children under five and satisfactory in both key stages. There are pupils who have behavioural difficulties who, occasionally, are not managed effectively throughout lessons. When these pupils work in small groups supported by adults they can work sensibly and achieve well. When left to work on their own they tend to talk to others and not achieve their full potential. Teachers are not clear how many times to speak to a pupil before taking further action to prevent disruption to the learning of other members of the class. There is a lack of consistency, which needs to be overcome.

19. The classroom assistants offer good quality support usually to lower attaining pupils and enable them to make good progress. They are well briefed as to their roles before lessons begin, have their own lesson plan and get on without having to refer to the class teacher. They enable pupils to participate in all lessons by supporting them in class discussions when appropriate to do so. Learning resources made by teachers themselves are of very good quality and used effectively in the reception and Key Stage 1 classes. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' attainment through questioning them, observing them at work or assessing their knowledge and understanding at the end of topics. Satisfactory use is made of the information they gather, either repeating work if it is evident pupils do not fully understand. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 class it was evident pupils had not fully understood when to round decimals up or down, and the teacher said they would return to the task the next day. Homework is set throughout the school, not only in basic skills, but also in other subjects. This extends learning into the home and supports the pupils' rate of progress.

20. The quality of teaching enables pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. The productivity and pace of working in most lessons is good. Pupils' own knowledge of their rate of learning in English is developing through having targets inside the cover of their exercise books. This keeps them in the pupils' minds and available for teachers when marking work. This is a good, manageable system which the school plans to extend. There are good systems for encouraging pupils to evaluate their own learning at Key Stage 2. Pupils indicate on their work how well they feel they have understood new work. This works well where pupils are honest in their responses. Class targets are on display in some classrooms, which again keeps them in pupils' minds.

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

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in which all subjects of the National Curriculum, areas of learning for under fives and religious education are taught and statutory requirements are met. The time allocated to individual subjects is broadly appropriate and the weaknesses evident at the last inspection have been addressed. The curriculum provides a range of worthwhile opportunities that meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy and a positive start has been made to implementing the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The curriculum for information technology has improved since the last inspection but is still at an early stage of development and the benefits are yet to be translated into improvement in skills and

levels of attainment.

22. There are good policies in place for all subjects. There is now sufficient detailed guidance available for teachers on the organisation, content and planning in most subjects. Good use has been made of a combination of national and local authority schemes of work to provide teachers with a great deal of advice. There are still some subjects such as information technology, art and physical education where teachers need further guidance. There is satisfactory long term planning from which medium term and weekly plans are derived. Effective use is made of the planning format that is recommended as part of the literacy and numeracy strategies.

23. The small team of teachers plan together effectively and coordinators monitor the planning in their subjects. This means that teachers are very aware of the work that is going on in all year groups, and how skills develop throughout the school. On a number of occasions, teachers swap classes for lessons to ensure better use is made of their individual expertise in, for example, religious education and music at Key Stage 1. In Years 5 and 6, where two teachers teach the class, they also use their individual strengths appropriately, although the teachers are not always aware of the work being carried out by their colleague. The work is well matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils in the substantial majority of lessons but, in a few lessons, everybody is expected to complete the same tasks.

24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school maintains an appropriate register for special educational needs, complies with the national code of practice and meets statutory obligations. Pupils with special educational needs are often grouped by ability in mathematics and English lessons to enable teachers to provide appropriately matched work. In addition, the learning support staff are often effectively deployed to work with the less able and support their learning. The pupils are all able to take a full part in the curriculum and in all other aspects of school life. The individual education plans focus correctly on language and general progress skills but the targets are sometimes too vague to enable accurate judgements about a pupil's progress towards specific targets to be made. The class teacher carries out reviews of individual education plans and the parents are appropriately invited to attend these meetings. There were no pupils with statements of special educational need at the time of the inspection. The good provision has a positive impact on the pupils' progress.

25. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. Provision for personal and social education is good. The school has a sound programme for personal and health education, which includes sex education and work on drug awareness. The school nurse works specifically with the older pupils for more focused work on sex education, and this gives boys and girls the opportunity to ask more personal questions in a safe and supportive environment.

26. The range of out of school activities is unsatisfactory. The only activities available after school, sporting activities and a French club, are provided on a paying basis by an outside organisation. However, the distance many pupils have to travel to school, and the use of a school bus at set times also makes after school activities difficult to provide. Staff do provide opportunities for pupils to participate in musical and sporting activities, such as recorder lessons and team games in swimming, cricket and football against other schools. Good residential activity weeks are run for older pupils. Pupils are able to use computers during lunchtimes but this is not run in an organised way to develop specific skills.

27. There are good curricular links with the local pre-school playgroup and this makes the transfer of children to the reception class more effective. There are satisfactory links in place with the secondary school, including a science project begun in Year 6 and completed when pupils attend the new school at the start of Year 7. Together with joint sports activities, this helps ensure that pupils are well prepared for their transfer.

28. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall and has been maintained since the last inspection. There is good guidance to help teachers to understand the wide range of opportunities for promoting each of these aspects of the curriculum.

29. Overall, the teachers satisfactorily provide pupils with knowledge and insight into different values and beliefs. The religious education syllabus includes a broad range of major world religions and pupils are building up a sound knowledge of each of them. Displays in the school introduce pupils to aspects of Sikhism and Judaism. Pupils have visited a temple in Cambridge and have listened to a

Buddhist visitor to the school talk about aspects of their beliefs. Local clergy also visit the school regularly to take assemblies. Collective worship meets statutory requirements.

30. The ethos created in the school is one of satisfactory behaviour and most pupils demonstrate courtesy and good manners, although a small number demonstrate a more negative attitude towards school. All teachers and support staff help pupils to distinguish right from wrong in their day-to-day dealings with them but not enough time is given to encouraging pupils to reflect on their misdemeanours and identify how these affect other people. There is a strong moral code embodied in the behaviour policy and in the home-school contract. Teachers act effectively as role models.

31. Social skills are developed through the curriculum where pupils are encouraged to co-operate and work together. For example, in the reception class children are developing good social skills through learning to share and to play together co-operatively. In Years 5 and 6, pupils work in small groups to produce a poem on a theme. During this work, they learn to negotiate and come to joint collaborative decisions. In art, children have taken part in local millennium projects, producing screen-printed banners, and drawing buttercups in a local meadow. Residential visits in Year 6 are used effectively to promote skills of collaboration and abiding by the rules. Pupils take personal responsibility for some minor tasks in the classroom and throughout the school.

32. There is broadly satisfactory promotion of cultural development, including multicultural awareness. Subjects such as English, art, music and history are providing some knowledge of Western cultures, but there is less evidence of learning about other cultures. The pupils are learning about different authors from present and previous times, and about some famous painters, artists and composers, though these aspects of culture are not given enough emphasis in the curriculum overall.

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

33. There are generally sound procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and well looked after but some health and safety procedures lack rigour. Appropriately trained staff look after pupils who are ill or who have accidents at school and staff are aware of which pupils have specific medical conditions. The school has adopted local child protection procedures and the designated teacher has received training. Appropriate support is given by external agencies such as social services. Whilst electrical and fire equipment is checked for safety, formal health and safety risk assessment of the premises is intermittent and procedures for recording hazards and the action taken are unsatisfactory. Fire drills have not been recorded. Subject policies do not contain risk assessment for curricular activities.

34. Procedures for monitoring academic and personal development are good overall, although monitoring of personal development is informal. Good systems are in use for identifying and monitoring pupils with special educational needs. Children are assessed when they start in the reception class and again at the end of the year. This allows good evaluation of learning in that year and provides confirmation of the need for additional support for pupils. In the rest of the school, pupils' reading and spelling ability is assessed each year and recorded in an on-going record. Writing is monitored each term although the recording of the level achieved is not consistent on the samples of work. Progress in mathematics and science is also well monitored and recorded. In Key Stage 2, pupils take the optional national assessment tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Other subjects are also monitored satisfactorily. Staff use their good knowledge and relationships with pupils to record personal development in the pupil's report. This information is maintained in a pupil's personal record. Although staff generally encourage appropriate behaviour, their expectations are not always high enough. The anti-bullying policy, whilst apparently effective, is insufficiently explicit about the action to be taken should bullying occur. Registers are completed correctly each day although the total present is not recorded. Attendance is well monitored, although minor areas of official guidance regarding pupil security have not yet been implemented.

35. The school makes satisfactory use of this data to improve educational, and to a lesser extent, personal support for pupils. Teachers use on-going assessment satisfactorily in lessons to modify plans for subsequent lessons. Longer-term records are in a variety of formats and tend to be class and subject based. Classes and groups of pupils are set targets based on monitoring of overall progress. Since class files do not contain formal records of attitudes, behaviour or attendance for individuals, this hinders support, which should be based on the broad assessment of both personal

and academic development. Pupils attaining the level below that expected for their age, are placed on the special educational needs register and assessment used well to set their individual learning programmes. The school also identifies those with higher attainment but has not yet used the information to target these pupils for extra support. Whilst the school recognises that test results show girls outperform boys to an extent greater than the national picture, little has been done to rectify this. The school has started to modify the curriculum based on more detailed analysis of national assessment tests. Examples of this are extra provision for extended writing and mental mathematics.

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

36. Generally, parents are satisfied with the school although some have concerns. They think that standards and teaching are good. They believe that the school has a caring atmosphere. However there are some concerns over the lack of extra-curricular activities and behaviour, and an unusually large percentage of parents responding to the questionnaire said that their child does not like school. A small number of parents at the meeting were concerned about the quality of their communication with the school, feeling that the headteacher did not always take them seriously.

37. The inspection team supports many of the parents' positive views, particularly those on standards, progress and quality of teaching. Extra-curricular activities, whilst fewer than usually found, are constrained by the small number of teachers and difficulties resulting from many of the pupils travelling by school bus. However, the inspection team shares some of the concerns over the behaviour of a small number of pupils and finds that information given is often unsatisfactory and lacking in sensitivity to parents' rights.

38. The school's links with parents are currently unsatisfactory. Several parents at the meeting and in the questionnaire had concerns over the attitude of the school towards them. They felt that concerns were not always addressed - 'swept under the carpet' - and that communications from the school sometimes exacerbated the feeling that their views counted for little. One concern was over the charging for curriculum activities such as swimming. The charging policy is entirely appropriate - charges are voluntary and no child is excluded if payment is not made. However, the tone of the letters to parents asking for the money bears more resemblance to a final demand from a utility company. The school has made a decision to limit drastically the size and content of the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents and to issue them together to avoid duplication. Neither meets statutory requirements and, even if they are seen as complementary, some information is missing. The school has not recognised that these documents serve different purposes and should be a valuable source of information for parents, which they currently are not. The reports provided annually on pupils' progress do not meet statutory requirements because they do not always include a statement on progress in information technology or appropriately specific information on attainment in other subjects. The contents are better for English and mathematics and include some advice on how the pupil can progress. The home-school agreement has been issued and returned by most parents but has had little effect as yet. There is no space for what the pupils agree to do. Other general information for parents is satisfactory.

39. Parents play a satisfactory part in their child's education but this is restricted by the limitations given above. Most parents hear their children read at home and comment in the reading diary. Many ensure that their child joins the local travelling library. This helps to raise standards in English. Parents are appropriately involved in discussions and decisions about their child's special needs. Parents are generally supportive of homework. The friends' association is active in organising fund-raising and social events and these are well supported by parents. Very few adults help in the school, which the school believes is because most are at work. Those who do give valued support for practical subjects like cookery and needlework. However, the school makes little effort to enrol support from local adults who may have knowledge or experiences, which would support the curriculum. Very few, if any, parents attend the annual parents' meeting. This is a lost opportunity for parents to express their views and opinions on priorities for development and other aspects of the school.

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

40. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, with both strengths and

weaknesses. Because of the small number of staff and the class teaching commitment of the headteacher, the school sought guidance from the local authority's advisory service in overcoming the weaknesses identified in the previous report. The intense level of support provided has been instrumental in helping the school to achieve good improvement. The most notable improvements being in teaching and pupils' learning; now evident in the improved national test results. The staff work closely together as a team, are committed and support each other well. They carry out their delegated responsibilities in a conscientious manner and keep governors well informed about the developments and improvements in their subject areas and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum co-ordinators have played an important part in driving up standards by the age of seven and eleven. The leadership in subject areas is clearer than in whole school issues. The school development plan has identified the correct priorities for development but the success criteria do not show the expected impact of the action on pupils' attainment. The plan does not contain sufficient information on how the school will be developed beyond the current year.

41. The school has an appropriate set of aims, designed to enable pupils to reach their full potential within a caring and secure school. These aims are mostly reflected in practice, although there are areas where they could be applied more rigorously, for example in expecting pupils to produce neat work and in expecting good standards of behaviour from all pupils. In focusing their efforts on raising and sustaining standards, teachers have not kept such a close eye on all other aspects and this has allowed the behaviour of a small number to deteriorate. Once pointed out to the headteacher during the inspection, the behaviour showed improvement.

42. The governors have undertaken training to develop their role in the strategic development and improvement of the school and, whilst progress has been made since the previous inspection, they acknowledge there is still much to be done. In particular they need to have a longer-term strategic view of where the school is heading as the building work to extend the accommodation gets underway. The priority areas will need to be clear and the funding linked more closely to the priorities than it is currently. The governors have not set performance targets for the headteacher or his deputy and their monitoring procedures are in early stages of development. They rely on the headteacher's termly reports for much of their information and these reports do not give as much information as they should to keep governors fully informed. As a result governors are not as aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as they should be. The governors are not fulfilling their statutory responsibilities in relation to the contents of the annual governors' report to parents, keeping a register of pecuniary interests and that the school has procedures in place for appraising the work of the teachers.

43. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching, and supporting individuals where necessary, are very good. All co-ordinators have received training in carrying out their responsibilities and are effective in managing the subject areas. All monitor planning and have undertaken some monitoring of teaching or pupils' work, given feedback to individuals and supported them in overcoming problems. This has resulted in the improved quality of teaching and learning evident in this inspection. The co-ordinators are in a much stronger position to identify areas for further improvement and take appropriate action now that they have a good overview of their subjects. The only exception is in science where no monitoring of teaching has taken place, although there has been scrutiny of pupils' work.

44. The headteacher and his deputy carry out a thorough analysis of test results each year and track the progress of individuals and different year groups to determine the value added by the school. This shows most pupils make at least satisfactory progress over their time in the school, a significant number make good progress but one or two do not make as much progress as they should. Whilst good use is made of the data to track individual pupils and set class and individual targets for pupils, little consideration has been given to the attainment of boys and girls where the differences are greater than found nationally. Some analysis of individual questions identified a weakness in pupils' mental recall and strategies and the school adapted the curriculum successfully to overcome the problems. The school exceeded its literacy and numeracy targets in 1999 and is likely to do so again this year. The targets set are not as challenging as they should be given the wealth of data available.

45. The school makes unsatisfactory strategic use of its financial resources because spending decisions are not linked clearly enough to educational priorities. The school development plan focuses too heavily on the action to be taken and places insufficient emphasis on the outcomes in terms of pupils' attainment. It is limited in scope and too short term because of the school's perception of budgetary constraints. It is therefore not an effective tool for allocating resources when

they become available. Budget setting relies too heavily on historic expenditure patterns and ad hoc allocation of additional funds as they are released. The school has become too focused on the small amount of what it sees as marginal funds instead of standing back and taking a strategic view of the school's needs and how to best meet them with all the funds available. Once funds have been allocated, financial control is good. Governors monitor the progress of expenditure against budget to ensure financial propriety. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been implemented. The funds allocated for specific purposes have been properly spent. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value more effectively by comparing the cost of educating a pupil in the school compared with similar schools.

46. The school has adequate staffing and learning resources. There are sufficient teachers for the number of classes, although the headteacher has to teach part-time. Staff meet their responsibilities as subject co-ordinators. The number of classroom assistants is adequate and they are used well. Classrooms are adequate in size. The school is well cleaned and made attractive with displays. In some areas, however, these are unimaginative and do not make sufficient use of pupils' work to stimulate interest. The hall is of inadequate size for indoor physical education and children under five have limited resources for outdoor play. Otherwise outdoor facilities are very good with a pond, used to support science, outdoor climbing apparatus and a large field. Resources for most curriculum areas are satisfactory, although heavy reliance is placed on borrowed resources for specific topics. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory but are well augmented through the support service. The number of computers is adequate, although insufficiently supported by software. Although classrooms have their own reference books, there is no general library and pupils' library research skills are unsatisfactory.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to sustain standards and raise them further, the headteacher and governors need to:

ž improve progress in science for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 by:

- providing more challenging activities which build on their prior attainment;
- making better use of the assessment information available to determine which pupils are ready to move to the higher level;

(Discussed in paragraphs 1, 5, and 75)

ž improve the presentation of pupils' work by:

- implementing an agreed policy for teaching handwriting and insisting that pupils use the taught style;
- raising teachers' expectations and insisting pupils set work out in an organised manner;

(Discussed in paragraphs 65, 72)

ž the governors should improve their strategic planning by:

- placing more emphasis on the school's longer term needs and including them in the school development plan;
- linking the action to be taken in reaching targets in the school development plan to raise standards;
- setting priorities for action so that when finances become available they are used efficiently;
- continuing to develop their knowledge of the school in order to hold it to account for the standards and provision.

(Discussed in paragraphs 40, 42, 45)

ž improve links with parents by:

- improving the quality of information in pupil reports and the school prospectus so they give clear information and meet statutory requirements;
- taking steps to seek parents' views of the school and including them more fully in the life of the school.

(Discussed in paragraphs 36, 38, and 39).

48. In addition to these key issues consideration should be given to including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- the governors should comply with their statutory obligations to draw up a register of pecuniary interests and to set performance targets for the head and deputy headteacher (discussed in paragraph 42);
- increase the rigour of health and safety procedures by recording fire drill practices and including risk assessments in policy documents (discussed in paragraph 33).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26	48	26	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	97
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.3	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	11
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (67)	95 (92)	100 (100)
	National	82 (78)	83 (80)	87 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	9
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	18	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (83)	95 (92)	89 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	8	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	8
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (66)	94 (27)	94 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	12	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (67)	93 (80)	93 (93)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	80
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.08
Average class size	24.25

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	99/2000
	£
Total income	178,399
Total expenditure	179,935
Expenditure per pupil	1,978
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,000
Balance carried forward to next year	-538

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	97
Number of questionnaires returned	31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	29	16	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	32	10	10	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	10	3	0
The teaching is good.	52	39	6	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	58	3	7	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	0	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	3	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	42	39	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	55	19	10	3	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	29	6	0

### Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues raised in the six letters received from parents. Three praised the dedication of some teachers in meeting the individual needs of their child.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

49. Pupils enter the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become 5. There are currently six pupils who are four years old. Assessment of children in the reception class within the first few weeks in school shows that overall, attainment on entry for the current year group is below average, particularly in early reading and writing skills and in their understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Personal and social skills are in line with the expectations for pupils' ages. The school reports attainment on entry this year to be similar to previous years.

#### **Personal and social development**

50. Virtually all the pupils are on target to achieve or exceed the targets in personal and social development soon after the age of five and progress in this area of learning is satisfactory. There is good liaison with the neighbouring pre-school playgroup, which most attended, and this helps them to settle in quickly to school routines. Strong emphasis is placed on developing the children's skills in this area of learning and opportunities are taken whenever they arise to help pupils work and share with others. The pupils are confident in moving around activities and in approaching adults when in need of help. They enter happily each morning and want to work. Most pupils have established effective relationships with each other; one or two have difficulty mixing with certain other pupils. The large majority of pupils can sustain their concentration for long periods of time, until tasks are complete. All pupils demonstrate good levels of independence in dressing themselves and in personal hygiene. However, opportunities to develop independence by choosing for themselves from a wide range of activities are limited. When pupils are allowed to choose activities it is only from a very limited range. Pupils are moved on after a period of time to enable them all to experience what is on offer. However, this does not always allow pupils to complete what they were doing. They respond well to praise and accept criticism if the reason for it is carefully explained. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. The adults know most of the children and their families well and this helps them in responding to their individual needs. The adults have quiet reassuring manners to which the pupils respond well.

#### **Language and literacy**

51. Standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Virtually all pupils are on target to achieve or exceed the level expected soon after the age of five. Progress towards the nationally agreed benchmarks is good in all aspects, and particularly in reading and writing where attainment on entry is lower. Literacy hours have been adapted well for these young pupils. They are able to speak with some clarity and make their needs and views known. They listen with interest to stories and offer opinions. All pupils know some letter sounds with more able pupils knowing most of them. All are reading or sharing the early books from a graded reading scheme. All make good attempts at writing their names and letters are usually formed correctly. Pupils of average ability and above are beginning to write familiar words and simple sentences using their knowledge of letter sounds. Good use is made of the computer to consolidate learning in this aspect. Lower attaining pupils can copy underneath an adult's writing. There are opportunities for pupils to write during role-play activities, for example in the pretend café. The teaching in this area of learning is consistently good. The teacher is very competent in teaching the basic skills and makes effective use of praise to encourage pupils to try and succeed. In turn the pupils respond well. Resources made by the staff are attractive, interest the pupils and encourage them to learn. The pupils are well prepared for the full literacy hours in Key Stage 1.

#### **Mathematics**

52. Standards are above average; virtually all pupils are on target to reach or exceed the level expected soon after the age of five. Higher attaining pupils can count and order numbers beyond 20 and recognise and write numerals to 10. They are aware of larger numbers, for example on their doors at home and can give their telephone numbers. Average attaining pupils are working with numbers to 20. There are no four year olds working below this level. All pupils are beginning to understand addition and subtraction of numbers, being able to count on and count back from 10 or 20. All pupils are beginning to build up their range of mathematical vocabulary, understanding

comparative language such as heavier or lighter; and positional language such as above, below and next to. They recognise coins and higher attaining pupils are just beginning to put out small amounts of money correctly. For example, they made 3 pence with one two pence coin and a one pence coin when involved in role-play in the café. Other pupils gave three coins. When the teacher placed the coins in order of value, one four year old said they were in the wrong order because they did not go up in size. All pupils can name simple shapes such as squares, circles and triangles. The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good and enables pupils to make good progress. All adults have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and are preparing pupils well for activities in Key Stage 1 by concentrating on developing mental recall of number bonds. The classroom assistant is deployed effectively to work with small groups of pupils needing support in a particular aspect of the work. Resources made by the teacher make learning fun for the pupils as they feel they are playing games. This is evident when exchanging coins to make 10 pence. The rate of learning is good for all pupils.

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

53. Standards are above average; most pupils are on target to achieve the level expected soon after their fifth birthday. They develop a sense of past and present from talking about members of their family and past events in their lives. They know some of the features of the local area and can compare the cathedral in Ely with the church in Mepal. Their natural curiosity is promoted well during the study of living creatures found in the school grounds and they can explain the life cycle of a butterfly in simple terms. They can name the main parts of their bodies and know we have five senses. They explore different materials and learn how to join them together securely, for example when making hot air balloons and when making models from construction kits. They know it is best to use paper fasteners to attach arms and legs to puppets if they want them to move. They investigate the effect of heat on materials when cooking and know that it changes some materials. They use the computer independently showing they can control the mouse and understanding that it responds to their commands. The quality of teaching is good. A wide range of interesting activities is planned, usually linked to the literacy work, and this is effective in extending pupils' knowledge and skills in many areas of learning.

### **Physical development**

54. Standards in physical development are above average. All pupils are on target to reach or exceed the level expected soon after the age of five. Good progress is made in learning to control their movements. Pupils go swimming and all are beginning to swim unaided. This is important given the amount of water in the locality. When pupils enter the school they use an area of the field with climbing equipment and small apparatus before progressing to the larger climbing frame used by all pupils. They run, jump, climb, slide, balance and swing confidently. Pupils can support their body weight with their arms when swinging on the climbing frame. They can do somersaults using bars on the climbing frame. The hall is used for gymnastics and dance to develop creativity and improve control of bodily movements. Due consideration is given to safety of these young pupils and they have their outdoor play at a different time to other pupils. There is no separate, secure area for four year olds and no access to wheeled toys, although this is being considered as part of the plans for extending the school. Pupils make good progress in developing control of pencils, paintbrushes and glue spreaders. They handle small items of equipment with ease and use scissors confidently when cutting out, managing to cut close to the lines. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, there are opportunities planned for physical activity each day and pupils develop a positive attitude to exercise. When involved in outdoor play, the teachers supervise rather than teach the pupils. This should be remedied.

### **Creative development**

55. Standards in creative development are above average. All pupils are on target to achieve the outcomes expected soon after the age of five, but none are likely to exceed this level. They can paint pictures, usually applying paint without smudging the colours. They make attractive patterns using strips of paper, which they weave over and under to give the effect of a dome. They are confident in creating their own printed patterns using sponges and in making models using play dough. They have used their skills in cutting out, which are good for their age, to make a frieze of owls to help them recognise numbers. Much of the work on display shows all pupils make the same things and the opportunities for pupils to choose what they use from a range of materials is limited. They can decide what to paint for themselves, but beyond this, opportunities to develop creativity are

mostly through music and movement. Adults often lead activities, and this is inappropriate, hindering the pupils' development of creativity. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Activities are planned effectively to provide a range of experiences for all pupils and to reinforce literacy skills.

56. The attainment and progress of the under-fives reflects the consistently good and sometimes very good quality of teaching, particularly in the basic skills. Planning is detailed and effective links are made between the areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good; pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and activities planned for small groups having specific difficulties. The relationships between all adults and pupils are good and support the learning. Resources are adequate, used well, and extended by good quality games made by the teacher. The only weakness is in the balance between activities directed by adults and opportunities for pupils to choose what they do, collect their own resources and tidy them away when they have completed their task. The quality of provision for under-fives has been sustained since the previous inspection. The criticism made at that time about the lack of a policy has been remedied.

## **ENGLISH**

57. Standards are above average. In 1999, the Key Stage 1 national assessments showed that in reading, standards were above those found nationally and that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was also above average. In writing, attainment was well above the national average and a broadly average proportion of pupils reached the higher level. When they are compared with similar schools, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was well above average. In writing, a well above average proportion of pupils reached the higher level than in similar schools. In reading, it was an above average proportion.

58. The Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 showed an above average proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in English, while a well above average proportion of pupils reached the higher level. When compared with pupils in similar schools, attainment was also well above average. Inspection findings indicate that these good results will be repeated or improved upon in this year's tests, in both key stages.

59. The positive results shown by the national tests in 1999 are reflected in the evidence collected during the inspection. They represent a clear improvement since the last inspection, and the improvements in standards have been achieved at a faster rate than those found nationally. The school has concentrated on improving standards in the basic skills recently and this is having a positive effect on pupils' reading and writing skills. The overall progress made by pupils is good throughout the school, and builds well on the below average language skills evident when they enter the reception class.

60. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress towards their targets. The support offered by the teachers and other staff helps to improve the weaknesses in their literacy skills.

61. In both key stages, the girls have outperformed the boys over recent years, and to a greater extent than is found nationally, but there were no significant differences in attainment evident during the inspection. However, the girls' attitudes towards the subject are more positive than many of the boys'. In the majority of the lessons observed the attitudes to learning were good at both key stages. Pupils are well behaved and listen attentively to the teacher, joining in with the reading of the text when required. Although the content of much of the work is good, the poor presentation of much of the written work indicates that pupils do not take as much pride in the finished product as they should.

62. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory throughout the school and pupils make good progress on the below average skills evident when they start school. During the inspection, the performance of haikus demonstrated a variety of speaking skills but not enough opportunities are provided for this to happen. Many of the older pupils are, on occasion, reluctant to take part in class discussion or question and answer sessions. However, in small groups or on an individual basis they are often more open, articulate and willing to offer their opinions. At Key Stage 1, pupils are more willing to talk and are often very keen to join in class discussions and answer questions.

63. Standards in reading are above the national average, and the higher attaining pupils are

accurate and fluent readers who demonstrate an interest in books and good literature. The use of a good variety of dictionaries and thesauruses helps to develop older pupils' skills in using non-fiction books. In addition, the recent introduction of the Internet provides a further opportunity to improve pupils' research skills. However, the majority of the pupils spoken to had little idea of how to use their good basic reading skills in finding information, and this is largely due to the lack of a school library, although teachers do make a range of information books available in classrooms. The less able readers make good progress, and all of those heard reading have the beginnings of basic phonic skills and an idea of how to attempt unknown words. Most pupils make use of the public library van that visits the village regularly, although the older, less able readers no longer make use of this. Although the basic reading skills are clearly in place, and most of the readers are very fluent and reading books at an appropriate level for them, few of the pupils read with expression. Good use of texts in Year 3 and 4 encourages pupils to use the skills of inference to gain extra meaning from their reading. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can compare two texts by the same author looking at characters, setting and events. Teachers keep good reading records, and the home - school diaries show that most parents also play an important part by regularly hearing their children read at home.

64. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good understanding of correct punctuation and they can write in a variety of styles. In particular, good imaginative writing is produced in a variety of formats. For example, poetry writing in Japanese or Anglo-Saxon styles, demonstrates creativity and good descriptive skills. Stories based on texts from their literacy lessons show humour and a good sense of plot. Younger pupils plan a piece of writing based on time travel and this provides a good link to history. However, not enough use is made of the time and opportunity available in other subjects to develop writing skills in a more practical way. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress over the year. They write increasingly complex sentences and the higher attaining pupils learn to use connectives accurately and appropriately.

65. Pupils' handwriting skills are unsatisfactory. There is no agreed whole school formats for learning to shape and join letters. The result of this is a majority of pupils who have untidy and poorly presented written work; older junior pupils who do not regularly join their writing; and letter formation that is uneven and unclear. The poor presentation skills are carried over into other subjects and pupils do not demonstrate enough pride in their work. The growing use of computers is teaching pupils satisfactory word processing skills. By the age of eleven they can edit, change font and colour, move text, and save and print their work.

66. Teachers have worked very hard to introduce successfully the daily literacy lesson based on the national framework. This has clearly had a positive effect on standards, which have risen rapidly over the past two years. During the inspection, all the teaching observed was at least good and twenty-five per cent was very good. The marking of pupils' work is often good, with clear comments praising, evaluating and giving ideas for improvement, although too often teachers accept work that is poorly presented. The teaching has been monitored effectively by the co-ordinator, headteacher and local authority adviser. Together with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, this has resulted in the good improvements in the teaching since the last inspection.

67. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to raise standards and introduce the literacy strategy successfully. Resources have been carefully purchased to address known weaknesses. Good use is made of the local authority library service to augment the texts available in the school. The lack of a central library facility in the school has a negative effect on the pupils' research skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

68. The results of national tests for seven-year-olds were well above the national average in 1999 and are very similar this year. The 1999 results were also well above the average for similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that standards are well above average for seven-year-olds; over nine-tenths are attaining the expected level, or higher. Approximately three tenths are attaining the higher level. Standards were well above average for eleven-year-olds in the 1999 national tests and well above the average for similar schools. Inspection findings show that standards by the age of eleven are still well above average. Over nine-tenths of pupils are attaining the level expected and over one third are attaining the higher level. Results in recent years show boys do better than girls and to a greater extent than found nationally but most of the pupils reaching the higher level this year are girls. The school's results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend.

69. The National Numeracy Strategy has been fully implemented and staff have worked hard to make it work successfully with mixed age classes. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and this includes those with special educational needs. Some of these pupils attain the level expected for their age as a result of the good quality support they receive from classroom assistants. The teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy and place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' mental recall of number facts and strategies for calculation.

70. At Key Stage 1, pupils soon begin to add and subtract numbers to 10 mentally, and begin to explain how they arrived at the answer by counting on or back. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand place value to 999 and can round numbers to the nearest 100. They can solve number and money problems using amounts up to £5. They are beginning to understand multiplication and division and can give half and a quarter of given numbers. They can estimate and measure in metres and centimetres with increasing accuracy and recognise and name a range of three-dimensional shapes. Average attaining pupils can apply the four rules of number when solving problems with numbers up to 20. They can order numbers to 999, put out amounts of money up to 50pence and give the number of faces and edges on solid shapes such as cubes and cuboids. Lower attaining pupils can order numbers to 50 and add and subtract two digit numbers. They are beginning to understand multiplication. The average and lower attaining pupils have also estimated and measured using standard and non-standard measures.

71. Pupils continue to make good progress in developing their skills and knowledge at Key Stage 2. By the age of eleven, they use the four rules of number with confidence. They can divide by 10, 100 and 1000 mentally. They use decimals to 2 decimal places and can change fractions to decimals. They are confident when doubling and halving numbers and in solving problems. They recall multiplication facts quickly and accurately. They know the properties of different types of triangles, for example, scalene and isosceles triangles and can work out the perimeter and area of regular and irregular shapes. They can draw accurately obtuse and acute angles of a given size. They handle a range of data and present their findings in block and line graphs. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils produce line graphs to show rainfall over the year. Insufficient use is made of computers to support learning at Key Stage 2.

72. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the mental sessions at the beginning of lessons and respond well. The pace of some of these sessions could be speeded up a little more in order to give more challenge. This enthusiasm is less evident in the work the children produce in their books, which is often untidily presented and difficult to read. The teachers accept this, rarely commenting on it and this is unsatisfactory.

73. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages and is sometimes very good. In the very good lessons in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6, there are good introductory sessions, which challenge pupils and make them think. For example, pupils in Year 2 had to work out the difference in cost between peanuts costing 24 pence and sandwiches costing 39 pence. The pupils use the 100 square to explain how they have arrived at the answer. Some chose to count backwards, others counting on and using their skills in rounding numbers to 10. In Key Stage 1, work is set at four different levels with tasks for pupils with special educational needs closely matched to their prior attainment. The classroom assistants are well deployed, working with a group during the introductory session as well as during the main part of the lesson. The time towards the end of lessons is used effectively to assess what pupils have learned and to determine the next stage in pupils' learning. The use of worksheets, where questions are not clear leads to a few pupils being unsure of what they have to do and this hinders their progress.

74. There has been good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed and monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place and information used to develop teaching skills.

## **SCIENCE**

75. Standards in science are broadly average at the age of seven and rise above the national average by the age of eleven. The Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. This is an improvement from the standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Inspection findings show over four fifths of pupils aged seven are attaining the level expected for their age. However, none are achieving the higher levels in life processes and

living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. This is because the school uses a commercial scheme of work designed to enable pupils to reach the national standard. A small number of pupils are insufficiently challenged and are being held back because the scheme is being followed too closely. In experimental and investigative science standards are higher, with approximately one fifth of seven year olds reaching the higher level. Inspection findings confirm the teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments in 1999 and 2000. Standards at the age of seven are not as high as in English and mathematics and could be higher if pupils are given more demanding tasks. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed all pupils in the Key Stage 1 class completing the same worksheets regardless of age or prior attainment. The pupils are confined by the limitations of the worksheets, particularly when only a few lines are given for them to write on.

76. By the age of eleven, over four fifths of pupils are attaining the level expected for their age, or higher, with approximately three tenths of pupils attaining the higher level. These proportions are similar to, although slightly below the results of national tests in 1999. This is due to a larger number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and some attain the national standard. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative and experimental skills and good progress is made in this aspect throughout the year groups. The test results in recent years, show that boys do better than girls and to a greater extent than found nationally. The school has not analysed the test questions to try and determine the reason for this. The inspection found no significant difference in the current attainment of boys and girls.

77. At Key Stage 1, pupils receive a broad range of experiences, which give good coverage of the National Curriculum programme of study. They can name body parts and the five senses, explaining which senses they used, for example when comparing bread and toast. They understand the conditions necessary to sustain life and are beginning to distinguish between living and non-living things. They observe the growth of tadpoles and how they change into frogs, reinforcing the knowledge gained in the reception class. They can name the main parts of a plant, such as leaves, petals and roots. They explore a range of materials and know some float and others sink, and can distinguish between magnetic and non-magnetic materials. They can construct simple circuits and have some understanding of the use of electricity in the home. From their experiments, such as when finding out which materials would be best for keeping out light, the pupils are beginning to gain an understanding of fair tests. They found it difficult initially to determine the difference between being fair to all members of the group and taking turns and setting up a fair test. Good progress is made in deepening their understanding of fair testing by the age of seven.

78. By the age of eleven, pupils plan and carry out their own investigations and show a good understanding of fair testing, evident, for example, in their experiment to test the permeability of rocks. They can set up experiments to test the strengths of different types of paper. They have a sound understanding of the main body organs and their functions, of food chains and the characteristics of different groups of animals such as mammals and amphibians. They can classify creatures according to their characteristics. They understand that materials may be changed by heat or cold and that some changes are reversible and others are not. They understand the difference between solids, liquids and gases and can explain clearly how to separate mixtures, for example salt and sand. They have some understanding of balanced and unbalanced forces, of force fields around a magnet and can measure forces in Newtons. Pupils can present their findings in tables and charts, often of their own design. However, little use is made of computers to generate tables or charts. Good links are made between science and design and technology where appropriate, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were making torches using their knowledge of electrical circuits including switches. Most completed the task successfully, although the finished products were cumbersome.

79. Where pupils are involved in practical activities, which are challenging, there is a real buzz of interest and enthusiasm and pupils work hard at completing the tasks. Teachers rarely need to speak to pupils about their behaviour. The pupils work well together and particularly at Key Stage 2, support each other by willingly sharing equipment such as batteries and bulb holders. There are a small number of pupils in Years 3 and 4, mostly boys, who show little interest in their work and little respect for adults, answering back and not settling to written tasks as they should do. This behaviour hinders the progress of others when time is taken up on discipline.

80. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages and is sometimes very good at Key Stage 2. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and all share the learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons. In the very good lessons with the Year 5 and 6 pupils there is a high level of challenge, with pupils expected to organise themselves to complete the task in the time

available. There is effective interaction with pupils as they are working to assess their level of understanding by asking questions such as 'why might the battery not light up?' and 'what do you need to check?' Teaching that is only satisfactory is evident where, following initial explanations and question and answer sessions, all pupils are given the same worksheet to complete. This does not enable the higher attaining pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

81. The weakness identified in the previous report has been remedied. The subject is now taught as an integral part of a broad and balanced curriculum. However, unlike most other subjects, no monitoring of the effectiveness of the subject policy, or of the teaching has taken place to judge whether all pupils are achieving their full potential. Whilst there has been good improvement in raising standards since the previous inspection there is further work to be done adapting the teaching to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1.

## **ART**

82. Standards in art have been maintained since the last inspection, and they broadly match those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Although the overall standards are satisfactory, there are examples of very good work throughout the school. However, the subject does not have a very high profile in the school and the good work produced is not always celebrated strongly enough through high quality displays. The study and appreciation of art from different cultures is also underdeveloped.

83. In the reception class, children have produced some very good pastel drawings of buttercups from direct observation in a local field, as part of a local millennium project. Year 1 and 2 pupils used clay to create very effective and unusual 'eggs' from which imaginary creatures have hatched. These were then fired and glazed in a local college. In Years 3 and 4, clay is also used; this time to make masks of faces showing a variety of expressions, following a brief study of some reproductions of portraits and photographs. Year 5 and 6 pupils have studied a portrait by Picasso, and geometric paintings by Bridget Riley. They have followed this up by producing some very good versions of their own. A number of older pupils worked with a visiting artist to design and create very effective banners using screen-printing techniques. These illustrate aspects of life in the village and surrounding community that the pupils feel are important.

84. The teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils are given sketchbooks in all classes but the use of these for practising and developing skills is inconsistent and irregular. Too few opportunities for observational drawing and for the appreciation of art from different cultures are provided. There are lessons when the intention to teach the whole class the same skill or method at the same time stifles pupils' creative expression and does not give them time to explore the possibilities opened up by the medium. However, the teaching of skills using clay or printing with tiles results in most pupils gaining a sound understanding of how they can work with these media.

85. The school uses the local authority's effective and detailed guidelines as the basis for its scheme and teachers' planning. The school needs to devise its own scheme of work to give teachers a clear idea of the skills they should be teaching and resources to be used each year, or over a two year period for the mixed age classes.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The introduction of a scheme of work based on the National Curriculum and the local authority's scheme now support the teaching of basic skills and these are better developed than was the case in 1996.

87. Little teaching was seen during the inspection and evidence was obtained from the scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils. Progress is satisfactory. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between pupils of different gender. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

88. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about the use of triangles as a strong shape when building a bridge. They then use straws to test this out. However, no opportunity for them to plan their work beforehand is provided. Earlier in the year they made model vehicles that were tested and improved as part of the design process. In Year 3 and 4 good, papier-mâché bowls were designed and made, and then evaluated. In addition, pupils used literacy skills to write out instructions for making the bowls.

89. At Key Stage 1, pupils use a variety of construction kits for both play and planned activities. In one lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils designed and made happy and sad faces using paper plates, paint and other collage materials. This lesson had good objectives, especially targeting the need for pupils to put down a base first before designing a face on top. A group of higher attaining pupils devised a good peach colour for the face rather than the majority's pink. Pupils also have the opportunity to use play dough and clay to create models that are photographed as a record.

90. Attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to talk about their work. They work well, both independently and collaboratively.

91. Little direct teaching was observed during the inspection, but that seen was satisfactory. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that when they use a book for their designs, or to keep worksheets in, they are often unmarked, undated and not annotated to explain the purpose of the exercise or the objectives of the lesson. Resources are well prepared and the practical nature of the lessons is well managed. However, as in art, there is a danger that lessons are too teacher-led and not enough opportunities are found for pupils to experiment with different media and materials.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection and are average for pupils aged seven and eleven. It was not possible to observe any lessons at Key Stage 2; judgements are based on the analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display, teachers' planning and talking to the pupils. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge, with good progress evident in developing mapping skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

93. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a toy named George Geography, which they take with them when going on family holidays to different locations. The pupils send postcards from their holiday destinations, which are located on a world map. This is an effective way of extending the pupils' knowledge of the British Isles and other countries. They read with interest the postcards, which George Geography sends to the school and this has stimulated an interest in maps and other localities. During the inspection George was on holiday in Majorca. By the age of seven, pupils have some understanding of how to locate features on plans and sketch maps, confidently giving reasons as to why they have placed features in a particular position on their map. Pupils understand why maps need keys. They can complete plans of bedrooms, placing furniture and other items in appropriate places and they know that England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales make up the British Isles. They have some knowledge of the geographical features of the local area, in particular the village of Mepal. They discuss the features they like about the school grounds and what would improve them, such as a rugby pitch and a seesaw.

94. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their mapping skills not only in school but also on field trips. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study Malham Tarn and know the difference in the physical features of Mepal and Malham. They have written tourists' guides to Malham, explaining clearly how an interesting day could be spent in the area. The accounts show a clear understanding of the

difference between the two localities, for example the limestone features and waterfalls. They carry out weather studies and can present information, for example rainfall and temperatures in graphs. They are currently studying settlements and understand some of the differences between rural and urban settlements. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a reasonable understanding of the course of a river, although their recall of vocabulary such as tributary and meander is weak. They can use grid references to locate features on maps and can compare and contrast the geographical features of Mepal with those of Caribbean Islands.

95. Pupils show interest in learning how to use maps and by Year 2 they are confident to take inspectors round the school grounds locating different geographical features and identifying where photographs had been taken from. By the age of eleven, the pupils' attitudes are satisfactory but less enthusiastic. There is no work available in pupils' books for analysis in Year 6 but talking to pupils about their field trip to Hilltop near Cromer shows that they understand coastal erosion and the need for coastal defences. They understand the physical features of the area and can identify some on a map of Sheringham. The weather at Cromer was noted to enable comparisons to be made between a coastal area and Mepal.

96. The teaching seen at Key Stage 1 is of very good quality and the analysis of work indicates teaching to be good overall. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and plan interesting activities, which enthuse the pupils and lead to a good rate of learning. There is excitement and interest from the pupils when locating parts of the school from photographs. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is evident and many challenging questions are posed to encourage pupils to think and look closely so they can locate the exact positions from where the photographs were taken.

97. The curriculum co-ordinator provides good leadership and support for colleagues. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been overcome. A clear policy with appropriate aims and the local authority's scheme of work have been implemented. Some monitoring of pupils' work and planning has been carried out to determine the effectiveness of the policy. Training has already been undertaken for Curriculum 2000 and the co-ordinator is clear about the amendments required to the current policy. The quantity and quality of teaching and learning resources have been improved and these are now satisfactory. Good improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. To secure further improvement greater emphasis needs to be put on geographical vocabulary.

## **HISTORY**

98. It was only possible to observe lessons in Key Stage 2 due to the organisation of the timetable. However, judgements are based on these lessons, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them. Standards are average for pupils aged seven and eleven and have been sustained since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. They develop enquiry and research skills and acquire knowledge and understanding of past and present, major periods in history and the significance of certain events. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others of the same age, although their written work at Key Stage 2 does not always indicate this to be the case.

99. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress as a result of the range of opportunities they have to consider people in history and to compare artefacts from the past with those of today. By the age of seven, pupils know that Queens Victoria, Elizabeth I and II have all had long reigns. They understand that the invention of engines has enabled people to travel further and faster. They know about the work of Florence Nightingale and some of the differences in hospitals in her time compared with today. They have studied homes and how they have changed over the years and from their knowledge have tried to work out what different objects they saw in Ely museum were used for. This is good preparation for the work in Key Stage 2. There is little evidence of the use of timelines to support the pupils' understanding of chronology. In assemblies about caring for others, the pupils recalled their knowledge of Florence Nightingale and extended their knowledge by hearing about the life of Mother Teresa. They listen with interest and ask questions to clarify their thoughts or seek further information.

100. In Key Stage 2, pupils acquire knowledge of major periods in history, making good use of CD-ROM to aid their research. By the age of eleven, they know about life in Roman times, for

example, how roads and baths were made, what Roman shops and amphitheatres were like, and how legionaries dressed. They can compare Roman and Celtic settlements. Pupils understand why the Saxons came to Britain, what their homes were like, how they dressed and entertained themselves. In Year 6, pupils can compare railways, shops, transport and the lives of rich and poor people in Victorian days with those of today. They make good use of computers and the local education authority's Intranet to research information. The pupils are eager to use the computers and show pride and pleasure when they find relevant information. There is less pride in the written work produced in other lessons over the year. It is often untidy showing a lack of care.

101. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and sometimes good. Educational visits are made to bring history to life for the pupils as far as possible. Such a visit has been undertaken by the Year 3 and 4 class recently but the pupils' understanding of Anglo Saxon homes is, nevertheless, at a basic level. Satisfactory lessons result from teachers relying heavily on commercially produced worksheets in lessons which, when completed as a whole class exercise, lead to a slow unchallenging pace for the older and higher attaining pupils. When this is realised and pupils are allowed to continue working at their own pace the teaching and learning improve. Good teaching is evident in the Year 5 and 6 class, for example when pupils compare the Victorian Great Exhibition with the Millennium Dome. This is a challenging task that requires pupils to use their knowledge of Victorian times. Lesson preparation is good, with relevant information on the Dome available. The tasks are set at three levels of difficulty for pupils of differing ages and prior attainment. This is manageable for the class teacher; allowing time to support each group. Skilful questioning challenges pupils to think about why both exhibitions received public criticism, where they were positioned and their purposes. The pupils learned a great deal about the two exhibitions from the lesson.

102. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been overcome and the improvement has been good. The co-ordinator has written a good policy with clear aims and the school has adopted the local education authority's scheme of work. This is now fully implemented and is supporting the teaching. Some monitoring has been undertaken, through looking at planning and scrutinising pupils' work, to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. The school makes good use of the local education authority's and Ely museum's loan service to extend the resources available which are now adequate.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those expected by the ages of seven and eleven. The provision has improved since the time of the last inspection. Resources have been updated and the teachers' subject expertise, knowledge and understanding have also improved. Pupils are now beginning to make gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding and have sufficient opportunities to practise and develop their skills. However, this provision is at an early stage and is yet to have a major impact on standards. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and there is no difference in progress or attainment between boys and girls.

104. Pupils at Key Stage 1 use the computer with confidence. Opportunities are provided for them to use computers during lunch times but this is often unsupervised and does not always result in effective learning. On one occasion, two girls used a CD ROM dictionary to find and print words and definitions linked to their science topic on light. During this work they used the mouse confidently and they understood how to move through the software correctly. Pupils were also observed using an appropriate spelling activity to back up the work in phonics in a literacy lesson. In another lesson, pupils were introduced to a 'paint' program that gives pupils the opportunity to create pictures or designs in a variety of ways. Pupils learn to use a 'touch-pad' as well as a mouse. They understand how to use the screen icons and they can print their work. Those with the opportunity to have 'hands-on' experience make good progress, but there are too many pupils in the group for the number of computers available.

105. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 and 4 pupils used a word processor to write about a visit they had made to an Anglo Saxon village. Year 5 and 6 pupils used the 'intranet' set up via the local education authority to access information about Victorians. They successfully researched information about a 'penny-farthing' and were able to print the information. During a mathematics lesson, learning on fractions was consolidated effectively through the use of a game based activity.

106. Discussion with pupils reveals that they have used floor robots to learn early programming skills. In Years 3 and 4 they develop these skills using a screen turtle to draw shapes and then extend this work to program sequences resulting in some more complex patterns. In addition to work on computers; pupils have opportunities to use tape recorders to listen to tapes and to record musical compositions. The school now has a digital camera, which has been used by pupils to take pictures of the construction of a local swimming pool. However, not enough opportunities to learn about the use of information technology in everyday life are provided. In addition, no work on external control or monitoring of events using computers is evident. Although further extension to the provision of hardware is planned, together with more training for teachers, the majority of pupils have insufficient time to use computers in school.

107. Little direct teaching was observed during the inspection. The pupils are largely well motivated and enjoy working on the computers. They demonstrate satisfactory attitudes to the subject. Although some teachers maintain records of how frequently pupils use the computer, and which programs are used, they do not maintain clear records of pupils' progress.

108. The school has a good policy in place, and there is a scheme of work and set of guidelines for skills development that are of good quality. However, these are new and have not yet had an effect on the quality of teaching or learning. Although the use of software is taught, there is little evidence of the direct teaching of information technology skills. Whole class or group teaching is restricted by the current organisation of the resources. Each class has access to two computers, and to CD-ROM. The computers are not networked and there is no computer suite where a group of pupils can work together, although this is being considered as part of the new building plans.

109. The resources have improved since the last inspection. However, the software available at present is limited and computers too often stand unused.

## **MUSIC**

110. Standards are average for pupils aged seven and eleven. For those pupils who play instruments and receive additional tuition standards are higher and exceed the level expected for their age. This is approximately one quarter of the Year 6 pupils. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in composing, listening and appraising music. They gain knowledge of famous composers and understanding of musical elements at a satisfactory rate. There are two members of staff with particular talent in the subject who are deployed effectively to teach pupils throughout the age ranges. This leads to consistent progress throughout the school.

111. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have started to build up a wide repertoire of songs which they enjoy singing and are developing confidence in performing for others. They make good attempts at singing unaccompanied and keeping in tune. They make appropriate choices when selecting instruments to accompany their performances. For example, they selected wooden blocks to represent kangaroos jumping. They listen intently to the Carnival of the Animals by Saint Saens and recognise the part of the music representing the lions. They recognise and can name a range of percussion instruments, hold them correctly when performing and put them away carefully. The pupils are beginning to understand the musical elements of dynamics and pitch and most have a good sense of rhythm for their age.

112. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge and skills in Key Stage 2. They develop composing skills, firstly through using graphic notation and then moving onto reading musical notation. Those pupils who receive instrumental tuition are confident in reading music. The inspector listened to tapes of pupils' performances, covering different aspects of music. These tapes confirmed that pupils are confident when performing for an audience. The quality of singing is satisfactory; diction is usually clear. Pupils have a good knowledge of musical instruments and know the flute is part of the woodwind section of the orchestra. They recognise that a clarinet is being played when listening to taped music. Pupils have a sound knowledge of some famous composers and can name pieces of music they wrote, for example the Clarinet Concerto in A major by Mozart. Other composers studied include Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a reasonable level of understanding of the musical elements and their skills in listening and appraising the music they hear are satisfactory. However, when entering the hall for assemblies they do not listen to the music being played as well as they should. Equally when all Key Stage 2 pupils

join together for music, the response varies considerably between the pupils and, for a small group of pupils it is unsatisfactory and hinders the progress of others.

113. The quality of teaching in lessons with individual classes is good and sometimes very good. In whole key stage lessons, the teaching is satisfactory. When all pupils in Key Stage 2 join together for singing, the larger number of pupils means some have difficulty in seeing the displayed words and their behaviour deteriorates. Good lessons result from the subject expertise, confidence in teaching and the sustained brisk pace. Effective use is made of the wide range of instruments available, enabling all pupils to have a turn at playing instruments in most lessons. The teaching of small groups of pupils playing guitars and recorders is good; the pupils enjoy these lessons and try hard. The teachers expect pupils to practise each week in order to improve their performance.

114. All pupils had the opportunity to take part in a night at the opera, which was performed at the local high school along with singers from an opera company. This gave pupils the opportunity to be involved, on a larger scale, with a live performance. School productions and carol concerts provide further good opportunities for pupils to develop their performance skills.

115. There are no extra-curricular activities in music; all take place during lesson time, with the work missed having to be made up at home. This is unsatisfactory. The parents' questionnaires show a significant number of parents feel the school does not offer a good range of extra-curricular activities and, as far as music is concerned, the inspectors share their views.

116. There has been improvement in the policy and scheme of work since the previous inspection, and the weakness in resources has been overcome. The subject is well led and coordinated which contributes to the pupils' attainment and progress.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. During the inspection only games lessons were observed. In addition, the school ensures all pupils reach a good level of attainment in swimming and take part in athletics, gymnastics, dance, and outdoor and adventurous activities. It is clear from the lessons seen that most pupils are making satisfactory progress and reaching a level of skill broadly in line with that expected for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. However, higher attaining pupils do not always achieve the levels they are capable of due to undemanding activities or a lack of opportunities to work with pupils of similar ability.

118. At Key Stage 1, pupils warm up well but show little knowledge of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They practise their throwing and catching skills using beanbags and hoops. From this, the pupils move on to activities with balls, which they can bounce and pass to each other satisfactorily. The majority of pupils can run, jump and skip confidently.

119. At Key Stage 2, the Year 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in rounders skills. They work in small groups practising bowling, batting and fielding and then move into small side games that give pupils plenty of opportunity to play a full part in the activity. The pupils in Year 5 and 6 take part in similar practices for cricket skills but the high number of pupils in the games means that a lot of the pupils are not fully involved in the activity and so make less progress.

120. The pupils' attitudes are good. They clearly enjoy lessons and take part in activities enthusiastically. They work well together in pairs or in small groups.

121. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Resources and activities are well prepared. The pupils are managed well and activities are appropriate for the ages of the pupils. However, there are unsatisfactory features. The teachers do not dress appropriately for the lessons and this sends a negative message to pupils. There are times when games are played with too many pupils in each team, resulting in several pupils being uninvolved and inactive.

122. Resources are good. There is a good supply of games and sports equipment for a school with this number of pupils. The field is a good size and the hard play area is suitable for a number of sports and activities, including netball and hockey. The soft surface under the outdoor climbing apparatus is very good. However, the hall is too small to allow older pupils the opportunity to perform at an appropriate level in gymnastics. This is being addressed by the planned new building, which

includes a good-sized hall.

123. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. The only after-school clubs are run by an outside organisation, which requires pupils to pay. The numbers who take advantage of this are very small. The Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils have a good opportunity to attend a residential week that includes a wide range of outdoor and adventurous activities. There are some opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive team games against other local small schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124. Standards are average and are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven. Standards have been sustained at similar levels to those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory gains in knowledge and deepen their understanding of Christianity and other major world religions as they mature. The locally agreed syllabus has been adapted well to meet the needs of the two-year age groups in classes.

125. The school places due emphasis on Christianity and in Key Stage 1 pupils have a good knowledge of stories from the Bible such as the Good Samaritan and understand that the stories they hear have a message for life today. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils understand the main festivals and celebrations of the Christian faith, such as Christmas, Easter and weddings. They are beginning to understand the symbolism that is important to other faiths such as Judaism and can compare Jewish and Christian weddings. They know about the difference in the way rings are exchanged and why a glass is broken at a Jewish marriage ceremony. They have visited the local church and can name some of the key features. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed they have considered what God and heaven might be like and have thought about their place in the world and what they have to offer. For example, they have considered what they are good at.

126. Pupils continue to build successfully on their body of knowledge at Key Stage 2 and deepen their understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. They know the main principles and beliefs of Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists and of the impact of these on their everyday lives. They extend their knowledge of Judaism, for example in the Year 3 and 4 class, the pupils know why and how Jews show special respect for the Torah. They recognise that the Torah is central to Jewish worship, study and observance. They know the purpose of Christian celebrations, such as christenings, marriage and confirmation. They know about the Hindu festival of Holi, their temples and Gods. By the age of eleven, pupils have explored the books of the Bible and from their study of the book of Joshua, they have some understanding of how God used Joshua as a prophet to talk to the people of Judah and foretell what God was going to do. They extend their knowledge of other world religions, for example they gain knowledge of the importance of the teaching of Guru Nanak to Sikhs and that this places great emphasis on honesty, sharing and respect for others. The pupils understand that the message from the story they hear about Guru Nanak is to share and be honest. They are able to relate this message to incidents in their own lives.

127. Pupils are interested to learn about other religions and, at Key Stage 1, listen with interest to Bible stories. They remember stories they hear and can recall them and the key messages for Christians months later in assemblies. By the end of Key Stage 2, the response is less positive and pupils do not always take pride in their finished work. The pupils do not have exercise books and work is done on paper and stored as loose pages. This makes it difficult for pupils to see the progress they have made and to refer back to previous work when necessary. Much of the work involves worksheets that simply require pupils to fill gaps in sentences; this does not offer sufficient challenge to higher attaining pupils and contributes to the untidy presentation.

128. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in all lessons seen at both key stages. There are good features in the way learning objectives are written and shared with the pupils at the beginning and returned to towards the end of lessons to check that they have been achieved. All teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and confident in their teaching. Good use is made of artefacts available from the Diocesan resource centre to make lessons more interesting. However, the heavy reliance on a commercially produced scheme to support the teaching reduces the levels of discussion, further exploration and interest. Untidy work that is produced by pupils; is accepted by teachers and this is unsatisfactory. Once pupils are engaged in completing the worksheets there is a tendency, in a few lessons, to supervise rather than teach pupils and this slows the rate of learning.

There are good links with local clergy who support the teaching of the subject, and visits to churches and a mosque extend pupils' learning about places of worship.

129. Lessons in religious education make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 were asked to think about why the words of the Shema were so important to Jews and to Christians. Pupils have few opportunities to use computers to support their work in this subject.

130. The criticism contained in the previous report, that there was no monitoring or evaluation of the subject, has been remedied. The co-ordinator monitors planning and has monitored teaching to check the effectiveness of the policy in supporting teachers in their planning for pupils' learning.