

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANDREW'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ely, Cambridgeshire

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110828

Headteacher: Mr G Fisher

Reporting inspector: Mr J Heap
18824

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 192745

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sand Street Soham Ely Cambs
Postcode:	CB7 5AA
Telephone number:	01353 720 345
Fax number:	01353 720 345
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Fox
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? School's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9399	R Watts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21066	B Bowen	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14806	J Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities	
30243	A Heakin	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Special educational needs	
1157	N Tonge	Team inspector	English Geography History	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
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?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	23
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Andrew's is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school that caters for pupils aged three to 11 years. It is situated close to the centre of the town of Soham, which is seven miles from the city of Ely. The school shares an attractive site with the local secondary school. The local area is residential and there are few signs of deprivation. There are 408 pupils on roll in the main school: 223 boys and 185 girls: above the average size of school. Children are admitted into the reception class in the year in which they are five. Pupils are organised into 14 classes which cater mainly for one year group, but there are four classes that have a small number from another year. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (twenty three per cent) is in line with the national average. The number of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is below the national average. Most of them have moderate learning difficulties. In the current reception class, attainment on entry is broadly average but this has been a variable trend in recent years. The majority of pupils come from the local area and around 15 per cent of pupils are transported to school by bus. The majority of pupils are white and a small proportion come from Black, Chinese and Indian ethnic heritages. Seven pupils (1.7 per cent) are learning English as an additional language. There is evidence of some (14 per cent) pupil mobility, with more moving in than out.

The designated nursery has 60 places. Children attend the nursery on a part time basis starting in the September before their fourth birthday. The nursery is staffed by a full-time teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistant. Although attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average, there are significant weaknesses in speaking and listening as well as children's personal development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a satisfactory school with a number of strong features. Standards meet expectations and the quality of teaching is effective. Pupils' attitudes to school and work are very good and behaviour, relationships and attendance are good. Leadership and management are sound. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective and they make good progress. The school's policies and practices make sure that all pupils are involved equally in everything the school does. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The curriculum and achievement of children in the Foundation Stage are good.
- Provision for and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and work. Their behaviour, personal development and relationships are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.
- Child protection and welfare procedures are effective.
- Parents have positive views about the school and make an effective impact on the life of the school.

What could be improved

- The use of writing skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- In science, insufficient emphasis is placed on investigative work and on using literacy and numeracy skills to record the outcomes of pupils' work.
- The monitoring and supporting of pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory and the quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Development planning and the delegation of responsibility to senior managers are insufficiently focussed on the present important priorities.

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 1997. Overall, the rate of improvement is satisfactory and many of the strengths identified at that time have been maintained. However, this is not true across the range of the school's work. Good improvements have been made in Foundation Stage, information and communication technology, the use of investigative work in mathematics and in resources, generally. Satisfactory progress was being made in the standards pupils achieve, until the results in 2001 proved to be disappointing. In teaching, the proportion of very good practice has improved and the overall picture has developed soundly.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	E	E
mathematics	D	B	D	D
science	C	B	E	E

Key

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

After several years of improving results which matched the national trend, the results achieved in 2001 were disappointing and led to the school falling behind the national trend. The results in 2001 were well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics when compared to all schools and similar schools. The evidence from the results that this group of pupils achieved at the age of seven show them to be below average. However, evidence from the inspection shows improvement in both English and science, most particularly in writing and the development of investigative skills in science. Targets set for last year were not achieved. They are equally challenging this year and judgements related to attainment and progress indicate that pupils are likely to meet the targets. There is no significant difference in the attainment levels of boys and girls.

At the age of seven, results in reading were well above average, above average in mathematics and average in writing. Results have been rising steadily over the last four years. Sufficient numbers of pupils achieve the higher than average Level 3. There is no significant difference in the attainment levels of boys and girls.

Standards in numeracy meet expectations. However, standards in literacy are unsatisfactory because there are a lack of opportunities in Years 3 to 6 to use the basic skills widely in other subjects.

Standards of attainment on entry to the nursery and to the reception classes are in line with those expected of children of this age. By the end of the reception year most children achieve, or are well on the way to achieving, the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. This shows good progress for all children in the Foundation Stage.

Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs, and those learning English as a second language, are supported well, take part in all activities and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic in all that they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are generally well-behaved and responsible. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils accept willingly the responsibilities placed on them. They respond well to the guidance given them in moral and social matters. Relationships are good between pupils and mostly good between pupils and teachers. Just occasionally, teacher/pupil relationships are unsatisfactory because of instances of sarcasm from a teacher.
Attendance	Good. Attendance rate in line with national average and low levels of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Ninety-eight per cent of lessons were satisfactory, or better. Fourteen per cent of lessons were very good or better and two per cent were unsatisfactory. In the Foundation Stage the particular strengths are teachers' knowledge and understanding, their effective teaching methods, and their management and control of lessons.

In Years 1 and 2, the strengths are similar to those identified in the Foundation Stage and also include the effective use of a range of resources. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching observed was good overall, but there are less demanding expectations. This shows itself particularly in the lack of opportunities to use literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as history, religious education and geography. Teachers judge pupils' attainment and learning satisfactorily but there ought to be a much sharper focus when they come to use the judgements to take the pupil onto the next stage of learning.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good in mathematics, design and technology, geography and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in English, science, art and design, history, music and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about information and communication technology.

In the Foundation Stage, pupils learn basic skills very well and this means that where pupils have deficiencies they are overcome, such as speaking and listening and social skills. Pupils continue to learn well in Years 1 and 2 and they continue to develop skills and work hard and quickly. However, in Years 3 to 6, the amount of work and the pace of learning is less than it ought to be in some subjects, for instance, English.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall satisfactory. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and the programme is rich and varied. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effectively makes sure that pupils are involved in everything the school provides. Pupils receive good support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are included in all activities and therefore make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is good. The provision for moral and social development is effective. Consequently, pupils make good progress in these areas from a relatively low base. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are effective. In particular, the arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are strong. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory.
Relationships with parents	Parents have positive views about the school. Their impact on the school is strong. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory, but there needs to be improvement in the pupils' annual progress reports.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher is a highly respected member of the school and local community. He continues to provide sound leadership in several areas of school life. The deployment of senior staff to manage significant areas of school improvement is an area for development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Highly supportive, keen and enthusiastic. Their knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses are sound. Their ability to shape the direction of the school is hampered by a lack of appropriate priorities in the development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Whilst the monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' progress is satisfactory, they have not led to improvements in standards, most particularly in writing. Priorities are identified, but lack focus and drive.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Finances are used well to support designated purposes, such as special needs provision. The school has adequate procedures for pursuing best value in its purchasing of supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expectation on the child to work hard and behave well. • Their children like school. • The good quality of the teaching and the good progress their child is making. • The approachability of the school and closeness of the home/school relationship. • The way that the school helps the children become more mature. • The information provided about their children's progress and the amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities arranged out of school time.

In general, inspectors support the parents' positive judgements. However, the team cannot agree that all pupils are making good progress, because pupils are not making good progress in writing. Similarly we do not agree that the information about their children's progress reports is good, because the present format gives too few judgements about pupils' attainment and achievement.

The range of activities arranged outside the school hours is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results of the National Curriculum tests at the age of seven in 2001 show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels was well above average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics when compared with all schools and with those schools having similar numbers of free school meals. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well above average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics and the science teacher assessments. Over the last three years, results in reading and mathematics have been above the national average and writing results are close to the average. Girls are outperforming boys in reading, writing and mathematics, but the differences are not significant. National trends have remained steady in recent years and the school's results have been above them in reading and mathematics. Writing results have improved at a rate greater than the national trend. Results declined in mathematics in 2001, but improved in reading and writing.
2. The 2001 national tests for 11 year olds show well below average results in English and mathematics and average results in science when compared to all schools nationally and with schools that have similar numbers of free school meals. Overall, results are well below average in comparison to all schools and compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. However, the results of the eleven year olds in 2001 have improved satisfactorily from the results the same pupils achieved as seven year olds in 1997. This indicates that pupils have made satisfactory progress in those four years. Over the last four years results are below the national average in English and close to the national average in mathematics and science. Boys are outperforming girls, but only the English result looks to be significant. However, there were no indications in the inspection evidence as to reasons for this.
3. At the age of seven, standards of work seen during the inspection are generally in line with expectations. They are above expectations in speaking, listening and reading, instrumental work in music and in aspects of physical education.
4. At the age of 11, standards of work seen during the inspection are generally in line with expectations. Standards are above expectations in speaking, listening and reading and aspects of physical education. However, standards in writing are below expectations because the school does not promote the use of writing skills broadly enough, most particularly in the work that is undertaken in the wider curriculum.

5. On entry to the nursery and reception classes, children's levels of attainment are broadly average. Children make good progress in their learning and by the time they are five years of age, they achieve or are on the way to achieving the nationally recommended early learning goals in:
 - communication, language and literacy;
 - mathematics;
 - personal, social and emotional development;
 - knowledge and understanding of the world;
 - creative development and,
 - physical development.

6. In English, standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are above national expectations. Speech shows clarity and logical progression. Pupils are attentive listeners. Pupils aged seven and 11 attain standards in reading that are well above expected levels. Seven-year olds are confident, expressive readers, who understand their books well. Lower attainers are hesitant readers, but they have sound basic skills and good attitudes to reading. Standards in writing are below expectations at the ages of seven and 11. The school recognises this and writing is an area for development, recognised in the school improvement plan. Handwriting, spelling and grammar are particular areas for attention throughout the school, especially amongst the average and lower attaining pupils.

7. Standards in mathematics are in line with national expectations by the age of seven. Pupils understand the value of numbers to 100, complete simple addition and subtraction sums and know several of the times tables. Higher attaining pupils weigh accurately and the majority measure skilfully the length of small and very large things. Pupils recognise well a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and solids. By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards that are above national expectations. The arrangements for grouping pupils by their prior levels of attainment are a significant cause of this raising of standards, particularly for the higher attainers. Generally, standards in number are good and higher attaining pupils work accurately with fractions, investigate codes and work out co-ordinates on a grid. Lower attainers work accurately with patterns of numbers.

8. By the age of seven, pupils' standards in science are above national expectations. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of light sources, living and non-living things and the conditions for healthy living. Higher attaining pupils do not go on to achieve greater levels of understanding because the worksheets they use limit further progress. By the age of 11, standards reach the expected level. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of life-cycles and food chains. They sort animals and distinguish between physical and chemical changes. Pupils know the parts of a plant and how forces work. Further progress is hampered because there are insufficient opportunities to plan, execute and record investigations of their own.

9. Throughout the school, standards in information technology are in line with expectations. By the age of seven, all pupils use appropriately the school's programs that support learning in mathematics, English and art. Pupils have useful skills in control technology and word processing. They access the internet to find information. By the age of 11, skills and competencies are developing soundly, particularly in wordprocessing and using spreadsheets. Higher attaining pupils use the 'sum' facility on spreadsheets. All pupils are developing a satisfactory vocabulary. They use CD ROMs to find information and they select and print appropriate extracts.

10. Attainment in religious education matches the levels required in the local Agreed Syllabus by the ages of seven and 11. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Christian festivals and other faiths, such as Islam. By the age of 11, knowledge and understanding have been developed satisfactorily, most particularly about Christianity and in relation to the way that Christians have worshipped through time. Their knowledge and understanding of other faiths are deepened by their study of religions such as Hinduism and Judaism.
11. Standards in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Literacy skills are used in other areas of the curriculum, for instance writing accounts in history. The well-equipped library provides helpful texts and motivation to pupils searching for information. However, the range of use is narrower than it ought to be because of the overuse of commercial worksheets, most particularly in the promotion of writing skills. Numeracy skills are used, for example, in science, geography and information and communication technology.
12. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have or who are awaiting statements of special educational need are effective. They ensure pupils who have special needs achieve standards that are in line with their prior attainment. All pupils at Stage 2 and above on the special needs register have individual plans that include their targets and success criteria. The special needs co-ordinator devises the individual plans based on assessment and in consultation with class teachers and if appropriate with external support services. These strategies combined with good focused teaching and monitoring by the coordinator mean that pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.
13. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress towards attainments that are in line with their peers. They have good standards of behaviour and want to learn. On occasions they are reticent in class, but teachers involve them well in all activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. In the opinion of parents, nearly all pupils enjoy school and this is borne out by conversations with pupils. When they start in the morning, they go quietly to their classrooms and get on with whatever activity has been set without fuss. The children in the reception classes and nursery are keen to experience all the activities offered. On the morning when parents can come and read with their child, all the children in the reception area are eagerly gathered round an adult, sharing books. There is a bubbly and expectant atmosphere. Teachers can start lessons promptly because all pupils are keen to 'get on with it'. When the teacher asks a question, the usual response is a forest of hands. After lesson introductions, pupils generally move quickly to start their individual or group work because they enjoy it and are keen to learn more. They persist with the tasks set and move on to extra work without the need to be reminded. They are pleased with the work they have done and are keen to share that pleasure. Pupils are also enthusiastic about doing things outside the classroom, taking a strong part in extra-curricular activities.
15. The behaviour of pupils is good. In most lessons only a quiet word is occasionally necessary to keep pupils' attention but generally teachers need to spend little time on this and can concentrate on their teaching. This has a very positive impact on the good rate of learning seen in the majority of lessons. In a few lessons pupils become

restless because they are insufficiently motivated or because the direct teaching is too long. Even here, however, misbehaviour is minor, without serious disruption. They behave well as they move around the school and sit quietly in whole-school assemblies. Pupils socialise well in the dining hall. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss the reasons behind school rules and fully accept their validity. There was only one fixed term exclusion from the school last year. Pupils treat the things they work with and the property of others with great care. Books and other resources are valued and treasured.

16. The personal development of pupils and the relationships within the school are good. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities offered and, on many occasions, volunteer to clear up or help around the school. For example, some older pupils volunteer to help class teachers with some routine administration work, which they enjoy. Older pupils help the smallest children come into assembly. They often identify what needs to be done and do it; they compete to be allowed to help. In most classes the strong rapport between adults and pupils is a very noticeable feature and allows a very positive interaction, which benefits learning. Most pupils are confident that the teachers are there to do their best for the pupils and they, in turn, respond by giving of their best. However, a few instances of unsatisfactory relationships between a teacher and pupils were observed with inappropriate use of hectoring and sarcasm. Overall, relationships between pupils are good. For most they are very good but some parents and a few pupils complained about low level bullying. In the playground pupils of all ages play well together, and older ones respect the needs of younger pupils. There are a few minor incidents of conflict, often derived from the robust nature of some of the play. The tolerance of this robust play makes it hard for those supervising to differentiate between accidental and intentional harm. Within lessons, pupils can work well to support each other and discussing problems. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to work as a team towards a common purpose or to take initiative to use skills in more imaginative ways. They recognise that, although theirs is largely a mono-cultural school, many different ways of life and beliefs exist. They are tolerant of these differences but have not yet begun to consider the implications of that tolerance, partly because they have so little contact with other views. No incidents of racism or social exclusion were observed during the inspection. Pupils confirmed that these were rare; minor incidents were handled with sensitivity and rigour by the school.
17. The overall attendance last year was in line with the national average for primary schools and there was very little unauthorised absence. A small amount of lateness arises because of the distances some pupils have to travel but most are in lessons by the start of school.
18. Pupils who have special educational needs have very positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. Pupils respond well to the caring ethos, feel valued and build meaningful relationships with adults and their classmates. As a consequence they gain in confidence and self-esteem.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and promotes effective learning in the majority of lessons. Throughout the school the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. In 98 per cent of lessons the teaching was satisfactory or better; very good or better in 15 per cent of lessons and two per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, overall.

20. In the Foundation Stage teaching is good. All lessons were good, or better and over four out of ten were very good or better. The strengths in all lessons are:
- teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and develop;
 - good planning;
 - high expectations of children's behaviour and learning;
 - very good and sensitive management of children;
 - very good relationships between the teacher and the nursery nurse.

As a consequence, children learn well in all the recommended areas of development and they settle into good routines very quickly. In the very good lessons children's learning is particularly well supported by the very effective rapport built up between staff and the children, which encourages a happy and productive ethos. In a reception literacy lesson, the quality of relationships promoted lengthy concentration, a feeling of success and enthusiasm for work. The same teacher provides a wide range of activities for the children that matches their age and maturity. For example, in a mathematics lesson the children responded enthusiastically to the initial counting games and the range of puzzles and matching shapes activities. Learning proved to be fun and the children took pride in all that they achieved.

21. In Years 1-2 teaching is good. However, the range runs from very good to satisfactory teaching. The main strengths are:
- good planning;
 - management of pupils;
 - brisk pace and quality of questioning.

In the best lessons, the pace was good, large numbers of pupils participated in discussion and question and answer sessions and the teacher checks pupils' knowledge and understanding at regular points. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, the focus moved seamlessly from identifying sounds to recognising adjectives in a story. The quality of the teacher's questioning brings out pupils' knowledge and understanding, and also encourages pupils to make fuller answers. One pupil noticed alliteration (the deliberate use of the same letter at the start of each of a sequence of words that draws attention to the sequence) in a passage of a story and when the teacher asked him to explain 'alliteration', he did so and provided an effective example. In a Year 2 personal, social and health education lesson, the teacher used a range of techniques to enthuse pupils and maximise learning, including garnering views from all the pupils about bullying, such as 'being picked on', 'smacked' and 'called names'. Pupils were well involved in the lesson, concentrated hard and many were empathising with victims of bullying.

22. In Years 3-6 teaching is good. The majority of lessons are good and a few are very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The main strengths are:
- teachers' knowledge and understanding;
 - teaching of basic skills;
 - management of pupils;
 - effective planning.

In most lessons pupils are challenged either physically, intellectually or creatively. In the best lessons the challenge is in more than one of these areas, for example, in the tennis lesson in Year 6. Physical education lessons invariably have a great deal of activity and pupils are expected to persevere and improve performance and this was obvious in the improvement of basic skills during this lesson. In the very good mathematics lesson in Year 4, the teacher asked a variety of questions that were well matched to differing levels of attainment. This meant that all pupils were appropriately challenged in their mental calculations. Teaching materials were stimulating, accessible and very well deployed and the pupils were all fully engaged in the work,

attentive and very well behaved. The teacher gave pupils the chance to lead and demonstrate and the responses were articulate, well thought-out and showed that many were capable of extending their thinking. These teaching skills and attributes were shown by most teachers in some lessons and they were particularly evident in mathematics.

23. The teaching in English and science is more variable. All of the literacy hour lessons are in the satisfactory and good categories. However, a Year 6 extended writing lesson was judged unsatisfactory. In this lesson, pupils did not make enough progress because the pace was slow, they did not do enough work and the standard of behaviour was unsatisfactory. A further unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Year 3 science. Overall, there was too much noise, resources were inappropriate and the worksheet provided did not challenge the pupils, because they reduced their opportunities for investigation. The majority of pupils concentrate well and produce a significant amount of work. The pace of learning was slowed by a lack of suitable resources. For instance, there was a shortage of appropriate apparatus to illustrate the clarity and opaqueness of glass. In the scrutiny of pupils' science work there is evidence of a lot of prepared worksheets that require one word or short phrase answers. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to write at length.
24. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in mathematics, design and technology, geography and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in English, science, art and design, history, music and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about information and communication technology.
25. Overall, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The judgement for literacy is a mixture of satisfactory provision and areas for improvement. The teaching of the literacy hour is satisfactory, reading standards are high and plenty of opportunities are found to promote speaking and listening. However, there are weaknesses in writing, particularly in the basic skills. The opportunities to use writing across the range of subjects is unsatisfactory and there is an overuse of worksheets that require short answers and phrases and these also restrict progress in extended writing. Numeracy skills are taught adequately and they are promoted in a range of subjects, such as science, geography and information and communication technology.
26. The quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Class teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow the correct procedures. In the classrooms the teaching assistants have good relationships with teachers and pupils. The assistants are well informed and work in conjunction with the teachers to raise standards and ensure all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons. Assistants give teachers regular verbal and written feedback when they have worked alongside individuals or small groups of pupils. This is an effective contribution to pupils' progress. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons, the work is tightly focused on their learning needs and equips them to understand and contribute more confidently in the class lessons. Withdrawal groups are thoughtfully arranged with the interests of the pupils in mind so they are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum. When adults have a positive approach and praise pupils for their efforts, pupils feel proud of their work and are ready to take on new challenges to their learning.
27. Pupils currently in school who are learning English as a second language do not require any specialist teaching. The teachers have a sensitive caring approach, responding well to any small problems of understanding that may arise, such as in a

Year 2 lesson where a pupil learning English as an additional language was upset by not playing a full part in a group discussion. The teacher and classroom assistant worked discreetly to involve the pupil and restore her self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are often well supported through being given suitable help from classroom assistants.

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

28. The school satisfactorily provides a broad and generally interesting curriculum that caters for the wide interests, abilities and special needs of its pupils. In doing so it has maintained the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection. It is working to improve the overall quality of the curriculum, and a recently agreed monitoring policy has set out a clear agenda upon which to move forward. All statutory requirements are met appropriately. The subjects of the curriculum have time allocated to them which shows a proper emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and all subjects are supported by pupils' work in information and communication technology.
29. Areas of particular strength in the curriculum are;
- the good quality of learning opportunities for children in the nursery and reception classes (an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection);
 - provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - the wide range of stimulating and well-organised extra-curricular activities;
 - the approach of the school which ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils;
 - the provision for pupils to become aware of personal, social and health issues in modern-day living;
 - the way in which the school works well with the local community and village college.
- There is room for improvement in;
- the effectiveness in teaching writing and using pupils' skills in writing in all subject areas;
 - the greater involvement of pupils in setting up their investigations and in recording of work in science;
 - the quality of the worksheets provided by the teachers which often limit the pupils' opportunities to make an effective response.
30. The planned learning experiences for the pupils aged below six are good in providing many opportunities for the children to develop both personally and socially. Under the careful eye of the teachers and support staff, they learn basic skills in language and number, they explore their immediate world, and have good opportunities to develop creatively in art and music, such as making and decorating masks and learning a range of action songs. They have sufficient opportunities to develop physical skills by drawing, cutting and sticking, and in the hall and play area, to run, climb and begin to play with balls.
31. The learning experiences for all pupils include all subjects of the National Curriculum together with religious education which complies with the agreed framework for local schools. The school has embarked upon a good programme for teaching personal, social and health education. This includes aspects of citizenship, as well as suitably providing for drugs awareness and sex education timetable. In Years 1 and 2,

personal, social and health education is combined with religious education. The school uses the local education authority's suggested outline of topics well to ensure that all pupils can develop an awareness of themselves and their rights and responsibilities. The main topics centre around feelings and relationships, healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. These topics have detailed units of study, with clear time allocations, activities and resources. Issues are often linked with assembly themes.

32. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs continues to be good and is a strength of the school. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. The school makes sure that the provision outlined in pupils' statements of special educational needs is in place and is reviewed in line with Code of Practice procedure. The decision to withdraw pupils from parts of some literacy lessons for specific work is effective because it gives pupils the skills to benefit from other lessons. The successful introduction of the literacy and numeracy lessons, including the system of setting and grouping pupils within lessons, gives lower attaining pupils good opportunities to progress well. However in some other subjects the lack of targeted work matched to pupils' individual skills limits the achievements of all pupils including lower attaining pupils. Since the last inspection the school has introduced regular short but focused sessions for pupils who have specific learning difficulties. This scheme is successful in raising pupils' self esteem as well as providing a regular structured programme to help the pupils improve their co-ordination and balance. The special needs co-ordinator and the other adults working in these sessions are committed to supporting this group of pupils with whom they have very good relationships. The school states its purpose is 'to provide equal opportunities of education for all its pupils, in an environment where all are valued'. This ethos is actively and successfully promoted throughout the school allowing pupils who have special educational needs to flourish.
33. The school follows successfully the national guidelines for the literacy and numeracy hours. Too often, teachers prepare worksheets for pupils to complete which require only a very limited response from pupils, for example in religious education. Pupils' skills in numeracy and information and communication technology are, however, satisfactorily used to support work in other subject areas.
34. The range of activities organised outside lesson times is good. The school has a strong tradition in music. Instrumental tuition of a good quality is available in brass, woodwind, and violin. A school choir and orchestra have been formed and have regularly performed in school concerts and elsewhere, including services at Ely Cathedral. Three recorder groups meet for weekly practices. There are successful school netball and football clubs, that have represented the school in local tournaments. Also the school runs weekly computer clubs, including one for younger pupils, and drama, country dancing and gymnastics clubs. They are all well supported, open to both boys and girls and provide opportunities for pupils with particular talents to further develop their abilities. A residential visit to the Isle of Wight is a strong feature of the summer term activities for Year 6 pupils.
35. There are good links between the school and the local community and village college. Pupils visit a local museum and St. Andrew's Church. The local vicar is vice-chairman of the governing body and a regular visitor into school, leading a weekly act of corporate worship. Members of the local fire, railway, postal and police services have talked to pupils about keeping safe. Parents are most welcome in school and many help in class or with special events. Pupils have visited a local builders yard as part of their geographical and environmental studies. A local potter has successfully worked with Year 1 pupils. Local storytellers and theatre groups visit the school

regularly and pupils have joined with others from the Village college to meet the famous author, Michael Rosen. Local residents have provided pupils with important insights into their experiences in India and Egypt. Pupils appropriately support fund-raising activities for a number of local and national charities. Teachers from the Village college have contributed well to the school's developing curriculum, for instance:

- they have worked with pupils on a design and technology project;
- a language tutor has led two workshops for pupils on the French Language;
- they have led in-service training for staff on work in science.

Year 6 pupils use the community sports hall on the Village College campus for games lessons. As part of the arrangement for transfer to the secondary phase, staff have worked with Year 6 pupils on a geography project in the period following the National Curriculum tests. Pupils visit the College for an introductory visit before the end of term and there is a developed programme of consultation to ensure a smooth transition for the pupils.

36. The school provides good equality of access in the curriculum. All pupils are included regardless of gender, ability or race. The school has policies and practices in place to ensure all pupils are included. There is an equal opportunities policy in which there is effective liaison with the co-ordinator for special needs and other staff. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good.
37. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. As at the time of the previous inspection, moral and social development are strengths of the school. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.
38. The school uses assemblies to promote spiritual awareness. These meet the requirement for a daily act of worship, and are largely Christian in character. Pupils are asked to reflect on the theme for the day as they pray. Some assemblies are calm and thought-provoking experiences. Others, however, miss opportunities to motivate pupils to think more deeply about the meaning and relevance of what they have heard to their own place in the greater scheme of things. Many religious education lessons are purely factual and do not emphasise the search of mankind for a meaning to life outside the material world. From displays around the school, pupils have clearly been discussing their responsibilities to the world to conserve endangered species and have looked at 'Dreamcatchers' as a way of exploring their thoughts. Pupils are occasionally delighted by discovery, for example of how to make 'telephones' with yoghurt pots and string, but too often opportunities are missed to allow them to explore the wonders of the world they live in.
39. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. The consistently applied behaviour policy encourages pupils not only to behave well for reward or fear of sanction, but also to gain moral judgement. Pupils discuss the benefits of setting rules and guidelines. Because they are taught the rationale behind rules, there is a good level of self-discipline, which increases as pupils grow. They understand right from wrong. Staff provide good role models and are respected by pupils. Pupils are taught to tolerate and respect the values and beliefs of others, although because the make-up of the school is largely mono-cultural, that tolerance is rarely put to a meaningful test. Nevertheless, the school successfully integrates the small number of minority pupils.
40. The school provides well for pupils' social development. The regular whole-school assemblies are used to foster a commitment to the school community amongst all

pupils. The assemblies teach pupils the value of being a useful member of that community and, by extension, to society as a whole. Pupils are encouraged to undertake all manner of responsibilities, from taking registers to the office from the reception classes to older pupils running the lunchtime lending library. Some pupils act as 'playground buddies' to listen to minor problems and try to resolve them; other pupils spoke highly of the value of this provision. The school's personal, social and health education policy covers appropriate ground for introducing pupils to the dangers and personal responsibilities they will meet. The policy leaves much of the way in which this is co-ordinated with the rest of the curriculum to individual teachers and there is no monitoring of the consistency of provision. Pupils receive appropriate advice on drugs awareness, sex education and personal safety. Pupils' personal confidence is further enhanced by a residential trip for older pupils to the Isle of Wight.

41. Pupils gain awareness of their own culture through lessons in several subjects, for example history, geography, art and music. A history lesson was brought alive with a study of the 1851 Soham electoral roll, which introduced elements of local culture. The teaching about Christianity is inextricably linked to British and local ways of life, with visits to the local church, Ely cathedral and celebration of Christian festivals. Whilst 'classical' music is played in assemblies and European painting studied in Art and Design lessons, pupils' appreciation of these aspects is not well developed, with some Year 6 pupils being unable to name more than one composer or famous artist. Pupils do, however, visit local theatres and art galleries. Last term the school was visited by a group of children from Belarus who gave a display of dancing and singing. Aspects of other cultures are also studied through the geography and religious education programmes but pupils are not often brought into close contact with other cultures found within modern Britain. There are exceptions such as the visit by a local Hindu and performance by a Caribbean steel band. There are some displays of other cultures around the school but, for example, the ethnic art display is away from main thoroughfares in the small hall and the exhibits are largely unlabelled. There are few books in the fiction library representing stories from, for example, Africa or South Asia. This awareness of the cultures of other groups that they will meet within Britain is still insufficiently developed, as it was at the time of the previous inspection.
42. The school is successful in creating the climate and learning environment for pupils to develop as well rounded individuals. They benefit from, and contribute to, their local community, while becoming increasingly aware of the wider world around them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has good procedures for ensuring that its pupils are cared for. It provides a secure and harmonious ethos which allows pupils to give of their best. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and pupils are well looked after if they are ill or have accidents at school. Systematic health and safety risk assessments and equipment checks are carried out and the school is a safe environment. Child protection procedures, which meet local guidelines, are in place and the designated teacher has been trained in their use. In the few cases encountered, the school has received good support from welfare agencies. The training of lunchtime supervisory staff requires updating in these and other general welfare and behaviour control issues; the school has plans to do this. Pupils have a good level of care. The needs of pupils learning English as an additional language are identified and their progress closely followed.
44. Procedures for maintaining discipline are effective and, generally, they are consistently applied. Pupils know and respect the rules, and the rewards and

sanctions used to implement them. The headteacher keeps a log of major incidents of poor behaviour and bullying and teachers note incidents in their diaries. There is, however, no system for collating this information and placing it in a pupil's personal record, which would allow the school to monitor the incidence and perception of bullying more effectively and in line with their anti-bullying policy. Some pupils and parents have concerns about low-level bullying. In a very few cases this had continued for up to a month before action was taken. Registers are completed satisfactorily at the start of sessions. The school operates a good system of contacting parents on the first day if pupils are absent without explanation and most absences are followed up with a written note from parents, including notification of family holidays in term time. This is a major component of absence but parents are not made sufficiently aware that this is not a right and that only the school can authorise such absence. The school currently lacks the recommended system for logging pupils in and out during the day.

45. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Standardised tests are carried out at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 in addition to the National Tests at the end of Years 2 and 6. At the end of each year as pupils progress through the school, teachers pass on records of pupils' formal assessment scores in numeracy and literacy including reading. Examples of pupils' work showing recent achievements are kept in pupils' files.
46. Assessment information is used effectively to organise groups and inform the groupings set up on the basis of prior attainment in English and mathematics. This means that group work, including work for pupils who have special educational needs can be based firmly on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. In science the system is less effective because although the end of unit assessment information indicates the pupils who need to revisit a topic there is no structure to allow this to happen. Reading scores are assessed twice yearly in each class and allow progress to be followed. The practice of relating attainment to the requirements of the published National Curriculum levels is underdeveloped. Consequently teachers are not able to judge how well their pupils are doing in relation to the standards expected for their age group across the whole curriculum. The school has however used assessment information effectively to identify writing as a whole school issue for development. Inspection findings confirm the school analysis.
47. The procedures for checking and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. This is because the assessment information is not used consistently to focus teaching on pupils' individual skills. The school does not stringently track pupils' individual progress and although group targets in English and mathematics are identified, the process of setting pupils' individual targets is underdeveloped. This means that a significant number of pupils do not reach their full potential. Pupils who have special educational needs do have individual targets and are carefully monitored. These pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The marking of work is only partially effective in helping pupils to improve. There is some good marking in English which relates to pupils' targets but there is scope for improvement in all subjects.
48. In reception, teachers judge children's levels of attainment in relation to the local authority's initial tests and reassess them at the end of the reception year. The results confirm the good progress children make in their learning while they are in the reception classes. Staff continually judge children's skills and knowledge. Though the formal recording of this information is being developed, the information is used well to plan appropriate activities that meet children's learning needs.

49. The school meets the requirements for those pupils who have statements of special educational needs and all are well supported. There are effective procedures for the early identification of pupils who have special educational needs. The recent introduction of deploying teaching assistants to work in each year group is effective because lower attaining pupils benefit from the extra adult attention. There are regular and effective links with other agencies such as specialist support teachers and educational psychologist as well as contact when needed with a variety of supportive agencies such as the Family Project. When the pupils are ready to leave the school there are good links with the receiving school so that relevant information can be passed on and pupils' individual needs can continue to be met. The effect of these links is that pupils who have special educational needs are well cared for by the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are generally well satisfied with what the school achieves. About half the parents returned the questionnaire and the views expressed were very positive. The only minor concerns were the quality of information about progress, links with parents and the extent of extra-curricular activity. A few parents made written comments about bullying and the attitude of a very small number of staff. About 30 parents attended the meeting before the inspection and they were also generally positive and had few concerns. Informal discussions with parents outside school at the end of the day confirmed this but there were some concerns about information and opportunities to see pupils' work.
51. The positive views are confirmed by the inspection. As to the concern over information, pupils' reports were found to be satisfactory with some shortcomings, the school works well with parents and activities organised outside lessons are good. Whilst no direct bullying by children was seen during the inspection, some pupils have concerns. These challenges are dealt with adequately and promptly and the majority of staff are good role-models for the pupils. However, one teacher was found to be occasionally sarcastic when talking to pupils
52. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. Information for parents has improved since the previous inspection but there are still shortcomings. Parents of children starting school are given a good introduction to what their child will be doing, starting with a home visit. Parents are kept well informed of what is happening in school with regular newsletters and curricular information is given by each year-group each term, so that parents can give support from home. Pupils' annual reports give good information about what the pupil has achieved that year in English, mathematics and science. They are honest and the comments discriminate well between those who are higher and lower attainers. The brief comments about the other subjects are unsatisfactory, however, as they give no insight into achievement related to the pupil's age. The comments on the pupils' personal development are satisfactory and parents have space to record their response. There are two formal occasions in the year when the parents can meet the teachers and there is an opportunity to discuss the report; almost all parents attend. The governors' annual report to parents still lacks some of the statutory information, such as a three-year summary of attainment in tests and targets, and the prospectus does not contain absence figures.
53. Parents have a good impact on the progress of their children at school and at home. Most parents support their child's learning by hearing them read at home and recording comments in their reading diary, although this tails off for many as they get

older. Most parents support homework when expected. The school has issued a Home-School Agreement but, in the opinion of the school, the exercise has had no additional benefit. There is a strong home school association that raises very substantial amounts for the school and organises social events. These help bring parents and the school together. Funds have been used to provide, for example, a wide-screen television and video player, a technology trolley and blinds in the small hall. A good number of parents help within the school, for example with hearing pupils read and in practical lessons. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson two parents helped with cross-stitching and quilling and at least 20 parents stayed to share books with their children in the reception classes.

54. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern. The school has good links with parents and values their involvement in their child's education. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to discuss the progress of their children, including attending formal review meetings and less formal discussion about pupils' progress. The school works closely with parents of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. A Hindu mother has talked to pupils about Indian costume, demonstrating how a sari is worn.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. Overall, the leadership and management of the headteacher are satisfactory. He is highly respected within the school and the local community, and has been at the school for 11 years. He is clearly viewed by the local education authority as a good professional with effective skills, knowledge and understanding because he was seconded in recent years to another school that was experiencing difficulties. He provides a clear educational direction for the school in several areas, for instance:
- the care and support of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs;
 - the maintenance of a disciplined and welcoming learning environment;
 - the involvement of parents and the local community in the life of the school;
 - the development of the checking of teaching quality, which this has led to satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
56. However, some of the more contemporary issues in modern primary school management have not been embraced so successfully. For instance:
- the delegation of management responsibilities to senior staff is unsatisfactory;
 - the thorough checking of overall provision and results to identify strengths and areas for development is weak;
 - there is no strong improvement plan that will improve pupils' standards, particularly in writing;
 - there is a lack of focus and drive when confronting challenges.
- Consequently, leadership and management are not as strong as they were at the time of the last inspection.
57. Within the current boundaries of their work, the senior management team provides adequate support for the headteacher and staff. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to have a proper impact on the school. This is mainly because the tasks and responsibilities delegated to them are not sufficiently challenging or clearly related to identified priorities. Consequently, this reduces their effectiveness in shaping the school or in determining its direction. Nevertheless, they do have an effect as role models for and supporters of staff, particularly those new to the school. The lack of focus in the setting of priorities for improvement within the overall school plan means that the senior members of staff are not given projects to manage and achieve.
58. The governing body is supportive of the school's management and makes a satisfactory contribution to leadership. Statutory duties are appropriately fulfilled. The school maintains satisfactory aims and values for the guidance of its work. Much of the detailed work of the governing body is carried out in its committees and these have suitable terms of reference for guidance. Discussions with governors reveal a satisfactory grasp of present strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, some are less clear about the strategies required to make improvements, for instance, how to provide subject coordinators with time to check on provision in their subjects. Governors are appropriately involved in the verifying of standards and provision through regular visits to the school. This is carried out by pairs of governors who have a specific focus for the visit and an important part of their remit is to report back at the next meeting of the governing body. An example is the work led by the literacy governor, who scrutinised pupils' work and had discussions with staff.

59. Financial planning is satisfactory. The headteacher and administrator are fully involved in the day-to-day management of resources and with the assistance of new technology the arrangements are effective. The governors' finance committee meets termly and reviews matters that are properly raised by the school management. The committee checks on income and expenditure through the detailed supervision of the monthly transaction printouts. The large carry-forward of funding is a result of the school benefiting from their new status and not having to spend money on maintenance or replace relatively new resources. However, the school is rightly aware of the need to use funds for these purposes and is holding a contingency for the purpose. They are also aware that funding will be needed for some of the management initiatives identified, such as enabling staff to check on the quality of teaching.
60. There are sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of pupils and to teach the full range of National Curriculum and religious education. All teachers have job descriptions and have identified targets through the sound performance management system. Classroom assistants effectively support teachers. The distribution of points for responsibility is heavily concentrated amongst the senior management team, which reduces the opportunity to provide recognition for teachers with core subject responsibilities. Teachers new to the school receive good support to develop their professional skills both in respect of the priorities of the school development plan and their individual professional needs.
61. The management of special educational needs continues to be good. The two governors who have responsibility for special educational needs are very well informed and committed to promoting an effective special needs provision. One recent example of this is that after visiting classrooms and assessing the provision, the governors decided to increase the number of teaching assistants. The impact of these appointments and the benefit to the pupils is being monitored. The governors meet very regularly with the special needs co-ordinator to support developments and keep themselves fully informed about special needs issues in the school. The special needs co-ordinator has good specialist teaching skills and takes seriously the need to maintain up-to-date expertise so that the school can support the individual needs of all pupils. The co-ordinator has identified the need to review the special needs policy and to promote the more specific targeting of work across all curriculum subjects. The designated special needs room provides a cheerful room for small group work and resources are used well. The school philosophy of making sure that all pupils are involved equally in everything the school does inclusion results in a good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
62. The management of the provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is effective. Local education authority support staff are involved in providing initial guidance to staff where necessary. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors subsequent progress of the pupils, intervening with support where necessary.
63. The accommodation is spacious, light and well ventilated which provides an attractive environment for learning and one suitable for the teaching of the National Curriculum. There is a well-equipped fiction and non-fiction library, hall, small hall, used as an additional teaching space and a newly established computer suite. The open-plan arrangement of teaching areas, whilst allowing teachers and pupils to work collaboratively, allows noise to carry from one teaching area to another. Teachers and pupils have learnt to accommodate themselves to this and it only has a minor effect on learning, for example when occasionally questions or answers have to be

repeated. There are extensive playing fields for games and recreational areas set aside for playtimes.

64. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. They are well-organised and easily accessible to staff. This represents a significant area of improvement since the last inspection when a shortage of geography and religious education books were identified, poor information and communication technology provision and a shortage of design and technology equipment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. To develop the school further the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Raise attainment in writing by:
 - improving basic skills, most particularly handwriting, spelling and grammar;
 - increasing the use of independent written work throughout the curriculum;
 - ensuring there is sufficient time for pupils to engage in independent work.(Paragraphs: 2, 4, 6, 23, 25, 29, 33, 46, 81, 84)
 - (2) Raise attainment in science by:
 - ensuring pupils have constant practice in setting up the conditions for active investigative work;
 - using pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy to produce increasingly detailed accounts of the outcomes of their work.(Paragraphs: 2, 8, 23, 29, 33, 97, 102)
 - (3) Improve the tracking of individual pupils
 - by focussing consistently on pupils' individual skills;
 - by setting individual targets for pupils' learning;
 - by developing the quality of marking so that it relates more closely to pupils' attainment and the achievement of personal improvement targets.(Paragraphs: 47)
 - (4) Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - delegating significant management responsibilities to the senior management team;
 - making the improvement plan more focussed on areas that need development;
 - identifying and evaluating priorities with the utmost clarity, particularly in attainment.(Paragraphs: 56, 57)
66. In the current school development plan, the school has appropriately identified the development of writing in English, improved standards in mathematics and the review of opportunities for investigative science.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	43	24	2	0	0
Percentage	0	15	53	30	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	408
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	92

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	29	30	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	22	27
	Girls	29	28	30
	Total	55	50	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	85 (79)	97 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	24
	Girls	29	30	28
	Total	54	58	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (79)	98 (96)	88 (77)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	27	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	27	33
	Girls	17	20	19
	Total	38	47	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (77)	72 (77)	80 (93)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	27	26
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	39	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (79)	68 (77)	68 (75)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	346
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	224

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	743,484
Total expenditure	702,119
Expenditure per pupil	1,649
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,788
Balance carried forward to next year	81,153

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

436

Number of questionnaires returned

220

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	48	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	49	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	4	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	55	6	1	4
The teaching is good.	51	45	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	47	9	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	44	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	54	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	50	41	3	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	2	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	47	7	3	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and is a strength of the school. This is because the consistently good teaching combines successfully with children's willingness to learn. The busy atmosphere in the classrooms provides a good climate for learning. The reception classes provide children with a good start to their formal education.
68. The children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the nursery and two reception classes. Children attend the nursery on a part time basis starting in the September before their fourth birthday. Reception children attend full time and start in the September before their fifth birthday. The school places children in classes on the basis of age, older children forming one class and younger children the other class. This means that teachers can more easily focus on the individual learning needs of all children in the Foundation Stage. The nursery is staffed by a full-time teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistant. The reception classes each have a teacher and full-time assistant. In the nursery there are 56 children each attending part-time and 56 children attend the reception classes full-time. Parent helpers and childcare students provide good support, which is well organised to meet children's educational needs.
69. Standards of attainment on entry to the nursery and to the reception classes are in line with those expected of children of this age. The school has analysed carefully the information from the early judgements of attainment and the results show that there are significant weaknesses in speaking and listening as well as children's personal development. By the end of the reception year the majority of children achieve or are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in all areas of the curriculum. This achievement represents good progress for all children in the Foundation Stage. Children who have special educational needs are supported well, take part in all activities and make good progress.
70. The school provides an induction programme that includes a home visit by the nursery teacher and nursery nurse and a gradual introduction to nursery life. A useful booklet 'All About Me' is given to each child for parents to complete and become involved in these early stages of their child's education. Weekly 'Nursery News' letters are sent home telling parents about coming events and about the special topics being taught in the nursery class. A priority within the department is to continue to develop the existing links with playgroup leaders so local children can benefit from continuity and support.
71. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and this shows a good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. The improvements include the successful introduction of the new Foundation curriculum, consistently high quality teaching, children's very positive attitudes and the good relationships between adults and children. A recent development has been the weekly team meetings where staff consider relevant issues such as behaviour management, policy review, language development and the effective provision of outside play. These improvements and the careful planning of the curriculum mean that children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. By the end of the reception year most children will have exceeded the expected standards. This shows very good achievement and reflects the very good teaching in this area. All adults foster children's personal and social skills at every opportunity and children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority. Children enjoy coming to school and the majority happily leave their parents and carers at the start of lessons. Staff deal sensitively with children who are a little tearful. During the nursery and reception years children are gradually introduced to other parts of the school so that they feel confident to join the infant classes when they leave reception. Children are keen to explore the wide range of activities available and keen to learn new skills and explore new ideas. They are encouraged to be independent. Nursery children learn to put on and fasten their own coats and reception children are encouraged to change their clothes and fold them up before their dance lessons. Relationships are good and children play well when they learn to share and work together in a variety of situations such as role-play and outdoor play. Children are learning to respond to instructions and know that 'show fingers' means look and listen. Reception children happily show their teachers that they can 'do good listening' as they sit with their legs crossed and hands on laps. Children in reception learn to take responsibility for tidying up at the end of lessons. They co-operate as they use construction toys to build small, middle size and big towers and share books in the reading corner. The classrooms are well organised to promote children's independence in selecting from a range of planned activities, tools and materials. Children respond to questions but some do not initiate conversation. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and reception teachers consistently apply the behaviour policy. This means children are clear about the expected behaviour and know that they must listen well. Nursery children are encouraged by positive comments from the staff to join in class and group activities and develop an awareness of the boundaries for acceptable behaviour. All adults work hard to ensure that the classrooms are happy places to be where children can grow in confidence and achieve well.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Children achieve well and most reach nationally expected levels of attainment by the end of the reception year, with some children likely to exceed them. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. The curriculum includes a wide variety of related activities and all children are given the chance to take part in all these well-considered learning opportunities. Teaching is consistently good and appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully introduced. There are consistently good opportunities for children to develop the spoken word and enjoy books. Nursery children talk with their teacher about pictures in a book and ask questions about the story. They chat happily as they make houses out of junk materials and mix the porridge for Goldilocks in the Bears Cottage. Reception children respond with enthusiasm as they suggest alternative words for 'little', and join in the refrain 'we're not scared' as they read a favourite story *The Bear Hunt* with a parent volunteer. Reception children listen well at the end of lessons as groups of children share their work with the whole class. Children are generous in their support for each other's achievements. Numerous opportunities are provided for children to join in with favourite songs such as 'If you are happy and you know it'. Most reception children are able to talk confidently to visitors. At the end of lessons teachers dismiss children in a variety of ways such as initial sounds of first names or colour of clothing. This encourages children to listen carefully.
74. Effective emphasis is placed on the development of reading and writing skills. This results in good achievement. Literacy lessons are typically lively, challenging and fun. Adults share books with children and encourage a desire to read. Nursery children

join in with familiar stories such as *The Three Little Pigs* and are learning to recognise their own names from flash cards. Reception children handle books appropriately and with respect. Children have book bags and well maintained reading records show that parents support the school well in encouraging children to read. Lower attaining children enjoy sharing stories with adults, talk about the stories and are able to recognise a few familiar words. Higher attaining children can talk confidently about the characters and story in their reading books, have basic sight vocabulary, use pictures to help work out the text and are able to associate sounds with letters. Children are aware that the name of a book is the title and when their teachers use a book as a focus for class reading they respond with natural curiosity and enthusiasm. Teachers make very good use of matching games such as placing all the items beginning with 'B' into a hoop. These activities help children recognise the sounds of words and the associated letters, giving a firm basis for the development of their reading and writing skills. Children know that writing communicates meaning and in the reception year they build on the nursery level skills of drawing lines and mark making. Reception children learn to write their own first name and to overwrite a sentence they have dictated to their teacher. Higher attaining children are learning to space their words and lower attaining children are starting to form the letters in their name. Name cards, alphabet and sound friezes help children to develop early reading and writing skills. Both reception classes have special cuddly toys, Albert and Gordon who go home in turn with children for the weekend. Parents support this initiative well by writing up weekend diaries to be shared with the rest of the class.

Mathematical development

75. The majority of children are on target to attain the expected standards by the end of the reception year, with some children likely to exceed them. Teaching is consistently good. The good planning and organisation mean that despite the wide range of attainment in the classes all children are able to make good progress. Children in the nursery class have great fun in learning to count. Their teacher has three little pigs and the children count to three. When they hide their faces one little pig disappears and children have to work out how many are left. In the same session the teacher made very good use of the number line as once again the children closed their eyes and their teacher took a number away. Children had to guess which number had disappeared. Good questioning from the teacher encouraged children to look carefully and use the remaining numbers as clues to finding the missing number. Nursery children learn about colour and shape with the majority of children knowing red, blue, yellow and green and half the children recognising squares, circles and triangles. Very good use was made of large cardboard boxes. Children pretended the boxes were houses and experimented to see how many of them could fit in. As this was intended to be the little pigs' house the children tried very hard but unsuccessfully to blow it down. In the reception classes children are learning mathematical language to describe size and how to sort objects into order according to size. Teachers in reception make very good use of resources such as Russian dolls and brightly coloured boxes to help children to understand biggest and smallest. Children show a good understanding of shape as they recognise three-dimensional shapes. A very successful teaching strategy was when the teacher placed a number of coloured three-dimensional shapes on a surface and asked children to describe for example where to find the red cube. This activity successfully consolidated children's knowledge of positional vocabulary, the recognition of three-dimensional shapes and their speaking and listening skills. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy have been appropriately introduced and this includes the good use of 'banana' number fans to help children become confident in their knowledge of number. They are able to show for example that they know one more than 6. Children are enthusiastic and respond very well to the wide range of related and well planned mathematical

activities that encourages them to practise the early mathematical skills of sequencing patterns, counting and sorting objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. By the time they leave the Reception year, most children reach the nationally expected levels of attainment in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are interested in the world around them and their interest is promoted well through the range of interesting opportunities provided. Children show curiosity as they use play dough to make shapes of varying sizes, they ask questions and make their own observations. Children in nursery and reception improve their co-ordination skills when use cutting tools to make shapes from the play dough. Adults promote a sense of time when they talk with children about activities that will happen later in the day and refer to events that have occurred previously. Reception classes have 'special person boards'. Each child has a week when their photographs and information from their 'All About Me' booklets is displayed, and the special person for the week leads the line. This not only develops children's confidence and self-esteem but also contributes to their awareness and interest in other people. The regular opportunities to take turns with dice games also encourage children to be aware and considerate of each other. Nursery children enjoy using glue and sticky tape to assemble models. There was great excitement when parent helpers supported the class work on the three little pigs by helping the children to make their own little pig masks. Children were properly involved in measuring the size of their mask and putting the eyes and nose in the correct places. Teachers in nursery and reception provide stimulating displays that children can investigate. For example photographs of their autumn walk, nature displays and many examples of children's own work showing their skills in cutting, drawing, sticking and painting. During the week of inspection reception children went out of school to visit the local recreation ground. They used their knowledge of shape well to identify the triangles of the speed ramps and other geometric shapes. Children pushed and pulled as they played on the equipment and when they returned to school they used their recollection of the features of the recreation park to plan and construct a tabletop model. Children play imaginatively with train and road tracks and explore the home corner. All children in the nursery and reception classes have access to computers and software and children who chose to use the computer are able to use the mouse to continue the programmes. Reception children join the full school for assembly and pray respectfully with the rest of the school.

Physical development

77. By the time they have completed the reception year, the majority of children reach the expected levels of attainment in their physical development. There are good opportunities for children to take part in safe outdoor play. There is a secure segregated play area, enhanced by outdoor toys and equipment . There is an outdoor playhouse which offers good opportunities for imaginative role-play. The whole area is pleasantly arranged and decorated. The playhouse has window boxes and the children learn to care for plants in the window box plants and in the flowerbeds. The structured physical education and dance lessons are taught very well. Children know at the beginning of the lesson they should warm their muscles ready for exercise. Teachers use appropriate text such as *Look at Me* or *Wriggle and Giggle* to encourage children to move imaginatively and with increasing control. Children gain in confidence as groups perform their sequence of movements for each other. Children enjoy these lessons and respond very well to the challenges of movement and dance. Support staff make sure that all children are able to join in and benefit from the lessons. Adults are enthusiastic helping to promote physical skills well and making good use of the opportunities to develop children's co-ordination and dexterity.

Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials.

Creative development

78. By the time they leave the reception year, most children make good progress and reach nationally expected levels of attainment in their creative development. Children use paint and make collages using paper and fabric. They draw leaves from observation and use oil pastels to make petal prints. They create splatter paintings to represent firework displays and produce Incy Wincy Spider paintings. Nursery children paint pictures of members of their family and use a tray of paint to print their footsteps while wearing wellies. Good use is made of the outside play area for children to experiment with texture as they make brick rubbings. Children enjoy singing favourite songs and build up a repertoire including number songs. Reception children enjoy listening to music and know the rules for good listening. They participate enthusiastically in the Fireman song showing a good sense of rhythm and try hard to follow a simple score. They respond well and are learning to listen to music appreciatively. Children play imaginatively alongside other children in the role-play areas. Nursery children use small toys imaginatively and the majority of children are happy to explain the tasks they are doing and to talk about their model making.

ENGLISH

79. The 2001 national test results for seven year olds show standards in reading that are well above average when compared to all schools nationally and schools in similar circumstances. Results in writing are average when compared to all schools nationally and similar schools. Over time, the trend in reading results has been above the national average, whilst writing results have been below the national average. There is little in the results of boys and girls in reading but boys do less well than girls in writing.
80. In the 2001 national tests for eleven year-olds, pupils standards were well below average when compared to all schools and compared to similar schools. When the results of this group of pupils are traced back to their national test scores as seven-year olds in 1997 the improvement is below average. The school has had little success in improving standards with this particular group of pupils, even though the school has attempted a number of initiatives. Prior to the poor 2001 results, standards have been in line with national averages. Boys do better than girls.
81. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations. Throughout the school, the evidence from the inspection is that reading, speaking and listening are above national expectations but the quality of writing, presentation and spellings are below expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because staff carefully target their needs. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment because they know and understand sufficient English to be able to join in with the rest of the class, particularly in the spoken language sessions. There has been satisfactory improvement in reading standards since the last inspection, but unsatisfactory progress in writing.
82. Attainment in speaking and listening is very good. Pupils listen attentively in class both to the teacher and to one another. Pupils of all ages and abilities are willing to contribute to class discussions and have the confidence to read their work out aloud. In a Year 2 class pupils prepared and reported back to the whole class on sets of instructions for getting ready in the morning and for making a kite. In a geography

lesson Year 5 pupils discussed possible solutions to traffic congestion on Soham High Street presenting their proposals in well-considered arguments. Other members of the class responded with relevant and searching questions. Pupils willingly and confidently discuss their ideas and thoughts. Their speech is clear and they explain things in logical order. They listen carefully to each other and extend their ideas and vocabulary.

83. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards in reading that are well above those expected nationally and this is a significant strength of the school. Higher and average attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 read fluently, confidently and with expression. These pupils explain what has happened in the story in correct sequence and provide descriptions of character and plot. They have an extensive sight vocabulary of familiar words and explain the meaning of complex words. They enjoy reading and it is a regular and favourite activity of many pupils outside school. Lower attaining pupils read hesitantly but they have sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding to correct themselves and sound out words even if they are unsure of the meaning. At eleven years of age, higher and average attaining pupils read difficult texts with considerable ease. They use punctuation and grammar to good effect in order to make the text more interesting and exciting. These pupils talk knowledgeably and in detail about character and plot and summarise the story-line well. They enjoy reading and this is a regular activity for them outside school. These pupils understand and use the contents and index pages effectively. Lower attaining pupils read relatively well and self-correct themselves when they make a mistake.
84. Attainment in writing is below the standards expected nationally at ages seven and eleven and has been identified as a priority in the school's plan for improvement. Children make a good start in nursery when they understand that print carries meaning and they begin to learn to control a pencil. By the time they are in Reception class and Year 1 most pupils are beginning to write independently. They develop an understanding of basic punctuation of full stops and capital letters and can recognise speech marks, question marks and explanation marks. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in understanding and practising the use of these aspects of grammar. As pupils progress through the school they develop more skill in writing and producing different kinds of writing such as poems, recount, instructional stories and imaginative stories. They learn to paragraph their writing, but this aspect of organising their work is not consistent. Spelling also remains an area for improvement. Some common consonant blends and rules of spelling are not firmly fixed and errors persist. The newly installed computer suite has encouraged teachers to develop pupils' information retrieval and word processing skills. The quality of handwriting and presentation is generally below the expectations of pupils at this age. Higher attaining pupils produce neat, legible writing, but many average and below average pupils produce work, which is untidy and letters irregularly formed. Some pupils use fountain pens, which many are unable to use with care and as a consequence their work is covered in inkblots. Pupils' writing frequently strays from the margin producing untidy presentation.
85. The quality of teaching is predominantly satisfactory and sometimes good. During the inspection week teachers planned appropriately within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. In some instances they spend too much time on introducing and discussing the work and activity, which reduces the time pupils have in practising their writing skills. In other instances, the lesson is organised in such a fashion that some children's work is not monitored sufficiently and teacher interventions are not made to improve pupils' work. In some cases a lack of pace by the teacher reduces the progress pupils make. In all lessons, however, lesson objectives are made clear

and pupils have a good focus for their learning. The quality of marking is variable. In the best instances teachers' comments explain the areas for improvement and specifically refer to pupils' individual targets. In most instances however, work is acknowledged only with a tick, with some incorrect answers marked correct or comment made about the pupils level of effort.

86. There are good examples of teachers transferring literacy skills to other areas of the curriculum for example in recount writing in history. There is, however, no consistent approach to integrating literacy skills across the curriculum, particularly, in writing and there are examples of missed opportunities when filling in missing words activities and even colouring in work is set.
87. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Some useful sampling of pupils' work and scrutiny of teachers' planning provide a basis for checking pupils' work in English, but this is insufficiently focused on standards. A detailed action plan to improve standards in writing has not been devised. Assessment of pupils' progress is in place. National test results, optional year tests and reading scores are used to monitor pupil progress and to set work which is appropriate to their needs. Resources for literacy are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is helping teachers to develop their expertise in teaching literacy skills by providing information from materials and as a result of attendance at professional development courses.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the 2001 tests in Mathematics were above those compared with all schools nationally and with schools that have similar proportions of free school meals. The overall trend since 1998 also shows standards to be above average compared with national figures. Inspection findings indicate that pupils in Year 2 currently reach standards which are at least in line with national expectations and are on target to meet national average standards by the end of the school year.
89. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in the 2001 tests in Mathematics were close to the national average for those reaching level 4 but below national average for those reaching the higher level 5. However, when compared with the results of these pupils as seven-year-olds in 1997, the standards are above the national average for those reaching level 4 and close to the national average for those reaching the higher level 5. The overall trend since 1998 shows that the school's standards fluctuate when compared with schools nationally but inspection evidence indicates that the present pupils in Year 6 reach standards which are above when compared to all schools nationally.
90. The arrangements for grouping pupils according to their prior attainment from Years 2 to 6 help the higher attaining pupils to achieve higher levels. In addition, pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior attainment because they know enough English to be able to take a full part in the lesson.
91. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. One of the key issues in the last inspection was to raise the standards of pupils' attainment in both key stages in using and applying mathematics. This has certainly been achieved and investigative work was noted a number of times when scrutinising pupils' work and in many lessons. The use of information communication technology has also increased satisfactorily and was used during the inspection week. Pupils in Year 6 are on target

to improve on the 2001 test results and are on course to be above the national average in 2002.

92. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils know the value of digits to 100 and can add and subtract single and two-digit numbers. They can also add and subtract pence. They know their two, three and five times tables. In two separate lessons in Year 2, the pupils experienced a wide variety of investigations. Some were able to carry out experiments in weighing different sized balls of plasticene to see which was the heaviest. Most pupils were able to use a tape to measure books and tables in centimetres and the playground, using a trundle wheel, in metres. They know the names of basic two- and three-dimensional shapes and solids. Some are able to find different ways of changing the order of three different coloured circles and then went on to do the same with four colours. Pupils in Year 1 are able to add two or three numbers together up to ten. They can count forward and back in ones or twos to twenty. They know the days of the week and practise the language of mathematics by using such words as before, after and next.
93. By the age of eleven, pupils in Year 6 can measure angles using a protractor and know about complementary and supplementary angles. They can calculate the area of triangles and circles and can work out co-ordinates on a grid. The more able can investigate codes, can size fractions and turn fractions into decimals. In a good lesson observed, the majority of the lower set were able to work out the pattern for triangular numbers. In a very good lesson the more able pupils could test for divisibility of all numbers up to eleven, except seven, without the use of a calculator. Pupils in Year 5, can turn improper fractions into mixed numbers, can order decimals, can solve problems with money and know the properties of shapes and solids. In one good lesson with the more able, pupils showed they know how to investigate problems of length, capacity, time and money and work out appropriate questions with the four rules. In another lesson observed to the lower set, pupils were able orally to subtract numbers with three digits using the adding on method with the teacher. However, when they worked on their own some pupils were unable to obtain many correct answers. At the age of eight, pupils investigate numbers, for example, three ways to equal fourteen. The more able can solve word problems with money. In two lessons, pupils were able to recognise equivalent fractions. Pupils aged nine proceed to knowing fractions of whole numbers, fractions of shapes and are able to do addition of simple fractions. In two good lessons observed, pupils were able to add using hundreds, tens and units with the more able pupils extending their knowledge into decimals.
94. The quality of teaching throughout the school varies from satisfactory to very good but is mainly good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers know their subject well and are good at teaching the basic skills. They manage their pupils well and the majority have a good rapport with their pupils. Pupils generally work at a good pace and are keen and interested. They behave well in lessons and have a good attitude. The three part system of the numeracy strategy is well used. The learning objectives are shared with the pupils. The mental starter, normally about ten minutes long, is at a good pace before the main part of the lesson is introduced finishing with the whole-class session where the teacher ascertains how much the pupils have learnt. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers encourage pupils to think and investigate where possible. In another successful lesson, Year 6 pupils had to think hard and investigate how a very large number could be divided by numbers up to eleven. The less able pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with classroom support assistants who work alongside them. The literacy skills of speaking and listening are developed and there are some very articulate pupils in the top sets.

Numeracy is used across the curriculum satisfactorily. For example graphical work is used in science and information and communication technology and a traffic survey was noted in geography.

95. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator, who is qualified in Mathematics, organises the department well. There are satisfactory procedures for recording pupils' progress. All pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 take optional tests which are recorded. Also recorded are those needing extra help or those more able pupils who need more work. Pupils with special educational needs who have individual education plans are given numeracy targets where appropriate.

SCIENCE

96. In the National Curriculum tests for 2001, the attainments in science of 11 year-old pupils were well below both the national average and the average reached by pupils from schools in a similar context. Prior to this year, pupils' attainments had been steadily rising, and in 2000, they were above the national average. The fall in this year can, in part, be attributed to a year group whose attainments had been recognised as generally low. However, the available information has also revealed that the progress made by this group in the four years leading up to the tests has been below that made by pupils generally. Teacher assessments for the seven year-old pupils in 2001 show that their attainments were also below the national average.
97. Scrutiny of the work completed by pupils so far this school year indicates that standards are higher, being above the expected standard for seven year-olds and around the expected level for 11 year-olds. However, for the older pupils, standards are not as high as those reached two years ago, and they do not match their standards in mathematics. As a consequence, the pupils, most particularly the higher attainers, do not make the progress to high levels of attainment that they should and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory for the younger pupils in Years 1 and 2.
98. The last report identified the fact that pupils had insufficient experience of investigative work. Although the school has worked hard to ensure that much of the science is taught through observing experiments, too much is teacher directed, and pupils have insufficient practice in carrying out and fully recording investigations. Accordingly, as shown by last years' National Curriculum test results and the scrutiny of work completed so far this year, there has been insufficient improvement in this key area of the subject.
99. By the time that they reach the age of seven, most of the pupils in Year 2 acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to reach the expected level for seven year-olds. Pupils have learned about light and dark. They are aware that light can come from a variety of sources, and that the sun is a major provider of light. They understand that objects can be sorted into living and non-living forms, and begin to learn about the conditions necessary for healthy living. They learn to sort foodstuffs into different categories, such as vegetables and meat. They carry out a practical study of the varying lengths of shadow throughout the day. However, opportunities for higher attainers to achieve even more are inhibited by the limiting nature of the worksheets provided by the teachers that are generally the same for all pupils.
100. In Year 3 pupils learn about the different categories of materials, such as wood, plastics and metal. They carry out experiments in the conditions which cause some metals to rust. They extend their work on light to compare the height of the sun in the

sky to the length of a shadow. They study which objects are transparent and which are opaque, but the impractical nature of the experiment leads to some misunderstandings. Year 4 pupils learn about forces and movement, measuring the outcome of their experiments in Newtons and recording them in graphical form. They learn about how friction can be a hindrance to movement through the air, but that it can be used well in braking. Year 5 pupils learn about the parts of plants, and how seeds disperse and germinate. They study the human body and the workings of muscles and blood circulation. In Year 6, pupils investigate life cycles and food chains. They learn how to categorise animals through decisions trees, asking 'yes/no' questions. They learn to distinguish between physical and chemical changes that are reversible, such as water freezing, or irreversible such as baking a cake. In all of this work, there is little opportunity for pupils to make an individual response or to describe their work in their own words. Often, the teacher's worksheet determines a prescribed way of working, and the pupils' restricted and identical comments at the end of most activities represent a limited involvement in setting up the conditions and methods of the experiments. This inhibits the opportunities for pupils who are gifted in this subject to progress to higher levels. An exception to this can be found in Year 6 when pupils were asked to write down in their own terms the conditions necessary for a fair test. The individual responses showed that they have understood the main factors involved, but this is a rare example. Pupils have insufficient regular practice in exploring the choice of apparatus, carrying out, recording and interpreting the outcomes of experiments for themselves.

101. Across the school, there are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. In younger classes, pupils with special educational needs are given good assistance by classroom support staff and they make good progress. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not require any special provision to work effectively in this subject and their progress is good, mainly as a result of the help that they receive from being fully involved in question and answer sessions by teachers, even when they are a little reticent in making active contributions.
102. Too often, however, the work given to pupils is the same for all the class, and it is often copied out. As a result, although they have good verbal skills in expressing their ideas, pupils' written work is poor, lacking in depth and care in presentation. They do not have sufficient practice in interpreting the results of investigations expressed in a variety forms. Accordingly, the progress made by the pupils in older classes is unsatisfactory and not enough of them progress to the higher levels of attainment that their verbal skills would suggest.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was good in two out of three lessons, and satisfactory in another. In good lessons, pupils worked actively to make their own telephone system using plastic cups and string. The pupils worked very excitedly, but kept on task, mainly through the teachers' good management skills and preparation of the necessary equipment. They explained the tasks well and most pupils successfully completed the task. In the other satisfactory lesson, pupils carried out a round robin of various investigations. The lesson was well supported by the voluntary help of parents, but some of the tasks were too difficult for the pupils and not connected with the main learning objective of the lesson.
104. In the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, three out of four were satisfactory, while the other was unsatisfactory. In the satisfactory lessons, pupils reviewed their previous learning through good quality questioning. As a result, pupils had a clear grasp of what they had to do, and they showed a good articulation of their knowledge in spoken

responses. The Year 6 classes combined together to organise a series of experiments all on the theme of electricity. All groups undertook three interesting experiments, using citrus fruits, for instance, as sources of energy. However, learning was limited by a lack of active involvement; most of the pupils were observers, and were not close enough to see the reactions that were taking place. An experiment on identifying which circuits were complete and would light up was good in leading pupils to understand the symbols used, but hampered by having only one piece of equipment for 'hands-on' use. The final experiment on the conductivity of metals did not allow pupils to assess the varying intensities of the light which was produced. Unsatisfactory learning took place in a lesson about the effect of light shining on transparent and opaque objects. It lacked sufficient pace to interest the pupils and caused some misunderstanding to arise through the unnecessary introduction of translucent material. In the main, however, teachers show good management of pupils. They prepare a range of interesting resources which are relevant to the ages and activities undertaken. Judging from the samples of pupils' completed work, there is a need for the teachers to have higher expectations of what pupils can do.

105. The subject is well led by a recently appointed co-ordinator. She is very knowledgeable and committed to ensuring that the subject moves forward and that standards rise. She has developed an appropriate action plan, but needs to have more opportunity to carry out an audit of the standards of completed work across the school. Resources for the subject are sufficient and maintained well. The school satisfactorily monitors the progress of pupils through the levels identified within the National Curriculum programmes of study. However, there has been insufficient investigation into discovering the areas where pupils were lacking in previous assessments to provide the necessary target areas for the revision of skills.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and 11. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.
107. Pupils at the age of 5 and 6 work with pencils, crayons and paint to express their ideas. For example, Year 1 pupils used flour and water on white cloth to design various patterns which were then painted over when dry. Year 2 pupils progressed to use an information communication technology (ICT) programme, called Dazzle, to create some good bonfire night skies. The same pupils also designed some black churches which were silhouetted effectively against a coloured background.
108. At the age of eleven, pupils design patterns for a box. They worked with partners and produced some good examples of printing. They have also used different textures and patterns for shading. Pupils in Year 3 produce some colourful and detailed pictures of Indian art work. Pupils have good skills in the use of pastels to draw a city landscape against a background of colour. They work the colours in carefully by rubbing. Art is used in other subjects, for example, Year 4 pupils use a photocopy for the clothes of Tudor times in their history project, decorate them and then draw and colour the faces. In Year 5, pupils successfully work in the style of William Morris and produce a repeated print pattern using imprest print pads. Another group in the same class produce pictures from strips of paper that are curled (quilling). They satisfactorily create simple spirals and curves and combine these to form flowers. Pupils make bright and cheerful 2002 calendars. The attitude and behaviour of pupils

are generally good. They behave well at their tasks and enjoy the subject. One comment from the last report was the need to extend the use of information technology. This has now been done.

109. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Where it is good, the lessons are well planned and organised. There is plenty of activity. The good teachers have good subject knowledge and manage the pupils well. Teachers enthuse pupils to work in the style of famous painters as, for example William Morris and Monet. Year 4 pupils had used Monet as an inspiration with an information and communication technology program. The support staff work well with the pupils and this enables small groups to work equally well together. There are many displays of art around the school, in the classrooms and in the two halls. In the small music room, for example, there is a glass case of ethnic art from various countries. All this helps the pupils to enjoy and learn about the subject.
110. Management of the subject is good. The art co-ordinator is responsible for all the displays and she manages the subject well. She organises activities outside lesson times during the time of the school plays when the pupils help to make costumes, masks and scenery. Each year the school enters the town carnival. She recognises that the main strengths in art are painting, printing and textiles and also that there is not a great deal of three-dimensional work undertaken. There is no kiln. Assessment and monitoring are unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards in the last report were stated to be satisfactory. They are still satisfactory and in line with standards expected nationally at the ages of seven and 11. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Those pupils with special educational needs and learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to prior levels of attainment. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
112. Pupils share their ideas well. This was evident in a lesson with Year 1, where pupils were able to talk about the materials they would use to make Christmas cards and how they would layer the materials. They were competent and confident in their use of scissors. By the end of the lesson the pupils had produced some colourful Christmas cards. By the age of 7, pupils become confident in working with basic tools, equipment and materials. Year 2 pupils used a machine correctly to cut bows for cards.
113. Pupils continue to design and evaluate their work in Year 3. This was evident when the pupils designed a rotary mechanism for a card. They were able to work with a degree of accuracy in cutting out circles and finding the centres. Evaluation was more prominent in Year 5 where, in a previous lesson, some pupils had made some biscuits as part of food technology. In the lesson observed they evaluated the biscuits and discussed how important packaging is for the product. All the hygiene and safety precautions were followed in another lesson with Year 6 where pupils made peppermint creams and lemon creams for Christmas. Homework was set to evaluate these products. By the age of 11 pupils, as well as working with food, use an increasing range of materials. There were some clay models on view by Year 3 pupils. Pupils have made decorated picture frames and constructed pulleys. However, partly because of the lack of space, not enough use is made of rigid materials. This is a big gap in the pupils' experience. It is intended that a large hut will be converted into a food technology area and workshop area in January 2002. This will enable drills and specialist tools and rigid materials to be used.

114. Teaching and learning vary from satisfactory to good. Staff follow a nationally known scheme of work closely. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to participate fully in all activities. Food technology is well developed throughout the school. Teachers prepare each lesson carefully paying particular attention to health and safety. Pupils enjoy the subject and attitudes and behaviour are good.
115. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The department is well resourced but some resources are under-used at present. Pupils benefit from good links with the village college. For example, the students at the college work with Year 5 pupils on building structures. They also demonstrate the hovercraft that they have built and give pupils rides on it.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils by the time they are seven and 11 years old. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment.
117. Only two geography lessons were observed during the week but it was possible to come to judgements about standards through an examination of pupils' work and a scrutiny of documentation. The school has adopted the government's scheme of work, which is divided into topics and allocated appropriately across the year groups. Teachers plan well together to produce medium and short-term plans. This ensures that expertise is shared amongst the teachers and pupils receive the same curriculum. Satisfactory attention is paid to covering the content of the topics and the development of geographical skills although there was a lack of depth to the work produced. The school has maintained the standards in geography since the last inspection.
118. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good knowledge of the local area through guided walks in the town of Soham. They explore and identify physical and natural features in their immediate environment by drawing and describing their route to school. In a year one class pupils made good links between their field trip and their classroom work. Pupils were able to make comparisons between the old school and the new and of the petrol pumps at the garage. They could talk about local shops and services and their use. Year 2 pupils could explain the important differences between their small town of Soham and the city of Ely. They are learning to understand directions, including left and right and the principal points of the compass. They learn to interpret symbols on imaginary maps and the shape of the continents by following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear'.
119. As pupils progress through the school their geographical knowledge deepens and their skills improve. In Year 3 pupils study an economically developing country through identifying the differences and similarities between the village of Chembakoli and their own environment. They also appreciate the variety of types of houses and buildings that exists in India by contrast with a large Indian city, which avoids them developing a stereotypical view of India. In Year 4 pupils begin to appreciate the need to be sensitive to environmental issues such as acid rain and non-renewable resources on a world scale and improving the environment in their own neighbourhood. In a good Year 5 lesson pupils study the implications of closing Soham High street to traffic by first completing a traffic survey. Using the information collected from their field visit, they were placed in different groups representing a range of points of view; the elderly,

shopkeepers, car users, buses and so on and asked to provide reasoned proposals from the point of view of these groups. All pupils participated eagerly and produced sound reasoned arguments for the proposal of their interest group. Not only this, but they were then able to combine these different perspectives into an overall proposal. In Years 5 and 6 they also develop their mapping skills to read four-figure co-ordinates, interpret a greater range of symbols on maps and to recognise the continental masses and oceans of the world.

120. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and the teaching was good in both. The lessons had clear learning objectives and challenging activities were planned, which motivated the pupils to learn effectively. Pupils were attentive during explanations from the teacher and other pupils and concentrated well when involved in activities. Teachers generally set all pupils the same task instead of planning different tasks suitable for pupils of different abilities. The quality of marking is variable. In the best instances the teacher's comment provides advice for the individual to improve, but frequently comments praise effort only or the work is acknowledged by a tick and no explanation. It is left to the individual teacher to judge pupils' levels of attainment and there is no clear and overall view on pupils' standards.
121. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear view of geography as an enquiry-based subject and is actively promoting this approach in teaching and learning. Work is monitored through a scrutiny of teacher planning and sampling pupils' work. This enables teachers to check on pupils' attainment and achievement. There are sufficient resources. This represents an improvement on the last inspection when a shortage of geography books was noted.

HISTORY

122. Standards are in line with national expectations at the ages of seven and 11, although the sample of work indicated a lack of depth and occasional lack of quality in the periods studied. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. This represents a maintenance of standards since the last inspection.
123. The school has adopted the government's scheme of work. Satisfactory programmes for teaching and learning are organised into longer and more general termly plans and shorter, more detailed weekly plans. This is done by teachers working collaboratively in a single year, and helps to ensure that expertise is shared and pupils in the same year group receive the same curriculum. Satisfactory attention is paid to the coverage of the history curriculum but there is some imbalance between the knowledge pupils gain and the development of their historical skills.
124. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a sense of chronology through the use of time lines and a clear sense that history is a study of past events though the topics they study. Pupils know about some important people of the past, such as Florence Nightingale and why they are considered important, and famous events such as the Gunpowder Plot, which have shaped the history of Britain. They are beginning to understand what 'memory' is and how it is connected with the past and that the study of the past is based on evidence, such as the artefacts connected with Neil Armstrong's expedition to the moon. Virtually all of the written work, however, is dominated by commercially-produced worksheets and this restricts the opportunities pupils have for developing their writing skills. Pupils of all abilities complete the same work and there is no evidence in the sample of work that different tasks are set for groups of pupils of different ability.

125. As pupils progress through the school they develop the skills of forming historical questions for investigation. For example, a Year 4 class studying crime and punishment in Tudor times suggested the sorts of questions you could ask a beggar on the streets in order to distinguish between the undeserving rogue and the genuinely poor. Their understanding that history is based on sources that can be used as evidence is developed. In a Year 5 class pupils used a transcription of an 1851 census return for Soham to good effect in finding out about occupations in mid-Victorian England. At the summing-up session at the end of the lesson pupils were able to offer perceptive answers for the limitations and advantages of census returns as historical evidence. In another Year 5 class pupils used a range of pictorial and written sources to find out how people in Victorian times travelled to the Great Exhibition and what it was like to travel at that time. In this last example insufficient connection was made, however, between the sources of evidence and the information taken from them. By the age of 11, pupils produce a written account on World War II in Soham from an account given by an elderly visitor to the class. They base their writing on the answers to the questions they had devised. In this way pupils gain a greater sense of the past as times that individual people lived through. However, there were several examples of pupils who had been required to colour in worksheets, which did nothing to develop their historical skills and knowledge.
126. Throughout Years 3 to 6, there are good examples of pupils using primary sources as evidence about the past but the connection between these sources and our reconstruction of the past is not always sufficiently reinforced. Additionally, pupils of all abilities complete the same tasks, which restricts the opportunities for lower and higher attainers to work at appropriate levels.
127. Teaching is predominantly satisfactory and occasionally good. Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives which are made clear to the pupils. However, work is not matched to the abilities of individual pupils. Pupils respond well, listening attentively to the teacher and other explanations made by pupils. They enjoy history, except in one instance where an over-long time spent on an activity resulted in low ability pupils becoming restless. The marking of pupils' work is variable. In many instances pupils receive a cursory tick or a comment on effort instead of advice targeting areas for improvement. Judging pupils' levels of attainment is the responsibility of individual teachers, and does not give a clear view of standards in the subject. Annual pupils' progress reports are satisfactory.
128. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a very clear view of the nature of history and the direction it needs to go. Monitoring work is undertaken using pupils' samples of work and a review of teacher planning. This needs to focus more sharply, however, on the standards pupils are achieving in order that a secure view of progress and targets for improved attainment are established. There are adequate resources to support the teaching of history. Very good use is made of outside visits to places of historical interest such as Wimble Hall and visitors to school, such as the visitor who talked about Soham during the war and his participation in the D-day Landings. One parent is particularly active in setting up a school museum and the school makes good use of loan boxes of artefacts from Ely museum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. During the inspection, three lessons were observed, all of which were in Years 3 to 6, so an overall judgement on teaching is not secure. Other evidence included

discussions with the subject co-ordinator, teachers and pupils, analysis of school documentation and pupils' work. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

130. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special education needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
131. By the age of seven, pupils use competently a range of software that includes programs to support learning in mathematics, word-processing and image making. Early experiences of control technology are provided through using a "pixie". Year 1 pupils change font sizes. Year 2 pupils use their word-processing skills to write poetry and they access the internet to support work about the local area. Future plans include further use of the internet to investigate and design Eid cards for religious education and developing control technology through using a an electronic floor robot.
132. By the age of 11, pupils are competent in a range of skills and show familiarity with a variety of programs. Pupils have a good grasp of word-processing and are developing well their knowledge of spreadsheets. For example, they word-process stories and poetry and respond to reading exercises. They highlight, change text and import pictures. Higher attaining pupils use the "sum" facility when entering data on to a spreadsheet, but at this early stage of the year they are uncertain about the potential uses of other spreadsheet facilities. The majority of pupils enter data onto a spreadsheet competently, as was observed in a Year 6 lesson when they entered figures relating to perimeter, area, length and breadth. Appropriate vocabulary is developing satisfactorily, for instance, "icon" and "cell". Pupils are learning control, through the use of a floor robot. CD-ROMs and the Internet are used appropriately to find information and select and print extracts, for example, when researching Diwali in religious education. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their work and many are well supported at home.
133. Computers are used with increasing competence to support teaching and learning across a range of subjects. These include English, mathematics, art and design, and design and technology.
134. Direct teaching was seen in Years 4 and 6. The teaching is strong in Year 4, where a commercial art and design program was being used. The strengths of the lesson included:
- teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding;
 - clear guidance on how to use the mouse and keyboard;
 - effective use of appropriate vocabulary, for instance, "click and drag";
 - good use of resources, for example, a mirror to explore the line of symmetry.
- As a result, pupils learn well and respond very well to the teachers and the tasks, mainly by being very attentive and contributing well to the lesson. Pupils gain in confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, they use the mouse adroitly, and show good knowledge and understanding of appropriate vocabulary. They are willing to experiment with colours and lines of symmetry and make sensible predictions.
135. In the Year 6 lesson, a small group of pupils were withdrawn from the main lesson to work in the computer suite with a learning support assistant. Strong aspects included:

- the clear demonstration about entering data onto the spreadsheet;
- pupils being invited to enter the data and use the “sum” facility to collate perimeter and area facts;
- the link between the use of mathematical skills and knowledge of measuring and the subsequent entering of the information onto the spreadsheet;
- good development of technical vocabulary.

Pupils developed sound knowledge and skills relating to spreadsheet operations. They also acquired a good attitude to learning and a strong will to succeed.

136. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is a true enthusiast and promotes the effective use of the computer suite and relevant software well. She has a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development. This knowledge is acquired by useful checks on provision and expertise and is mainly achieved through the periodic oversight of pupils’ folders of work. She has drawn up a helpful action plan that identifies priorities for the current year and longer term goals. The co-ordinator encourages staff to attend in-service training and this is increasing their knowledge and understanding. Pupils’ levels of attainment are judged at the end of a unit of work and the findings are entered on to a satisfactory record. Sound use is made of this information in the planning of lessons and the curriculum. Resources are adequate and developing.

MUSIC

137. During the inspection, two lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, and two in Years 3 to 6, together with brief visits to tuition groups studying brass, woodwind and string instruments. A school recorder group was also observed. From these observations, the standards of attainment are judged to be in line with the national expectations for the majority of pupils at the ages of seven and 11 Overall achievement is satisfactory, and it is good for those who take advantage of instrumental tuition. In Years 3 to 6, many pupils reach good standards of performance. Progress is satisfactory for the majority of pupils.
138. The subject is one where all pupils of the school are given opportunities to play and respond to music. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are included in such groups as the choir, orchestra and concerts. They make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language do not require any special provision for them to take a full part in musical activities, and, accordingly, they make good progress especially as a number go on to play musical instruments. The majority of the pupils make satisfactory progress. Although girls tend to make up most of the participants in instrumental tuition groups, the groups are open to all pupils.
139. The school has a strong tradition of pupils taking part in high quality musical performances and it has maintained this strength since the time of the last inspection.. Throughout the schools, pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. In school assemblies, they sing with proper regard to the length of notes and to the mood of the music.
140. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about different types of percussion instruments, being able to distinguish between a drum and a tambourine. They learn about some elements of music, such as tempo and pitch. They can identify the high and low notes of a pair of bongo drums and some can recognise that the low notes come from the larger drum. Their knowledge that sound is caused by vibrations in the air is less well established.

141. In the Years 3 to 6, pupils move successfully on to more advanced study of musical elements. They use the work of famous composers, such as Pachelbel's 'Canon' to recognise tempo, and see how there may be more than one note added to the beat. Most of the pupils move sensibly around the room to the tempo of the music, and a small number are adept at showing additional notes by bending at the knees or taking short steps followed by a longer stride. Older pupils learn about musical styles, such as rap and plain chant and begin to contrast them. These are not, however, related to a wider appreciation of the variety of musical genres, such as classical, pop or forms of music from different cultures.
142. Most instrumental tuition is given on a fee-paying basis, and tutors take a range of groups on their weekly visits, from beginners to more advanced. The higher groups reach a good standard of playing, being able to play the full range of notes with a steady sound and able to read basic notation well. These skills are not used to the full by teachers in class lessons where there is a general lack of opportunities for pupils to practise and record both their own improvised forms of notation and the accepted form using notes written on the five bar stave.
143. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with two lessons being taught well, while the other two were satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were carried along by the bright, enthusiastic approach of the teachers. They had a good grasp of the necessary knowledge about the subject. In one of the lessons, the pace slowed as the teacher had not prepared who was to play which instrument, and this caused some confusion when the singing group changed place with the instrument players. In Years 3 to 6, good teaching was evident when the tempo of the music was explored through pupils' moving to the music. In the other lesson, which was judged to be satisfactory, pupils' had only one chance to chant along with the 'rap', when a further practice would have provided them with the opportunity to improve their performance. Pupils respond well to the enthusiasm and efficiency shown by most teachers in preparing their lessons and they enjoy singing and playing with confidence. The instrumental tutors have a high degree of playing ability and knowledge of teaching methods. They have good relationships with their pupils who generally remember to bring their instruments to school and turn up for their group work at the right time.
144. The management of the subject is good. The subject is well led by two experienced and qualified co-ordinators, both of whom have playing expertise. They monitor the progress of instrumental players and give assistance in using the published programme of study to class teachers. This gives a structure to lessons for members of staff who do not have specialist knowledge of music, along with the necessary tape recorded resource. At times, this resource is followed too closely, and pupils do not have enough time to study the material in sufficient depth, as in a lesson on rhythmic drumbeats, where only one pupil 'had a go' at making up a beat for the class to follow. The teachers complete a class record of what is covered in music, but there is no means at present for the school to track the musical abilities and progress of individual pupils. The school has a very good range of resources which are maintained well, and has supplemented the instruments which are available for loan from the local education authority to ensure that all pupils who wish to have instrumental tuition may do so. The school makes particularly good use of the carpeted small hall for most music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Owing to timetable restrictions, it was not possible to observe the full range of activities on offer. Lessons were seen in gymnastics and games. Other evidence, such as swimming records, planning documents and discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that an appropriate curriculum is provided for pupils.
146. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are above expectations in the narrow range of activities the inspection is able to judge. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. These are similar judgements to the last inspection, and signifies satisfactory development of the subject. However, it is not possible to make a secure, overall judgement about standards and achievement.
147. By the age of seven, pupils' gymnastic skills are good. The majority of pupils make an energetic and creative response on the apparatus set out for them. Pupils have good balance and are well co-ordinated. They move apparatus sensibly. In games, all pupils have at least sound dribbling skills in soccer. However, the majority of pupils have good close control and do their work at high speed and with great accuracy. Pupils manage to keep the ball close to their foot at all times and keep their head over the ball. Standards are enhanced by the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
148. By the age of 11, all pupils are skilful throwers and catchers of a small ball. Most can bounce the ball well on a bat and some move as they are doing so. The important skill of watching the ball on to the bat is performed well. In the development of tennis skills, all pupils successfully hit the ball with the bat and the majority of pupils are beginning to move their feet to play forehand and backhand shots. Pupils respond very well to their skills being put under pressure in the mildly competitive nature of the lessons. Generally, there are high levels of pupil enjoyment and participation. A significant advantage in this work is the school's access to the large sports hall in the adjoining community college.
149. Scrutiny of last year's swimming records indicate that more than 90 per cent of pupils swim at least 25 metres by the time they are eleven years old. The few pupils who have yet to achieve this level are confident in the water and well on their way to achieving the expected standard.
150. The quality of teaching is good. In the five lessons observed, one was very good, three were good and one was satisfactory. In the very good Year 6 lesson, the strengths included:
- good pace;
 - energetic and skill based warm-up;
 - the class teacher providing very good guidance and example when demonstrating skills and tactics;
 - a progressive plan that introduced and consolidated techniques that were put under competitive pressure towards the end of the lesson.
- As a result, pupils' learning is very good and significant improvement was seen in the pupils' skills and tactical appreciation. In general terms, the good lessons are planned well, activities are physically taxing and the teaching techniques are varied according to the needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 2 games lesson, the teacher instigates appropriate individual and group practices at carefully planned times and this encourages improvements in performance and effort. Lessons are invariably interesting and the pupils respond well by listening carefully and watching attentively when one or more of them are demonstrating what they can do. However, in the one satisfactory lesson, in Year 2, demonstrations were not used at appropriate and helpful opportunities.

151. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator leads by example and clearly has a wide range of personal skills, knowledge and understanding. She has a clear and accurate view of the strengths and areas for development. Although the observation of teaching does not begin until Spring 2002, plans are checked and the co-ordinator provides "model" lessons for teachers who lack confidence and expertise. The range of activities outside lessons is satisfactory, for instance, there are regular opportunities to play games such as football and netball. There is an inter-house swimming competition and a country dancing troupe. Resources are adequate. Provision is enhanced by the extensive outdoor accommodation and by the use of the community sports hall at the Village College on the same campus.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the ages of seven and 11. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Owing to the constraints of the inspection timetable, it was not possible to visit any lessons in Years 1 and 2, and so no judgement can be arrived on the quality of teaching for these pupils.
153. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to learn about the services of the Christian faith, such as Baptism and Harvest. They learn that religious communities have special books, and that there are a variety of faiths around the world. Junior age pupils begin to study in greater depth religions such as Hinduism and Judaism. They see that religious faith can be interpreted through art work, such as Hindu hand decorations, and that objects such as the Torah and Seder plate can have importance and symbolism to believers. Pupils visit the local church to study its architecture and the artefacts found within it, such as the pulpit and font. Older pupils make their own artistic representations of the story of Genesis.
154. As a result of this broad band of study, pupils generally make satisfactory progress. Those with English as an additional language are fully included in all aspects of study and involved in the lessons through the teachers' good use of verbal questions. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress as they are often supported by the close guidance of classroom assistants. Across the school, however, too much work is identical and often copied out in the same format by all members of the class. This means that pupils are given insufficient opportunities to make a personal response to the areas being studied. However, pupils in Year 5 were pupils given the chance to form their own account of the visit to St. Andrew's Church.
155. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons seen, one was judged to be satisfactory, and it was good in the other. Features of good teaching in a lesson on designing the layout and contents of a church include:
- the development of good relationships with the pupils;
 - the preparation of effective teaching materials;
 - the close questioning of the pupils to focus them on the most important features and purposes of their work.
- In the satisfactory lesson, which was about the Hindu artwork, pupils were constrained by the nature of the worksheet that they had to complete which did not allow a sufficiently personal interpretation. All teachers are committed to the subject and it is timetabled for all classes. Pupils respond to this enthusiasm by being interested in the subject and tolerant of the beliefs and traditions of all faith

communities. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies. Some teachers generally limit themselves to a cursory tick at the end of the work, while others write extended evaluative comments.

156. Management of the subject is good. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Some specialist teaching of the subject is organised to suit the expertise of the staff within the year groups. The agreed syllabus has been appropriately adapted to suit the school's timetable, although it contains insufficient opportunities for pupils to compare the similarities within faith communities, their beliefs and practices. The chosen religions tend to be studied in isolation from one another. Although teachers carry out an assessment of the success of the work of pupils, this is not matched on an individual basis to the specific criteria that are identified in the agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator has developed a satisfactory range of resources that are available to support teachers and these are used well. The subject has maintained its standards and efficiency since the last inspection.