

INSPECTION REPORT

EARL SOHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Earl Soham

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124578

Acting headteacher: Miss J O'Reilly

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods
21079

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 April 2000

Inspection number: 191292

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Street Earl Soham Woodbridge Suffolk
Postcode:	IP13 7SA
Telephone number:	01728 685 359
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Clare Sanders
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information technology Art Design and technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Bavin	Team inspector	Under-fives English Science Geography History Physical education Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities? (Assessment)

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Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Earl Soham Primary School is a valued part of the village community. There are currently 57 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 5 and 11, which is very small by comparison with the national average. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average. Four of these pupils are at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice¹ for the identification of such pupils and one has a statement of special educational need. The majority of pupils live locally and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, seven per cent, is well below the national average. Pupils come from a variety of different social backgrounds, but none are learning English as an additional language. Their attainment on entry to the school varies considerably, but overall is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good education for the pupils. It has passed through a period of considerable uncertainty, and the acting headteacher has had considerable success in addressing the concerns of parents and maintaining stability. The school is led effectively and all staff are deeply committed to achieving high standards. The quality of teaching and learning is good as a result of this commitment and the detailed knowledge teachers have of the pupils in their care, and the school has a good ethos. The governing body is taking an increasingly active role in monitoring the work of the school and the standards attained. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The hard work and dedication of the acting headteacher and her team are strengths of the school, with a shared commitment to providing high standards.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and staff have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the pupils.
- All pupils have equal access to all the opportunities provided.
- The school has very good links with the local and wider community.
- The knowledge and expertise of the chair of governors is a strength of the school.

What could be improved

- Provision for and standards in information and communication technology for the oldest pupils.
- Planning of the curriculum to secure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Collation and recording of information from assessment procedures to provide information on pupils' attainment and progress in a more accessible form.
- Establishment of formal systems for monitoring the planning of the curriculum and the standards pupils achieve.
- Further development of the role of the governing body, and ensuring the recommendations from the 1998 auditor's report are fully implemented.

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 November 1996. It had made limited progress towards addressing the key issues identified at that time prior to September 1999, as a result of considerable disturbance through long-term sickness. Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has made considerable progress in addressing the areas identified for development and in raising morale throughout the school. All subjects now have schemes of work, and the balance of the curriculum is much improved through a greater emphasis on science, design and technology and physical education. However, monitoring of planning and teaching is informal, and there is limited monitoring of the outcomes of pupils' work or the standards they achieve. The information gained from the comprehensive range of assessment procedures is not

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

collated or analysed in a readily accessible format to provide detail on the progress of individual pupils or the value added by the school. The school has already identified these areas for improvement, and a comprehensive school development plan has been produced by the acting headteacher. The increasing involvement of the governing body in the work of the school, and their raised awareness of the importance of their roles and responsibilities, means that the school is in a sound position to improve in the future.

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	A	B	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	D	B	C	
science	B	D	B	C	

The above table shows that for pupils leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, attainment in English was well above the national average, and above average compared with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics and science was above average nationally, and average compared with similar schools. These overall figures, however, mask the wide variation in levels of ability within the small year group of 14 pupils. In mathematics, for example, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above, but those attaining the expected Level 4 was well below, both the national average and attainment in similar schools.

In the 1999 standard assessment tasks at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading was below the national average, and well below average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. In writing, attainment was above the national average, and average compared to similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was well below average compared both with the national picture and with similar schools. These overall results, however, again do not show the wide variation in individual attainment. For example, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was close to, and in writing was well above, the national average. In addition, the small year group of pupils taking these tests included one with a statement of special educational need. Teacher assessment of attainment in speaking and listening and in science was average compared to the national picture, but below average compared to similar schools.

Pupils' attainment when they enter full time education is average overall, although within each year group there are wide variations. The small numbers of pupils in each age group makes it difficult for the school to establish trends over time in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the time of the inspection there were no children under five in the school. The three children in the reception age group were working confidently within at least the first levels of the National Curriculum. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in English, mathematics and science is on target to be average by the end of both key stages for the current pupils. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Apart from word processing, there is too little emphasis overall on the subject for the older pupils. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment in design and technology has improved since the time of the previous inspection, and is in line with pupils' abilities at both key stages. In art, attainment is average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. In geography, history, music and physical education attainment is in line with pupils' abilities at both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils take a keen interest in all the activities provided, are eager to please their teachers and work hard in lessons. Some of the oldest pupils, however, have been affected by their parents' understandable uncertainty about the future, and reflect this at times in a lack of respect for staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and co-operate and share resources willingly and sensibly. They listen carefully in assemblies and are almost always aware of others' feelings and the impact their actions may have. In the small playground, play is exuberant, but good-natured.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are keen to show initiative, willing to help, and take their responsibilities seriously. Relationships throughout the school are almost always warm and supportive, and characterised by mutual respect.
Attendance	Good. It was excellent during the inspection week. Pupils enjoy school and arrive promptly in the morning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. All the current staff are committed to maintaining a stimulating learning environment and high standards for pupils, and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and levels of attainment in the school. In lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was good or better in 78 per cent, and very good in 15 per cent. The very good partnership between class teachers and classroom assistants makes a positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and the school makes good use of individual areas of expertise, for example in physical education. Teachers make effective links between different curriculum areas. In good lessons, teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject provides stimulating and interesting detail, which captures pupils' imaginations and creates a good quality of learning. Teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. In literacy lessons, teachers involve pupils fully in discussions and use good questioning to develop pupils' vocabulary and use of language. They place a high emphasis on, for example, correct punctuation and using interesting words in creative writing. Almost all numeracy lessons begin with appropriate mental arithmetic sessions, although the pace of these is occasionally slow. Teachers provide interesting and relevant activities which support pupils' understanding of the use of mathematics in 'real life' effectively.

In all lessons, there is a good level of challenge for groups of pupils of differing abilities, and this challenge is particularly effective for the younger pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants, and encouraged consistently to do their best. Their efforts are valued and praised, which enhances their self-esteem positively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and relevant to pupils' age and experience. It is enhanced effectively by a good range of additional activities, including lunchtime clubs, visits and events in conjunction with other local schools.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed. Pupils are supported well by experienced teachers and classroom assistants, both in class and in separate sessions. They have full access to all opportunities and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual and social development is good, and is satisfactory for their moral and cultural development. The school, however, recognises its responsibility to develop further opportunities to prepare pupils for the diversity represented in contemporary British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good personal support and guidance for all pupils, and has satisfactory procedures to promote their welfare. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. However, the wealth of information gained from these is not collated into an accessible format.

The school's relationship with parents has greatly improved in the last six months and is now good. Parents give very generously of their time, and their considerable contributions are valued by the school. Attendance at parents' meetings and school events is high, and parents are kept well informed about these and their children's progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher has worked tirelessly to maintain standards and a good quality of education, and to improve channels of communication. The teamwork between all staff who work in the school, and their shared dedication to providing a stimulating learning environment, is a significant strength.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The newly-appointed chair of governors is very well qualified and experienced. Other governors bring a considerable degree of expertise to the school, and the governing body is developing a secure understanding of the importance of its responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has a clear understanding of where it needs to improve, and a comprehensive school development plan has been produced by the acting headteacher in consultation with all staff and governors.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The budget is now very carefully managed and all specific grants are used effectively. Day-to-day financial management is efficiently conducted by the clerical assistant, and the principles of best value are applied appropriately in all spending decisions.

The school is fully staffed with well qualified, committed teachers, who are ably supported by dedicated classroom assistants and enthusiastic parent and community helpers. Accommodation is satisfactory for Key Stage 1 pupils but cramped for those in Key Stage 2. In addition, the playground is small for the number of pupils on roll and some areas are in poor condition. The school has adequate resources for all subjects and these are used well to deliver the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Sixty-seven percent of parents returned questionnaires. Twenty-one parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoy school, behave well and make good progress.• Teaching is good and staff have high expectations of both children's academic and personal development.• They are kept well informed and feel the school is approachable.• The management of the acting headteacher is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many parents felt there were insufficient activities outside lessons.• A significant number of parents expressed concern over the uncertainties regarding the future of the school, particularly in relation to staffing.• A significant number also expressed dissatisfaction with the timing of the inspection.

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views about the school. They respect and understand their concerns about the future, but judge the school to be in a sound position to maintain standards and continue to improve. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons, although these are not held after school so that pupils who travel by bus are not disadvantaged. The timing of the inspection is beyond the control of the inspectors.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Currently, there are no children under five in the school. The three children in the reception age group are working confidently within at least the first levels of the National Curriculum.
2. In the end of Key Stage 1 standard assessment tasks in 1999, overall attainment in reading was below the national average, and well below average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. In writing, attainment was above the national average, and average compared to similar schools. Attainment in mathematics was well below average compared both with the national picture and with similar schools. These overall results, however, do not show that the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was close to, and in writing was well above, the national average. In addition, the small year group of 14 pupils included one with a statement of special educational need. Teacher assessment of attainment in speaking and listening and in science was average compared to the national picture, but below average compared to similar schools. Over the past four years, there has been little difference on average between the performance of boys and girls in the tested areas.
3. Results from the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 show attainment in English to be well above the national average, and above average compared with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics and science was above average nationally, and average compared with similar schools. These overall figures, however, again mask the wide variation in levels of ability within a small year group of 14 pupils and between boys and girls. In mathematics, for example, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above, but those attaining the expected Level 4 was well below, both the national average and attainment in similar schools. Teacher assessment of attainment in these tests was accurate. Statistics show girls consistently outperforming boys over the past four years, but the school has a clear and detailed understanding of the individual abilities and needs of pupils in each year group, and works hard to provide appropriate challenge and support based on this.
4. Pupils' attainment when they enter full time education is average overall, although within each year group their abilities vary widely. Twenty-two per cent of pupils in the school are identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. Together with the small numbers of pupils in each age group, this makes it difficult for the school to establish trends over time in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, although information from a range of standardised tests is not recorded in an easily accessible format, teachers' detailed knowledge of the individual pupils in their class enables the school to set realistic and challenging targets for each year group.
5. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in English, mathematics and science is on target to be average by the end of both key stages for the current pupils in Years 2 and 6. This maintains the picture found by the previous inspection. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has worked hard to improve provision since the time of the last inspection, but apart from word processing, there is too little emphasis overall on the subject for the older pupils. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment in design and technology has improved since the time of the previous

inspection, and is in line with pupils' abilities at both key stages. In art, attainment is average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. In geography, history, music and physical education, attainment is in line with pupils' abilities at both key stages.

6. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory throughout the school. Most pupils respond well to teachers' questions that have more than one answer, and to the opportunities provided to volunteer opinions, develop their ideas and to listen closely to each other. However, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 often appear reluctant to speak out in front of their peers. Pupils' literacy skills are satisfactory overall. They read fluently and expressively at a level appropriate for their age, and older pupils use their reading skills well to research information in the small but well stocked library. Throughout the school, pupils write for a wide variety of purposes, for example poetry and stories, historical accounts and recording the results of scientific experiments. Their use of punctuation is good overall, but standards of handwriting, spelling and overall presentation are less satisfactory.
7. Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory. Their mental arithmetic skills are improving, and mathematics is used widely throughout the curriculum, for example to record measurements in science and design and technology, and co-ordinates and traffic surveys in geography. Skills of scientific observation are good, which is an improvement on the position found by the previous inspection. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are used appropriately at Key Stage 1, but these are less well developed at Key Stage 2, except in word processing and to a lesser extent in researching information on the Internet and CD-Rom. The school makes satisfactory provision for the arts, and this is enhanced effectively through joint activities organised with other local schools.
8. Boys and girls make satisfactory progress over time in almost all subjects. This is good in art, but is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology, at Key Stage 2. In lessons progress is satisfactory overall. It is frequently good, particularly for the younger pupils in mixed year classes, where the activities provided are stimulating and challenging. Pupils with special educational needs persevere well in separate individual or small group sessions, and in class alongside their peers. They make satisfactory progress and attain standards commensurate with their abilities. Overall the attainment and progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, is appropriate to their age and ability.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school continues successfully to instil in pupils the good positive values and attitudes reported four years ago. Pupils like school and develop a good work ethic from the time they start in the reception class. They arrive promptly and are eager to start their lessons. Their attendance is good and was excellent during the inspection week. Within this small village school, a supportive, family atmosphere is engendered with older pupils caring well for those younger. Pupils with special educational and other needs are very well integrated and supported by their peers.
10. Pupils have good attitudes to school. In lessons, pupils are keen to achieve and try hard to please their teachers. Merit points are eagerly sought. In the Class 2 data-collection exercise all were excited by their tasks and delighted with the number of vehicles using the road during this 20 minutes. They happily helped each other and subsequently enjoyed creating their bar charts. Great enthusiasm was shown during the Class 1 music lesson, with all keen to repeat their favourite songs. All teachers know their pupils very well and relationships between pupils and with all adults are good overall. Some of the oldest pupils, affected by their parents' understandable worries over the many recent staff

changes and uncertainty about the future, reflect these in a lack of respect for staff at times, making it difficult for all concerned.

11. Pupils behave well. In lessons, they are interested and concentrate hard on their work, co-operating well and sharing resources. In assemblies, they listen carefully and offer sensible opinions during the discussions, for example on recycling materials. They are aware of others' feelings and the impact their actions may have on others. There were gasps of delight when the school tapestry was displayed and all were keen to celebrate their own and others' contributions. In the small playground, play is exuberant and rare upsets are dealt with effectively by the vigilant supervisor. All pupils understand what is expected of them and what will happen if they transgress. There was no bullying observed during the inspection, and there have been no exclusions.
12. Pupils' personal development is good. When given the opportunity, pupils are keen to show initiative and take their responsibilities seriously. All are willing to help. Year 6 pupils, for example, act as team captains and clean the tables willingly, and they organised a very successful five-a-side football competition over half term. They are aware of the difficulties and dangers facing them outside their school environment, and this is reinforced effectively through visits from the police and other services. A recent incident was used well by the acting headteacher to bring home these messages. Pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong as soon as they start at the school. As a result of their participation in assemblies in which moral and environmental issues are raised, they appreciate their responsibilities as citizens. They develop in confidence and understanding well as they progress through the school. Older pupils visit their secondary schools and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. The commitment of all the current staff to maintaining a stimulating learning environment and high standards for pupils makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and levels of attainment in the school. In lessons seen teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was good or better in 78 per cent and very good in 15 per cent. This is an improvement over the picture found by the previous inspection, where five per cent of teaching was judged unsatisfactory.
14. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. The school makes good use of individual areas of expertise, for example in physical education and in information and communication technology from the part-time teacher. This is helping to raise standards effectively in these areas. In good lessons, teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject provides stimulating and interesting detail, which captures pupils' imaginations and creates a good quality of learning. For example, in a geography lesson in Class 2, pupils are fascinated by the fact that submarines can travel under the North Pole. Teachers make good links between different curriculum areas, for example in Class 3 where the theme of life in Africa permeates through all lessons including literacy, numeracy, geography and art. In a mathematics lesson in Class 1, pupils investigating train fares in different decades identified correctly that they were estimated in 1940 because of the war.
15. Teaching of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good. In literacy lessons, teachers involve pupils fully in discussion of the text, and use good, open-ended questioning to develop pupils' vocabulary and use of language. They place a high emphasis on, for example, correct punctuation and using interesting words in creative writing. Almost all numeracy lessons begin with appropriate mental arithmetic sessions, although the pace of these is occasionally slow. Discussion at the end draws together the lesson objectives and reinforces what the pupils have learnt well. For example, in

collating tally charts in Class 2, pupils identified that there were more films on a particular Monday because it was Boxing Day. Literacy and numeracy skills are frequently skilfully integrated into lessons in other subjects, for example in geography in Class 3 and science in Class 1.

16. Teachers plan lessons satisfactorily, although the school does not have a consistent written format for this. In all lessons, there is a good level of challenge for groups of pupils of differing abilities, and this challenge is particularly effective for the younger pupils in mixed-age classes. The quality of learning is good as a result, as pupils respond positively to teachers' expectations and enjoy the activities provided. All teachers take careful note of pupils' achievement in lessons, and amend plans for subsequent sessions effectively as a result. Teachers' detailed knowledge of individual pupils' levels of attainment and of their progress makes a positive contribution to the quality of learning as effective challenge is maintained. This knowledge, however, is not consistently recorded in writing to provide valuable information when there are changes in teaching staff.
17. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour, concentration and application. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils respond positively to these and the quality of learning is good, as pupils work hard to complete their assigned activities. Almost all lessons have a good balance of discussion, practical work and time at the end to share findings and results. In all lessons, teachers keep a good overview of all pupils as they work, and interact well with individuals and groups to explain points and resolve difficulties. The very good partnership between teachers and classroom assistants makes a positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Classroom assistants are well briefed and use the same skilful questioning as the teachers to reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by all staff and encouraged consistently to do their best. Their efforts are valued and praised, which enhances their self-esteem positively. Teachers make good use of individual pupils' research and findings to reinforce teaching points and generate a lively buzz of enthusiasm in many lessons. Lessons start promptly and no time is wasted. Homework is used well to support and reinforce pupils' learning, for example to learn spellings, conduct research and to complete work from lessons, such as writing up their science experiment in Class 1.
18. Teaching is sound for pupils withdrawn for specific support, for example booster classes in Year 6 and for additional support in literacy throughout the school. These lessons are well planned and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress in the areas covered. Teaching and non-teaching staff, including parents, have good relations with the pupils in their groups and maintain a good pace of learning.

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

19. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Since the last inspection, the school has addressed the key issue that required them to provide policies for information technology and design and technology. Teachers are also now planning suitable activities to challenge more able pupils. However, while teachers share a format for planning numeracy and literacy lessons, the usefulness of these written plans varies between classes. Class teachers work extremely hard to plan work for pupils but they do not share a consistent format that provides a firm basis for the sequential development of knowledge, skills and understanding for all pupils. In this respect, there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.

20. The curriculum for children under five is suitably planned to meet individual needs. These are identified with parents, who write a profile of their child before the child starts school, and through the statutory baseline assessment which takes place soon after children have started in the reception year. The school recognises that the very small numbers that join each year group, as well as the termly intake for children under five, means that difficulties occasionally arise in providing all elements of the recommended areas of learning². For example, there may be particular difficulties in meeting an individual child's personal and social or creative needs when there are no other children at a similar stage of development.
21. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice. It has successfully used this code to work with external agencies and provide a statement of special educational need for one pupil. Pupils are carefully assessed; their needs are identified in appropriate detail and their progress is reviewed regularly. The individual targets for pupils cover both literacy and numeracy and most are useful and measurable. Some individual education plans, however, are made less clear by mixing targets for pupils' learning with targets for adult teaching strategies. The school uses the 'Phonological Awareness Training' (PAT) programme well to contribute to its priority of raising standards in spelling for many pupils throughout the school, and this is of particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs.
22. The curriculum for all pupils is enhanced extensively by special events. The last Christmas production, for example, strongly supported history as well as aspects of English and music. The school makes very good use of its links with other schools to provide specialist days, for example in science, art, physical education and drama. Some of these are organised around a theme, such as 'pirates', to incorporate a wide range of subjects such as physical education, drama and geography. A strength of the school is the way in which it has recently further developed its links with the local community to enhance pupils' learning. For example, a recent innovation is for pupils to travel to a local high school so that they have access to a large hall for gymnastics and games, as well as the swimming pool they have used for a while. Additionally, the school uses the neighbouring church to accommodate events such as achievement assemblies, to compensate for the lack of space in the school. During the inspection, the school was participating in an interesting project for half a term, linking the local newspaper, work in literacy and work at home with parents.
23. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a developing emphasis upon sporting activities, including competitive events with neighbouring schools, following the arrival of a specialist teacher in the school. A footballer from Ipswich Town provides much appreciated football training during one lunchtime each week. It is to teachers' credit that they provide activities, such as the computer club, when they are employed on a temporary and/or part-time basis. The evolution of the chess club demonstrates the school's very high commitment to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. The only girl in a particular group was loathe to join her male peers in this, so the acting headteacher suggested widening the remit to 'board games' and the girl felt happy to join in. There is a very popular drama club, and a recorder club is possible because two parents give up their time to provide this.

² [These are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy \(speaking, listening, reading \(recognising their own names and common words, enjoyment of stories, books and pictures\) and writing, e.g. writing their names and recognising UPPER and lower case\), numeracy \(recognising the meaning of numbers, beginning to add and subtract small numbers, sorting and matching objects and numbers and recognising common shapes and patterns\) and personal and social skills \(showing confidence, self-respect, ability to work with other children and adults, concentrating, offering ideas, taking turns and sharing\). These will be replaced with the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.](#)

24. The school has a suitable policy for sex education. Pupils' health education is covered satisfactorily, mostly through the science curriculum. There is a suitable emphasis upon a healthy lifestyle, and pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 2 have lessons to alert them to safety issues, such as a safe response to fire in the home. However, drugs awareness is not formally taught through a structured personal, social and health curriculum. The acting headteacher has appropriately identified clear planning for personal, social and health education as a priority. The provision for personal development is good overall. Opportunities for spiritual development are sound throughout the curriculum, but consistently good in collective acts of worship. For example, pupils value creativity and consider that 'what you carry in your hearts is more than what you see', when they look at an old patchwork quilt, made in a previous generation.
25. Provision for moral development is sound. All staff share a commitment to providing pupils with clear guidance regarding what is right and wrong. This is supported on a daily basis by recognition of effort with the newly introduced system of merits. The school makes good provision for social development. The small number of pupils in any one year group means that pupils are accustomed to working alongside older and younger peers. Teachers make good use of this feature of school life. They regularly group pupils to work together collaboratively. When doing this, they skilfully exploit the range of development in the class. Pupils are encouraged to relate positively together and this mostly meets with success. There is, however, a minority of older pupils who are not consistently kind to all of their peers. Pupils throughout the school have classroom responsibilities such as setting up for assembly and acting as book monitors. A residential trip for older pupils provides further opportunity for social interaction.
26. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Teachers increase pupils' understanding of their own culture satisfactorily through all subjects of the curriculum. There are strengths in the art curriculum, which provides good opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultures beyond their own. For example, at Key Stage 1 pupils study elements of African, Indian and Aboriginal art. Opportunities for special cultural events are provided occasionally. For example, the school has recently had a visit from a theatre company performing a production that dealt with environmental issues. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to appreciate music on a regular daily basis. The school recognises its responsibility to develop further opportunities to prepare pupils for the diversity represented in contemporary British society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school continues to provide good personal support and guidance for all pupils reported by the previous inspection, and has satisfactory procedures to promote their welfare. The dedicated staff and good school ethos engender a purposeful, happy atmosphere from which all benefit. The health and safety policy is under review and practice is good. Trained first aiders are always on site and all incidents are recorded. The acting headteacher recently participated in child-protection training. Support services are well used. The governors' newly-established working party is planning risk assessments, and security is under regular review. The school was appraised of some health and safety concerns during the inspection, amongst which were the need to 'cage' the dustbins and to enclose the area underneath the mobile kitchen.
28. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school keeps good records of pupils' attendance and every absence is explained. Parents are aware that their children should arrive on time, and rarely take them on holidays during term time. The acting headteacher monitors the registers, as does the educational welfare officer when visiting the school.

29. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The behaviour policy is understood by and well known to all, and is consistently implemented by staff. Merit points are awarded for behaviour and effort as well as for academic achievements. Sanctions are rare but pupils know when they have disappointed their teachers. Their high expectations result in pupils' good application and behaviour in lessons.
30. The school does not specifically timetable personal and social education, for example, by using group discussions during 'circle time'. However, teachers' detailed knowledge and understanding of individual pupils ensures any problems or general issues arising in or outside school are dealt with effectively during assemblies and/or registration time. Only the oldest pupils are given formal responsibilities, with all Year 6 pupils acting, for example, as team captains. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is effective, if informal. Representatives of the police and other services, and the school nurse talk to pupils to alert them to the world outside Earl Soham and they are well prepared for transfer to their secondary schools.
31. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Teachers have considerable detailed knowledge and understanding of their pupils and they use this very well to support pupils' learning. The school also has a good range of formal and formalised procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. These include the statutory baseline assessment for children under five and the end of key stage standard assessment tests. Additionally the school regularly tests standards in pupils' reading and in mathematical skills and teachers carefully assess learning at the end of topics. The special educational needs co-ordinator uses a commercial 'cognitive profiling test' regularly to assess language and specific learning difficulties and the PAT programme has fully integrated assessment procedures. The information gleaned from this extensive range of tests is well assimilated by teachers and used to group pupils effectively. Staff make very good use of the information on a daily basis to modify lessons and meet individual needs.
32. However, the wealth of information is not collated on paper into an accessible format. This means that while the school is basing its targets for groups of pupils on its very good knowledge of each pupil, there is no system for easily tracking the progress of an individual and setting individual pupil targets across the curriculum. This, in turn, means that there is no accessible record that firmly establishes progression for each pupil or the value added by the school. As a result, new members of staff do not know what each pupil knows, understands and can do. Therefore, they need to compile their own knowledge of the pupils and risk inefficiently repeating previous work. The school's planning documents do not ease the situation because they do not reliably identify skills, knowledge and understanding, or the levels of the work to be provided for each year group. The use of assessment information to guide termly and half-termly plans, and procedures for monitoring academic progress are, therefore, unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The school's relationship with parents has greatly improved in the last six months and is now good. Parents are pleased with the recent changes and value this village community school. They are very supportive of the school's aims, ambitious for their children and help them regularly at home. The parent-teacher association runs very successful, well-attended fund-raising events, to which members of the local community and parents come. Monies raised provide for coach trips as well as for extra resources to augment those of the school. Many parents help in lessons and are well prepared to support in these, for example both children and parents much enjoyed the fruit-tasting in Class 3. Other parents and members of the local community assist with reading. Two parents give valuable tuition in recorder playing and others have been trained to participate in the

successful PAT sessions. Parents give very generously of their time, and their considerable contributions are valued by the school.

34. The acting headteacher and her staff make every effort to consolidate and improve the school's links with parents and are always available to speak to them about any of their concerns. Unfortunately, some parents have communicated their understandable anxieties over the future leadership of the school to the oldest pupils, resulting in some lack of respect for staff and passive disaffection with school.
35. Parents are well informed about the school and their children's progress. Regular news and other numbered letters ensure that all are aware of school events. Reading journals are very well used as an effective two-way dialogue between home and school. Parents of children with special educational or other needs are involved with their individual education programmes and invited to review meetings. Parents' attendance at consultation evenings, which take place once a term, is excellent and parents are invited regularly to curricular events. A recent numeracy information evening attracted a good audience. The annual reports contain appropriate information about topics studied during the year and children's individual achievements, although the format for these is not consistent in all year groups. Children identify for themselves where they have achieved well and the areas in which they want to do better. Parents are invited to, and do, comment on these reports. Achievement assemblies are popular and are often held at the church to accommodate all who wish to attend. These give all parents an opportunity to celebrate their children's success. The popular school productions, for example the last Christmas show in which the decades were represented, are a 'sell-out' with an enthusiastic audience of parents, relatives and the local community.
36. The acting headteacher and all staff are committed to improving the school's links and relationship with parents. Their strong support for the children's education, coupled with the local community's involvement, make a positive contribution to children's academic achievement, widen their experience and enhance their personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. As a result of considerable disturbance through long-term sickness, the school had made limited progress towards addressing the key issues identified by the previous inspection prior to September 1999. Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has made considerable progress both in raising morale and in addressing the areas for development.
38. All subjects now have schemes of work, based on guidelines from the government and the local education authority. The balance of the curriculum is much improved through a greater emphasis on science, design and technology and physical education, although standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 remain unsatisfactory. Monitoring of planning and teaching is regular, but informal, and there is limited monitoring of the outcomes of pupils' work or the standards they achieve. The school uses a comprehensive range of assessment procedures to provide useful information on pupils' attainment. However, the information gained is not collated or analysed in a readily accessible format to provide details on the progress of individual pupils or the value added by the school.
39. The school recognises clearly that there are still significant areas for improvement. These are already identified and analysed in detail in a comprehensive school development plan produced by the acting headteacher. This is regularly reviewed and updated, in consultation with all staff and governors. This clear and transparent understanding the school has of where improvement needs to be made, together with the

increasing involvement and awareness of the governing body of its roles and responsibilities, means that the school is in a sound position to improve in the future with the appointment of a new headteacher.

40. The quality of teamwork between all staff who work in the school and their shared dedication to providing a stimulating learning environment are significant strengths. The acting headteacher has worked tirelessly, with energy and commitment, to maintain standards and a good quality of education, and to improve channels of communication. She is fully supported by the staff and governors and her work is much appreciated by the majority of parents. The aims of the school are reflected well in its daily life and the school has a positive ethos.
41. The newly appointed chair of governors is very well qualified and experienced for this role. She has a detailed insight into the strengths of the school and its areas for development through frequent visits, working with the staff and pupils. Other governors bring a considerable degree of expertise to the school although, for many, visits to see its work at first hand are infrequent. The governing body is, however, developing a secure understanding of the importance of its responsibilities, and individual governors have undertaken appropriate training to improve their knowledge of their roles. Governors' working parties are beginning to take an active part in setting targets and monitoring the work of the school, although much of this is still at an early stage of development.
42. The size of the school means that full-time teachers each have responsibility for several areas of the curriculum and aspects of its work. These responsibilities are taken very seriously and managed well. All staff work in very close co-operation and matters of concern and individual pupils' progress are discussed frequently and in depth. The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching through regular, informal classroom visits. However, monitoring of teaching, curriculum planning and the outcomes of pupils' work is not formally undertaken or recorded in a consistent format. As a result, the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding is not secured, particularly against future changes in staffing.
43. Management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator liaises regularly with her colleagues and with external agencies as necessary. The register of these pupils is kept up to date and appropriately indicates both increased and reduced intervention. Experienced classroom assistants provide discreet and sensitive support in lessons. They successfully enhance pupils' access to the full curriculum by providing extra explanations or supplementary questions, while retaining opportunities for pupils' independence. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has kept an appropriate overview, but has not played an active role in monitoring the school's provision.
44. The school is fully staffed with well qualified, committed teachers, who are ably supported by dedicated classroom assistants and enthusiastic parent and other helpers. Well-focused training is offered to all staff and shared at the regular staff meetings. Good induction procedures are followed for new and supply teachers; appraisal and staff development proposals have yet to be tested. All staff have up-to-date job descriptions and many also run the extra-curricular activities, which range from board games to drama.
45. Accommodation is satisfactory for Key Stage 1 pupils, but cramped for those in Key Stage 2. The school building is well cleaned and decorated, with stimulating wall displays which celebrate pupils' work. The playground is small for the number of pupils on roll and the tarmaced areas are in poor condition despite the new markings, with many cracks and holes appearing. The perimeter fencing on two of the boundaries is in good condition

but there is none between the school grounds and the field or the stream. Permission is being sought to move the public footpath, which runs alongside the school building. This will improve the security of the site.

46. The school has adequate resources for all subjects and these are well used to deliver the curriculum. The well-stocked library is used by pupils for their research but limited for in-lesson investigations because of its situation within a classroom. Information and communication technology provision is satisfactory, although more software is needed and many of the current computers are out-of-date.
47. As a small school, there is a very high income per pupil. The budget is now managed very carefully and all specific grants are used well. The budget for next year has been fully discussed with the governing body and is linked effectively to the school's priorities for development. Spending decisions are considered in detail and the principles of best value applied appropriately when making these. A high figure has been carried forward, after careful consideration, to maintain staffing levels whilst the future of the school, particularly in relation to pupil numbers, is evaluated. The clerical assistant manages the day-to-day finances of the school very well. She keeps a very close eye on budget spending through comparison of the monthly printouts from the local education authority with her own efficient computer records. Any discrepancies are pursued and resolved fully.
48. However, the school audit in April 1998 judged that whilst principles of control were sound, operation of control was inadequate. There was inadequate division of duties in the school, which weakened internal control. It contained 11 legal requirements which were not being met and 25 further recommendations to improve financial control. There is no evidence of an action plan to address the points raised. Whilst some have been addressed satisfactorily, for example registers are now all marked in ink, there is no clear indication that they have all been acted upon fully, or that the governing body was aware of the audit report contents at the time.
49. The school has passed through a period of considerable uncertainty, and the acting headteacher has made sterling efforts to address the concerns of parents and maintain stability, with considerable success. The school has a good ethos, with all staff being deeply committed to achieving high standards. The quality of teaching and learning are good as a result of this commitment and the detailed knowledge teachers have of the pupils in their care. Taking these factors into account, together with the increasing involvement of the governing body in monitoring the work of the school and the standards attained, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, acting headteacher and staff should now:

- i. make appropriate provision for, and raise standards in, information and communication technology at Key Stage 2; (*paragraphs 5, 7, 36, 86, 88, 90*)
- ii. set in place strategic planning of the curriculum:
 - to ensure appropriate work is provided for the foundation year when the youngest children first start school;
 - to secure continuity in curriculum provision, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
 - to ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly for the more able, younger pupils in mixed year classes;
(*paragraphs 16, 19, 52, 60, 75*)
- iii. establish a useful, common format for recording and collating assessment information in order to:
 - provide information for teachers about the level of work pupils have covered in previous years and the standards they have attained;
 - provide a clear picture of the attainment, progress and value added for each individual pupil;
 - set targets for individual pupils and for the year group as a whole;
(*paragraph 32*)
- iv. establish formal systems for monitoring the planning, delivery and outcomes of the curriculum in order to:
 - provide the management of the school with a clear overview of the content and level of work to be covered in each class;
 - enable management to have a secure picture of the quality of teaching and learning in the school;
 - enable all staff to participate in evaluating the standards achieved in each year group and by individual pupils;
(*paragraphs 38, 42*)
- v. continue the good start made to developing the role of the governing body, particularly in relation to monitoring the work of the school and the standards attained; (*paragraphs 41, 43*)
- vi. make a detailed analysis of the recommendations in the 1998 audit report and ensure all legal requirements are complied with. (*paragraph 48*)

In addition to the issues above, the following points should be included in the governors' action plan:

- i. improving standards in handwriting, spelling and presentation, and experimental work in science; (6, 58, 71, 75)
- ii. raising the awareness of a small minority of older pupils of the effect of their actions on others; (10, 34, 62, 102)
- iii. improving structured provision for pupils' personal, social and health education; (23, 30)
- iv. ensuring consistency in the format of reports; (35)
- v. repairing the poor condition of the playground and improving boundary fencing; (45)
- vi. consider providing more opportunities for musical appreciation, for example in assemblies. (26, 93)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
	15	63	22			

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)	57
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	4
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	5	9	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	5
	Girls	8	9	7
	Total	11	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (86)	86 (93)	86 (71)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	3	5	4
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	12	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (n/a)	100 (n/a)	93 (93)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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	7	7	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	6	3	7
	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	12	8	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	86 (73)	57 (47)	86 (67)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	5	3	5
	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	11	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	79 (n/a)	57 (n/a)	71 (n/a)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (69)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	57
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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)	3.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	19

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	49.75

Financial information

Financial year	1998 / 99
	£
Total income	167,559
Total expenditure	148,243
Expenditure per pupil	2,004
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,560
Balance carried forward to next year	23,876

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	40
Percentage returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	44	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	44	10	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	50	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	50	10	0	3
The teaching is good.	42	37	8	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	32	15	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	27	5	3	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	34	8	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	30	54	8	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	35	34	10	8	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	50	3	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	37	25	12	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

50. No children were under five at the time of the inspection. Comments about attainment and progress for pupils in the reception year are incorporated into the subject paragraphs.

ENGLISH

51. Standards attained in English are average throughout the school, which maintains the picture found by the previous inspection. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, overall attainment in reading was below the national average, and well below average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. In writing, attainment was above the national average, and average compared to similar schools. These overall results, however, do not show that the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was close to, and in writing was well above, the national average. Teacher assessment of attainment in speaking and listening was average compared to the national picture, but below average compared to similar schools. It is unreliable to identify trends over the last four years because of the very small year group sizes and the wide variation in pupils' abilities year-on-year. For example, the small year group of 14 pupils taking the tests in 1999 included one with a statement of special educational need.
52. Inspection findings show that if current standards are maintained, the majority of pupils will attain average levels in reading and writing at the end of the key stage. Staff place a high emphasis upon teaching literacy skills and this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Teachers have addressed the key issue of the previous report to plan to challenge more able pupils. However, while teachers plan to meet the needs of groups of pupils within the current classes they do not ensure consistent development of skills and understanding for individual pupils as they move through the school. Girls and boys are performing at similar levels in both reading and writing. This is against the national trend as girls generally outperform boys in English.
53. At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 in the 1999 national tests was well above the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was above average. These results at both levels are also above average when compared with similar schools. While the performance of girls in English was well above the national average, the performance of boys was close to it. This echoes the national trend for girls to outperform boys. However, the small year group sizes means that it is again unreliable to draw conclusions from trends over time.
54. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the start of Key Stage 1. At the end of this key stage, standards are in line with expectations in speaking and a few pupils use a wider vocabulary than is expected for their age. For example, one of the youngest pupils identifies 'catkins' and a pupil in Year 1 defines 'hibernate' very clearly. There are strengths in pupils' listening skills by the end of Key Stage 1. They listen closely for extended periods of time and retain this ability even when they are excited, to an extent that exceeds expectations for their age.
55. Standards in both speaking and listening are average by the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, teachers ask questions that have more than one answer and so provide pupils with good opportunities to volunteer opinions, develop their ideas and to listen closely to each other. They have high expectations that pupils will listen and speak thoughtfully. Most pupils in the school respond well to these opportunities. They listen to adults and peers politely and speak up willingly. However, the pupils at the end of Key

Stage 2 often appear reluctant to speak out in front of their peers. They respond to interesting texts, such as the legend of Arachne, and challenging questions with hesitant and monosyllabic answers.

56. At the end of both key stages, attainment in reading is average. The school places a suitably high emphasis upon the reading and enjoyment of a range of books. It also appropriately recognises the value of home-school links in developing pupils' continued interest in books. Good reading journals provide useful information for parents in distinguishing between different ways of sharing books. These journals also provide targets for older pupils to encourage diverse reading habits, such as science fiction, poetry and non-fiction texts. All staff place a good emphasis upon teaching phonic skills and, as a result, pupils at Key Stage 1 use phonic knowledge competently to attack new vocabulary. They use picture clues sensibly and more able pupils use the context of a new word to support these skills well. Pupils discuss their books confidently and demonstrate a secure understanding of the stories they read and hear.
57. At Key Stage 2, pupils read competently and if current standards are maintained a significant minority of pupils will exceed national averages in reading. Pupils begin to skim and scan in order to retrieve information. They have a good understanding of how to use a library and clearly understand referencing and researching with dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopædias, as well as using information technology. The oldest pupils do not show their level understanding or their reading preferences reliably in a group, but do so more willingly on an individual basis. On these occasions, they discuss characters' motivation and the broad themes of the book they are reading, such as bullying or divorce.
58. Standards in writing are slightly lower at both key stages than they are in reading, but this is a national pattern, and attainment for the majority of pupils is average. At Key Stage 1, pupils retell familiar stories such as 'The Pied Piper', and use capital letters and full stops correctly. There are strengths in pupils' development of ideas and also in their punctuation. A minority of pupils at the end of the key stage begin to experiment with apostrophes. The school encourages pupils to use a cursive script as soon as possible. However, younger pupils do not form letters consistently clearly, and writing and presentation of work remains a weakness for many pupils throughout the school. Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 spell simple, common words such as 'went' correctly most of the time. However, pupils at both key stages do not reliably spell correctly the range of vocabulary expected for their ages. The school has correctly identified improving spelling as a target throughout the school and is using the 'PAT' programme to support improving standards.
59. A strength in writing at Key Stage 2 is pupils' awareness of writing for different purposes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce their own newspaper page with the appropriate layout, they write imaginatively about journeys 'back in time' and begin to use interesting vocabulary, such as 'puffy' to describe dresses in the past. They also write their own book reviews. Older pupils develop their ideas well and demonstrate maturity in punctuation, for example by starting to organise their writing into paragraphs or chapters. They write in a good variety of styles for a wide range of purposes, for example producing brief character sketches, a Second World War diary, descriptions of Lady Macbeth and comparisons between the plots of 'Matilda' and 'Oliver Twist'. They demonstrate a lively awareness of their reader, for example by appealing to them directly with, "Can you solve the mystery?"
60. Learning in lessons develops well; boys and girls at all attainment levels, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time. The school uses the broad structure of the National Literacy Framework to plan literacy sessions, and this

is having a satisfactory impact upon standards. Throughout the school, teachers select a suitable and challenging variety of texts for pupils to share. However, they do not plan for group work and plenaries with a consistently useful level of detail and so are not fully exploiting the strategy.

61. Younger pupils have consistently positive attitudes to literacy lessons. They appreciate the beautiful illustrations as well as the irony of 'Handa's Surprise' and enjoy sharing a big book about village life in Africa. They concentrate well and apply themselves enthusiastically to independent work. Most older pupils also work well. They share ideas sensibly and willingly make suggestions, for example of words that will produce a sentence using alliteration. While the behaviour of the oldest pupils remains satisfactory, a minority is silly too often and teachers work hard to ensure their full co-operation.
62. Teaching of English is good overall. Teachers have good expectations of pupils whom they know extremely well. They ask manageable but challenging questions. They organise and manage their classes well, making good use of time and the resources available to them. They make good use of the reading journals and encourage diversity in reading habits and writing experiences. They have correctly identified areas for whole school improvement and while their assessment of pupils is personal and individual, it is reliably accurate. These strengths have a direct impact upon most pupils reaching attainment levels in line with their abilities. Teachers are disappointed and distressed when pupils' attitudes are resistant to this process.

MATHEMATICS

63. Results from the 1999 standard assessment tasks at Key Stage 1 showed attainment in mathematics was well below both the national average and the performance of similar schools. Whilst the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above was close to the national average, most were at the lower end of this level and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well below the national picture. Teacher assessment over-estimated the percentage of pupils reaching both Level 2 and Level 3, although the size of the year group meant that one pupil represented seven percentile points. In the 1999 tests at Key Stage 2, attainment was well above the national average, and average compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was nearly twice the national average. Teacher assessment was accurate at this key stage. The size of the year group of pupils taking these tests each year, together with the wide range of abilities in each class, make it difficult for the school to establish trends over time or analyse the relative performance of boys and girls.
64. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in mathematics is on target to be at least average, by the end of both key stages. Within the very small year groups both in Year 2 and Year 6, a significant number of pupils are on course to achieve above average standards. This maintains the picture found by the previous inspection.
65. Pupils at Key Stage 1 count confidently in tens to 100 and enthusiastically provide ways to make 20; "it's two lots of ten", "four lots of five". They experiment competently to find ways to share 24 equally, and the more able pupils recognise that if there are four lots of six, then there will be six lots of four. They use standard and non-standard measurement successfully, for example to estimate how many cubes will be needed to balance toy animals or the distance to be covered by a programmable toy. They tell the time to the half and quarter hour accurately, using both analogue and digital clocks. They understand halves and quarters, name two- and three-dimensional shapes confidently, and recognise lines of symmetry by folding shapes to 'see if they fit'.

66. At Key Stage 2, younger pupils use tally charts accurately to record data, for example from throwing dice or turning cards. They count and record cars passing the school with great enthusiasm and concentration. They use a data-handling program successfully to record their results on the computer. Older pupils use 24-hour clock times accurately to solve problems with timetables. They calculate addition and subtraction problems confidently to two decimal places and understand positive and negative numbers. They know the names of triangles and construct and measure angles competently.
67. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound overall throughout the school. Their agility at mental calculations is satisfactory, and they enjoy the mental arithmetic sessions which start most lessons. They use their mathematical skills well in other subjects, for example measuring accurately in design and technology and recording the increase in their heartbeat during science. They have a good understanding of appropriate terminology and use this correctly when discussing their work.
68. Boys and girls at both key stages make satisfactory progress over time. Progress in lessons is frequently good, particularly for the younger pupils in mixed-age classes, and the quality of learning is good, as teachers provide interesting and challenging activities which are well matched to pupils' experiences. Pupils respond well to these challenges and work with concentration and evident enthusiasm. They co-operate well, sharing ideas and solutions, and the pace of lessons is good. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated in all classes and make good progress, particularly when sympathetically supported by non-teaching assistants.
69. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and plan activities carefully within this framework. They make appropriate use of mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons, although the pace of some of these is slow. They know the abilities of individual pupils in their classes well and carefully match work to these. They have high expectations and make work lively and relevant to pupils' experiences, which generates a good quality of learning in lessons. They consistently reinforce teaching points as the lesson progresses and a buzz of excited discussion is frequently evident. Resources are satisfactory, although some text books are rather old. New material to support the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy has been bought recently and this is well used to provide challenge for all groups of pupils.

SCIENCE

70. At the end of both key stages, attainment in science is average for the majority of pupils. Inspection findings reflect teachers' assessments for 1999 at the end of Key Stage 1. These indicate that pupils are attaining standards similar to national averages but below the levels expected in similar schools. However, the extremely small year groups mean that statistics are very sensitive to individual pupils' levels of attainment. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching expected standards was similar to the national average, and results in similar schools, at both Level 4 and above and the higher Level 5. This maintains the standards found by the previous inspection.
71. The school has recently implemented the full science curriculum by increasing its allocated time and providing appropriate opportunities for investigative work. However, this is a recent development and there has been insufficient time for its full impact to take effect. This means that pupils' experimental skills are still under-developed, while their knowledge is good and their understanding is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 pupils record the results of 'tests' regarding how many hops or skips they perform in a minute. They make their own evaluation of experiments with sound, writing, for example, "it was hard to tell" the direction of sound when they were blindfolded. They have satisfactory

understanding of the value of exercise, rest and sleep. They make close observations when they are looking at pictures of animal habitats, and are fascinated by the sudden appearance of water snails from the weed in a fish tank.

72. At Key Stage 2, pupils record the cycle of water changing shape and form. They experiment with filtration using filters and a variety of materials. They use their knowledge and understanding of forces effectively to experiment with making parachutes and explain their results in terms of air resistance and gravity. The oldest pupils are interested in the 'human body' topic that is being studied during the inspection. They have a good knowledge of the functions of different organs, and use information technology sensibly to research further information.
73. The school makes good links between the different elements of the science curriculum and other subjects. For example, older pupils use design and technology skills and understanding of forces to develop their understanding of how blood moves through capillaries in the lung. Although pupils' scientific recording skills are under-developed, these are beginning to make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school makes good use of science homework to increase pupils' knowledge, understanding and recording skills. For example, older pupils identify and record forces at work in their daily lives and home environment.
74. Pupils throughout the school enjoy science lessons. They contribute thoughtfully to discussions, for example regarding how to separate mud and water and to test water for purity. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 suggest that the latter would be possible by "letting an animal try it"! They are all keen to participate actively in practical work but co-operate amenablely in small groups when required to share equipment. They listen well to teachers' explanations and older pupils are enthused into conducting relevant independent research.
75. The quality of science teaching observed during the inspection is good overall, with an equal distribution of sound, good and very good teaching. Until recently, teaching focused on extending pupils' scientific knowledge and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge base. However, lack of planning for investigative work and for the progressive development of skills, has meant that teaching has paid insufficient attention to this element of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' practical scientific skills are under-developed. The school has recently taken steps to rectify this effectively, and the good quality of teaching means the school is well placed to improve standards in this aspect of the science curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. As a result of the timetable, only a few lessons in art and design and technology were seen during the inspection. Evidence from other sources shows that standards in design and technology are in line with the age and abilities of the pupils throughout the school. In art, standards are in line with expectations at Key Stage 1 and above expectations at Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement over the position found by the previous inspection. In both subjects, pupils cover a good range of projects, often linked together and frequently linked well to other areas of the curriculum. The specific skills relating to both subjects, for example shading and joining techniques, are given full attention.
77. In art at Key Stage 1, pupils produce lively and colourful group collages of jungle and underwater scenes. They work successfully together to create sensitive 'art for blind people', based on works by well-known artists, using a wide range of different textures. They make careful observational drawings of Aboriginal artefacts linked to their topic work. This is extended into modelling three-dimensional models of African animals,

although the stickiness of the salt-dough causes some technical difficulties! Some interesting crocodiles emerged from this session. These activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. In design and technology, pupils have designed and made plate puppets, carefully evaluating the position of the features. They investigate and evaluate the taste of exotic fruits, such as pineapple, mango and passion fruit with serious concentration and lively discussion.

78. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in extending their artistic skills. They use a wide variety of media, including paint, pastel and modelling materials to create lively and attractive work. In Class 2, pupils have made detailed, colourful group collages of Saxon villages. They have designed and made striking 'silver-clad' robots in connection with their literacy work. This is extended into modelling 'robot hands' using plaster of Paris. Pupils evaluate the success of these sensibly, explaining that "the fingers fell off because there were air bubbles in the mixture". Older pupils in Class 1 have created extremely effective pastel pictures in the style of Van Gogh. Extensive, well-mounted displays enhance both the learning environment and pupils' sense of pride in their achievement. Examples of these, and other projects by all pupils in the school, such as careful observational drawings of fruit, striking three-dimensional Saxon helmets and examples of block-printing, are currently displayed in a local art exhibition. In addition, all pupils have designed and made patchwork squares which have been sewn together to make an attractive millennium wall hanging to live in the village hall.
79. In design and technology, pupils in Class 2 construct wheeled vehicles with serious concentration, and understand the need for careful measurement and accurate angles in these, which makes a useful contribution to their numeracy skills. In Class 1, pupils evaluate carefully their designs for parachutes and suggest how these could be improved. They make attractive moving toys using cam wheels and understand that 'the amount of movement is governed by the position of the hole'.
80. Boys and girls of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, take a keen and enthusiastic interest in all their projects in both subjects. The quality of learning is good, as they discuss, compare and evaluate their efforts as they work, co-operate well and concentrate hard. The quality of teaching is good overall, with teachers demonstrating a good knowledge in both subjects and providing interesting and well-resourced activities. They interact continuously with groups as they work, encouraging pupils to make greater effort with careful questions, constructive criticism and good use of praise. Resources for art are good, and they are satisfactory for design and technology. All aspects of both subjects are covered fully, and sketch books are beginning to be used well for pupils in Years 4 to 6 to practise techniques and record designs. However, these do not currently provide a useful tool for evaluating pupils' attainment and progress, as entries are not dated or annotated to provide a context for the work.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

81. Standards in both geography and history have been maintained since the last inspection and the quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. The organisation of the timetable means that during the inspection it was not possible to observe any history lessons. However, from looking at pupils' written work, teachers' plans and discussions with pupils and teachers, it is evident that standards are appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities.
82. Pupils at Key Stage 1 compare their toys with those used by their parents and grandparents. They know that previous generations did not have computerised toys. They study famous people from the past, such as Florence Nightingale, Louis Braille and Helen Keller connected to the science topic, 'ourselves'. They understand that these people made a contribution to society that influences our lives today. In geography, they

keep a weather diary, using appropriate geographical symbols and vocabulary to record their observations. They begin fieldwork with walks close to the school grounds, and use such experiences well as a source of geographical knowledge and understanding. They describe natural environments, such as ponds, with good attention to observed detail. Lessons such as information technology using a programmable toy support their geographical vocabulary for direction appropriately, such as 'left' and 'right'.

83. At Key Stage 2, pupils increase their historical understanding and study selected periods. They understand that the past is divided into periods of time, each with particular characteristics. They compare daily life now with daily life in Saxon Britain. For example, in a comparison of homes, they identify that where we now have chimneys, Saxons had holes in their roof. They develop understanding of chronology well by placing Anglo-Saxons on to a timeline in relation to the Roman occupation and Viking invasion. Additionally, they begin to consider why events took place, such as the reasons for invasions and settlement. Older pupils study the sources of historical evidence, for example by addressing the question 'how do we know' about the daily lives of Ancient Greeks and their legacy. They appropriately relate dates to major events in the periods they are studying, such as the Battle of Hastings.
84. The history curriculum effectively supports other subjects such as English and geography. For example, pupils read and analyse myths and legends in literacy and study the Saxon fable of Beowulf. In lessons that make strong links between history and geography, pupils familiarise themselves with ordinance survey maps to locate place names with Saxon origins. Geography is also supported fully by reference to current affairs. The oldest pupils study rivers, their formation and their journey, and locate important world rivers on maps. Teachers this year have made suitable reference to the recent flooding in Mozambique. In the only geography lesson seen at Key Stage 2 during the inspection, younger pupils distinguished between countries and continents with a good level of knowledge and accuracy. These pupils also have good knowledge of local rivers. A minority of more able pupils has very good understanding of the nature of the North Pole and current environmental concerns regarding the effect of pollution on the ice caps.
85. In the two geography lessons seen there was an equal distribution of good and very good teaching producing good levels of learning and attainment. Pupils have positive responses to their geography lessons. They enjoy studying their immediate environment and its seasonal changes. Older pupils enjoy map work, and enthusiastically participate in lessons that use and extend their geographical understanding of the world. During the last Christmas production, pupils participated with evident enjoyment in dance and drama that represented the significant features of the decades of the last century, and supported their historical understanding well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations overall by the end of Key Stage 2. The picture remains the same as that found by the previous inspection, although it was not raised as a key issue at that time. The school made good progress in improving provision of hardware to support all aspects of the curriculum and in producing a scheme of work, which ensures all aspects of the subject are covered appropriately. However, whilst sufficient equipment is in place to meet the full requirements of the curriculum, much of the hardware is now outdated and lack of compatibility hampers the school's efforts to raise standards.
87. At Key Stage 1, pupils use a range of software well to support their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, they negotiate a spelling program enthusiastically to reinforce their

understanding of initial letter sounds and sequence events carefully using 'Teddy's Clothes'. Pupils handle the mouse and keyboard confidently to manipulate the programs and need little adult support in these activities. They enter text successfully on a weather map 'Today the weather is...' and these are well displayed to reinforce pupils' sense of achievement. In all three year groups, pupils follow the movements of a programmable toy with excited enthusiasm. This work is well matched to the age and abilities of the pupils in each group. The youngest estimate the number of 'Roamer' steps needed to move a specific distance with reasonable accuracy, whilst the older, more able pupils enter programs to draw specific shapes competently, having first drawn them on paper.

88. At Key Stage 2, the majority of work in the subject focuses on word-processing skills. In Class 2, for example, all pupils have produced accounts of 'Encounters with Robots' using a good variety of fonts. This work is supported well by pupils' access to computers at home. These younger pupils enter the results of their tally charts in mathematics carefully into a data handling program and enjoy seeing their efforts printed out, although they are disappointed that the results are so small. Older pupils in Class 1 research on CD-Rom in connection with their science topic. They are excited and awed by the facts they discover, for example that the surface of the lung is the size of a tennis court. They competently negotiate through the levels of the program, but progress overall is hampered by the fact that only one computer has the appropriate hardware to support this work. All pupils in Class 1 are working co-operatively and enthusiastically on a class newspaper, but progress is again hampered by incompatibility between the different computer systems in the classroom.
89. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, enjoy using computers, and have a clear understanding of the value of information and communication technology in supporting their work across the curriculum. The quality of learning in sessions seen is good, as they work sensibly and co-operatively, and handle the equipment with care. They are keen to discuss what they are doing and what they have done in the past. Almost all of the older pupils attend the computer club, which makes a positive contribution to their progress, and the older pupils are helping each other successfully to access the Internet.
90. The quality of teaching in the few sessions seen is good, with teachers showing a good understanding of the programs in use. They communicate an enthusiasm for these effectively, which generates a good quality of learning and results in pupils making good progress in the sessions. Progress over time is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 through the difficulties relating to the current hardware, which is not adequate to support the increasing demands of the curriculum. The school is well aware of this and plans are well in hand to improve provision and raise teachers' level of expertise in the different aspects of the subject, particularly in relation to control technology.

MUSIC

91. Standards in music are in line with pupils' ages and abilities throughout the school, as was found by the previous inspection. During the inspection, the main focus was on singing, but evidence shows that all aspects of the subject are covered appropriately during the year. In the two lessons seen, pupils in Class 3 sing enthusiastically, with a good rhythm and real enjoyment, and want to share their song 'Che Che Kule' with the rest of the school in assembly. They listen carefully to taped singing, and appreciate the difference in tone between European and African voices; "their voices are deeper". In Class 1, pupils sing with equal enthusiasm and a greater degree of control over tone and tempo, and use percussion instruments effectively to accompany their singing. Sadly, this enthusiasm is not communicated during singing in assembly. Lack of live

accompaniment is a drawback, but the school sensibly uses taped broadcasts to support the songs chosen. However, whilst tuneful, pupils' singing is lacklustre although it improves considerably when a teacher intervenes to encourage greater effort.

92. The quality of teaching and learning in both lessons is good, as teachers and pupils share an equal enthusiasm for the activities and a commitment to improve performance. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, work co-operatively and sensibly sharing a good range of resources equitably. Teachers' lack of personal musical expertise is well supported by a detailed scheme of work and taped broadcasts, which are used effectively to provide a good range of musical experiences.
93. Pupils throughout the school appreciate music from different cultures and historical times, for example the African music in Class 3 and 'Old Time Music Hall' in Class 1. In their recent school production, pupils sang songs from different decades in history, such as 'We All Live in a Yellow Submarine', with gusto, and danced to the 'Chinese Dance' from 'Fantasia' with good feeling. Teachers use music effectively in other subjects, such as drama and physical education where 'Chariots of Fire' is effective in encouraging pupils to think about their movement. However, the range of pre-recorded music in the school is limited and has to be supplemented by teachers from home. In addition, the school does not make use of the opportunity to extend pupils' musical appreciation by playing different music during assembly times.
94. The school has a good range of percussion and other instruments, such as keyboards and guitars. Pupils learn to play the recorder in a lunchtime club run by parent volunteers, and share their successes confidently in assembly, to enthusiastic applause. The school has firm plans to extend musical opportunities by providing a guitar club next term and involving the expertise of the local education authority's music service from September.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Overall standards in physical education are in line with expectations at both key stages, as was found by the previous inspection. However, there are strengths in games' skills by the end of Key Stage 2. The school provides a good range of sporting activities and events. The recent employment of a physical education specialist has further enhanced this provision and added impetus to the school's involvement in inter-school tournaments.
96. Staff work extremely hard to limit the impact of the poor accommodation for this subject. In the absence of a school hall, staff and pupils move furniture and hold aerobics, dance or gymnastics lessons in the largest classroom space available. Additionally, pupils have recently started using a hall, as well as the swimming pool, at a local high school. During the inspection three lessons were observed, two of which took place on the meadow behind the school and one of which was classroom-based gymnastics skills.
97. Pupils appreciate their physical education lessons. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good use of the limited space available to them. The youngest pupils, inspired by the story of the 'Pied Piper' create interesting movements with good levels of co-ordination and thought. Toward the end of the key stage, pupils develop sequences of movement as expected at their age. They work well in pairs in the confined space. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils acquire appropriate skills to play hockey. They control a plastic ball with a plastic hockey stick with expected levels of skill. When they play a game, they are enthusiastic about shooting goals, but have still to develop the team spirit that enables them to pass the ball effectively. Older pupils demonstrate a good level of teamwork and awareness of strategy in a game of netball. They understand the need for speed and

accuracy and put good effort into achieving these. All pupils in Year 6 are on target to be able to swim the required 25 metres unaided by the end of the year.

98. Teaching of lessons seen during the inspection is mostly good. Pupils clearly benefit when teachers have good subject knowledge, skill and expertise which enables them to make well-timed interventions, promoting discernible development within the lesson. Good teaching is characterised by high expectations of pupils' behaviour, effort and skill and has a direct and positive impact upon pupils' effort and level of attainment. Teachers and pupils share a commendable commitment to overcoming the difficulties that the accommodation presents for this subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

99. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations in the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus by the end of both key stages. This maintains the position found at the time of the previous inspection.
100. At Key Stage 1, pupils know that families experience special events, such as the birth of a new baby. They understand that different families share similarities in their experience of such special events, such as the importance of naming the new baby, and appreciate that there are differences in the customs and ceremonies attached to these events. Their understanding of the meaning and significance of their own names exceeds expectations for their age. They make attractive cards congratulating a Christian family on the birth of a new baby and understand that a cross is a Christian symbol that would be appropriate to include. They understand clearly that Jewish families hold different beliefs and attach importance and meaning to different symbols.
101. At Key Stage 2, pupils distinguish between the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. They are familiar with stories that have moral messages, such as 'The Good Samaritan'. As they mature, they identify and appreciate the value of 'rules for living' and begin to express their own opinions thoughtfully about how necessary they are. They use their own experience well to underpin their understanding of social responsibility. They consider carefully what it means to belong to a Christian community, and extend their comparison of different religions satisfactorily when, for example, they compare Christian and Muslim festivals. They also extend their knowledge of Christian artefacts and symbolism, such as those associated with the, 'Last Supper'. Teachers use discussions about such artefacts well to promote debate concerning profound religious questions.
102. In the lessons seen during the inspection, good and very good teaching contributes effectively to good levels of interest from pupils. When teaching is very good, it inspires depth of thought from pupils, as well as developing their factual knowledge. The youngest pupils show that they are listening carefully and thinking deeply about the Easter story when they ask how Jesus died twice. The oldest pupils ask searching questions about the nature of belief and struggle to understand that belief exists beyond knowledge. However, these positive attitudes are not fully and consistently reflected in older pupils' written work or conversations. There are examples of pupils both writing and speaking without giving thought to their expression. On these occasions, pupils appear disrespectful and offhand in their approach to this subject and to the views of others.