

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH ELMHAM V.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Elmham, Dereham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121049

Headteacher: Mr R. T. Turner

Reporting inspector: Mr M. A. Mackay
23112

Dates of inspection: 8th – 9th May 2002

Inspection number: 196281

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Community Primary

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Holt Road
North Elmham
Dereham
Norfolk

Postcode: NR20 5JS

Telephone number: 01362 668318

Fax number: 01362 668832

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs C. Gilbert

Date of previous inspection: 2nd – 11th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23112	Michael Mackay	Registered inspector
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants Ltd.

16 Wychwood Road
Trowel Park
Nottingham
NG9 3RB

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

North Elmham is a community primary school that serves the rural village of Elmham and parts of the outlying district. There are 111 full-time pupils on roll - sixty-three boys and forty-eight girls, aged four to eleven. Around fourteen per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. All of the pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none has English as an additional language. The attainment of the pupils on entry to school is broadly average, but because there are so few pupils, the level of attainment can differ significantly from year to year. Twenty-three per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have only recently taken up their posts.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

North Elmham is an effective school that is poised to improve still further. It provides a good education for its pupils because the teaching is good and the curriculum, well planned. The leadership and management are very successful in providing a caring and stimulating environment in which the pupils learn effectively. The Headteacher very skilfully manages educational change and development and is well supported by an effective governing body. The pupils, therefore, attain very well in relation to their prior attainment. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because the teaching is consistently good or better, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The pupils have very good attitudes, share positive values and acquire good personal skills because the school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The teaching is often very good in science and art, and usually good or better in other subjects, because the teachers plan carefully to provide opportunities for the pupils to engage in a wide range of interesting and challenging practical activities.
- The school's links with parents and the wider community are strong and well used to support the pupils' learning
- The headteacher and the well-informed and active governing body provide very effective leadership that enables the school to plan and implement change effectively.

What could be improved

- The range of opportunities the school provides for the older pupils to plan and carry out their own investigative work in science and develop independent responses to challenging texts in literacy lessons.
- The range of activities in drama ¹

¹ *The school has already identified this issue as an area it would like to improve. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in 1997, the standards attained by its pupils were judged to be above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The pupils' overall standard of achievement was deemed to be good, and the school was considered to give good value for money. Since then, the school has made good progress in raising standards, except in English, and very good

progress in addressing the issues arising from the last inspection. For example, it has improved the quality of teaching and learning for the children under the age five, and for all pupils in religious education and information and communication technology. Standards of teaching and learning in all three areas are now satisfactory, with some strengths emerging. The good quality of the teaching in other subjects has been sustained. The most significant improvements have been brought about by the way the headteacher manages educational change, and through the strong partnership between the headteacher and the governors to increase the Governing Body's involvement in monitoring the quality of education provided at the school. As a result, what was a weakness in the work of the governors is now a significant strength of the school. The governors now make a very effective contribution to the life and work of the school.

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	D	D	C	D
Mathematics	B	A	B	B
Science	A	A	A	A

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

At Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in science is consistently well above average in relation to all schools, and similar schools. In mathematics, the pupils generally attain above average standards in relation to the national picture, as well as that for similar schools. The standards in English, particularly in writing, have improved over the past three years to a point where they are close to those found nationally but below those found in similar schools. The inspection evidence, however, suggests that standards are currently significantly higher than indicated by the last year's test results for English. This is due to the school's identification and implementation of a range of key teaching strategies to improve the writing of all pupils. At Key Stage 1, standards have been broadly average over the past few years, although the small number in each cohort means that results vary significantly from year to year. Throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils make good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's performance is above the national trend. The school has set challenging but achievable targets in relation to the number of pupils it expects to attain Level 4 or above in English and mathematics. The particular strengths in the standards of work seen include high attainment in art and science, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the pupils work enthusiastically and with some flair because the teaching is consistently very good. By the end of the Key Stage 2, the pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics, and design and technology. There are no significant weaknesses in the standards attained across the range of subjects. The pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and to other opportunities, such as activities outside normal lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils behave well in lessons and at other times, including play and lunch times, and after-school activities.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils develop very good personal skills that enable them to learn effectively. They establish productive relationships with their peers, their teachers, and other adults.
Attendance	The pupils' rate of attendance is well above the national average.

The pupils quickly develop positive attitudes and values because the adults at the school demonstrate clearly how much they respect and value each pupil. The school provides interesting lessons and a good range of after-school activities that encourage the pupils to play a full part in its life and work. A striking example of this is the role the pupils play on the school's council. Through it the pupils have gained a voice in the life of the school. They use it wisely for the benefit of their peers and for children around the world who are less fortunate than they are.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. It was good or better in all fifteen lessons observed, and very good in five of them. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, and sometimes very good. It helps all pupils to achieve well. In English, the teaching of reading and writing is particularly effective because it presents the pupils with interesting and challenging activities that encourage them to engage with a wide range of texts and attempt ambitious pieces of writing in many different forms. In mathematics, the teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The lessons provide the pupils with many opportunities to develop mental skills and problem-solving skills in activities that help them relate what they learn at school to common, everyday activities. The teachers are particularly good at using computers to support and extend the pupils' work in mathematics. Most aspects of literacy and numeracy are well planned and taught. The teaching has a number of strengths, including the teaching of science and art, and no significant weaknesses. The teachers are skilled at organising learning in mixed age classes. The teachers know their pupils well and are able to provide activities that match their needs. The pupils become effective learners because the activities are well planned and catch the pupils' interest. As a result, the pupils work hard and

strive to improve on what they know, understand and can do. Among the strengths of the teaching and learning are the way the teachers plan opportunities for the pupils to work without close supervision, and the mature and responsible way the pupils respond to them. However, a *relative weakness* in the teaching is the teachers' failure to build sufficiently well upon this good practice. They do not, for example, give enough encouragement to the older pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations in science, and to form responses to the texts they read, independently of their teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has a broad, balanced curriculum. It is well planned. A good range of well-run after-school activities enriches it.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The school ensures that all pupils have access to the full curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good, particularly for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The school offers many opportunities for the pupils to develop positive moral values and a wide range of personal and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good arrangements for ensuring the well being of the pupils. It provides good support and guidance to them and has a well-thought-out health and safety procedures and effective arrangements for child protection.

The school works very well in partnership with the parents. It keeps them well informed about their children's progress, and it offers many opportunities for parents to get involved in its life and work.

The school offers a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum that places a strong emphasis upon literacy and numeracy. In all areas, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The curricula for art and science are particular strengths of the school. They provide good opportunities for pupils to explore and respond to the natural and man-made environments. The range of activities provided outside normal lessons is good. They are well attended and make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. One way the school demonstrates good care of the children is through its arrangements for providing pupils with a means of expressing their views and opinions across a wide range of school activities. The pupils have a school council to which they elect representatives. They consult their peers and bring matters of interest or concern to the attention of the senior teachers.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, consequently the school has a very clear vision of its development and a very strong commitment to building upon its past successes.
How well the governors	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have rigorous

fulfil their responsibilities	arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good arrangements for monitoring the teaching and learning. It sets realistic, yet challenging targets for improvement
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources very well to provide opportunities for the pupils to benefit from interesting and challenging learning activities.

There are very significant strengths in the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher is a very skilful manager of educational change and innovation. As a result, the school is able to successfully consolidate and build upon past successes. The headteacher has an extensive knowledge and understanding of how children learn, and of what the school needs to do to create the conditions for even more effective learning. He has a very clear vision of the school's pivotal role within the local community, and has very effective strategies for ensuring its aims are realised. The governing body is now highly effective. It monitors the school's work very well and holds it to account for the quality of its work. It also provides good support to the senior teachers in their drive to improve the school still further. The headteacher and governors work very closely together to make sure that the school applies the principles of best value when implementing educational change and making financial decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • The good teaching; • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best; • The very good leadership and management of the school; • The way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible; • The good behaviour of the children; • The good progress the children make; • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems; • The good range of interesting activities; outside normal lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work the children get to do at home.

The inspection evidence fully supports the parents' positive views of the school. The inspection also revealed that, among the parents who felt their children did not get the right amount of work to do at home, opinion was divided roughly equally between those who felt their children got too much work to do and those felt they got too little. The inspectors judge the amount of work set for homework to be broadly similar to what is set in most other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because the teaching is consistently good or better, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2.

1. The pupils achieve well because the teachers plan learning opportunities that are very well matched to the needs of the different groups of pupils. They make careful assessments of each pupil who is admitted to the school. When the teachers plan future work, they make good use of the information they have gathered on what the pupils know and can do. This ensures that they provide the pupils with work that is challenging, interesting and varied. As a result, the pupils take a strong interest in what they learn – they work hard and strive to improve areas of weakness. This is particularly so in English, mathematics, science, and art.

2. In a literacy lesson for a class of Year 4 and Year 5 pupils, for example, the pupils achieved very well because they were fully engaged by the learning task they were given. The teacher skilfully introduced the pupils to the idea that authors sometimes make use of dialect to portray aspects of their characters' lives and thoughts. The teacher helped the pupils to collect, from a text they were sharing, words and phrases in a Caribbean dialect. The pupils discussed these and agreed on their Standard English equivalents. The pupils delighted in their growing command of the dialect and were keen to display how well they had mastered it. By the middle of the lesson, the pupils were able to make credible attempts at writing in the style of the author whose novel they had been exploring. Even though the work was very challenging, nearly all of the pupils were able to achieve well because the teacher had prepared a range of prompt sheets that were very well matched to the levels the pupils were working at. These enabled the pupils to build effectively on what they had already learned. By the end of the lesson, most of the pupils were able to use their new skills to make a deeper reading of the original text. As a result, many pupils made perceptive remarks about the relationship between the characters' uses of language and their relationship to the themes of the text.

3. In a number of subjects, the teachers keep very detailed records of the attainment and rates of progress made by each pupil. In Information and communication technology, for example, the school makes excellent use of the *Primary Information Technology Certification Scheme* to record and evaluate the progress each pupil makes. The scheme also provides for pupils to receive certificates to celebrate what they learn and are able to do at each of the levels of attainment. This has a powerful impact upon the achievement of the pupils because the pupils are highly motivated to achieve well and gain recognition for doing so, and because the teachers have very good information on which to plan what the pupils need to do next.

4. There are other reasons, too, why the pupils achieve well. For example, the school provides many opportunities for the pupils to make links between what they learn in one subject to what they learn in other areas of the curriculum. In science and mathematics lessons, for example, the pupils are encouraged to use computers to support their learning. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher enabled the pupils to use a laptop and a digital projector to communicate what they had learned in mathematics about pie-graphs. In a science lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the teacher made good use of extra classroom support to help the pupils use computers to consolidate what they had learned about the relationship between the length of a shadow and the height of the light source. In a Year 6 science lesson, the pupils used computers to present a range of graphs that helped them draw conclusions about the effect of exercise on their pulse rates. The teachers conscientiously plan opportunities for the pupils to use what they learn in literacy and numeracy across a wide range of

subjects. This helps the pupils to consolidate newly acquired literacy and numeracy skills as well as providing them with a means to a fuller understanding of what they are doing in subjects such as science, history and geography. It also helps them to communicate what they know very effectively.

5. The school uses its specialist staff, its learning support staff and ancillary assistants very well to ensure that all pupils receive the help and advice they need in order to achieve well. For example, the school makes excellent use of a specialist teacher in information and communication technology to provide very good opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of learning activities. As a result, the achievement of the pupils has improved significantly since the last inspection. Standards at the school have improved from unsatisfactory to satisfactory, with some pupils achieving very well in control technology, word processing and the use of spreadsheets. The learning support assistants play a key role in promoting good achievement among the pupils. They are fully engaged with the pupils in their learning activities. They use discussion and demonstration well to help pupils overcome problems with their work. They are very successful in establishing good relationships with the pupils, whatever the level of the pupils' attainment. Because the pupils trust and respect them, the learning support assistants are able to make a significant contribution to the quality of the pupils' learning, and to their achievements. A typical example of this is the work done by some of the learning support assistants with pupils who require additional work in literacy and numeracy. These pupils achieve well in these sessions because they are well planned to address specific needs. The work is focused and the pace of learning is fast.

The pupils have very good attitudes, share positive values and acquire good personal skills because the school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

6. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They attend regularly, work hard in lessons, concentrate well and participate enthusiastically in the after-school activities provided for them.

7. The pupils' rate of attendance is well above the national average. The pupils arrive at school promptly, in good time for registration. Lessons, therefore, start when they should, and no learning time is lost. The pupils express strong views about what they like about school. They say they are keen to come to school because the work is interesting, and their teachers caring and supportive. The parents support and value work of the school, and talk positively to their children about their school experiences. Another factor affecting the pupils' eagerness to be at school is the strength of the relationships among the pupils, and between pupils and their teachers.

8. During lessons, the pupils work hard and concentrate well without very much prompting from their teachers. The youngest children listen carefully to their teachers. They show high levels of interest in the learning activities provided for them. For example, the children in Reception and Year 1 showed sustained interest in the work they were doing on plants. They held sensible discussions about what they had observed about the beans they were growing, and they asked many questions about why the watercress in one of the pots had withered whilst the other one had grown well. Later, in imaginative play, they enthusiastically assumed the roles of shoppers, gardeners and garden centre staff, making very good use of the well-designed and attractive outdoor resources. During their play, the pupils readily used what they had learned in reading, science work and mathematics as they talked about plants, and bought and sold them in the make-believe garden centre.

9. Even at this early age, the pupils were keen to share, to take turns and to think about each other's needs and points of view. Among the older pupils, personal and social skills are very well developed. In many lessons, the teachers plan and implement activities for a number of groups,

confident that those pupils engaged in activities that are not directly supervised by the teacher will work sensibly and diligently, co-operating with each other across a range of tasks. In a science lesson, for example, the pupils worked in small groups to carry out investigations into the relationship between pulse rates and exercise. This involved them in activities outside the direct supervision of the class teacher. Nevertheless, the pupils worked sensibly and quickly. They made the observations expected of them, recorded them and, without fuss, got on with other tasks. A large group of pupils in the same class worked with a very high degree of concentration and maturity on a group-reading task in which they tackled a demanding text successfully.

10. The pupils demonstrate a high degree of social maturity and a strong sense of citizenship. They elect representatives to a school council. The members of the council take their duties very seriously. They represent their peers faithfully in debating issues that will benefit them. The pupils' sense of community is particularly strong. This is seen most clearly in the way many of them get involved in activities outside normal lessons to represent their school in the parish. A significant proportion of them regularly attend family service on Sundays. They also take part in regular hockey sessions on Sundays. The pupils understand that many of the values promoted by the school reflect those of the Christian community within the village. During an assembly taken by the local vicar, the pupils displayed a very good knowledge of Christian values in relation to family life, and life as a member of the Church community. The pupils show a genuine interest and concern for those less fortunate themselves in the energy and commitment they put into charitable acts such as filling shoeboxes with gifts for children in other countries. The school is thoughtful about the way it provides for the pupils' spiritual moral and social development. Its provision has a strong impact upon the pupils' values and attitudes.

The teaching is often very good in science and art, and usually good or better in other subjects, because the teachers plan carefully to provide opportunities for the pupils to engage in a wide range of interesting and challenging practical activities.

11. The teachers plan well across most subjects, but particularly well for work in art and science. The opportunities they provide for the pupils are varied and include much work of a practical nature. The activities are effective in supporting the pupils' learning because they quickly engage the pupils' interest. The teachers ensure that their plans include links between subjects that will help to enrich the pupils' learning. They create very strong links, for example, between art and design and technology. A display of work in the main foyer of the school that the pupils had done on sports headwear demonstrates this very well. The designs are not only technically accomplished but creative too because the teaching very successfully encouraged the pupils to draw on a wide range of skills learned earlier. The work also shows that the teaching enables the pupils to develop research skills using reference books and the Internet. The designs show the pupils' concern for form and pattern as well as for appropriateness for purpose. When planning science work, the teachers ensure that they make strong links with mathematics and information and communication technology. One outcome of this, is that pupils enjoy the challenge of using skills learned in one subject to support what they learn in another. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils used pulse metres and stop watches to determine pulse rates and then recorded and evaluated the results using computers and a digital projector.

12. The teaching is generally well matched to the needs of the different groups of pupils because it is based on a good knowledge of the pupils, and because the teachers are skilful in determining each new level of challenge. In art, for example, the pupils are encouraged to develop skills in a wide range of media that enable them to express their ideas well. The pupils are helped to go beyond the level of stylised drawings of objects when they are taught how to observe closely and how to draw what they actually see, rather than what they think they see. The teachers systematically help them, for example,

to respond to problems to do with proportion, perspective, tone and texture. As a result, the pupils create attractive and detailed pencil drawings that capture faithfully the subjects they represent. In a lesson for Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, for example, the teacher modelled very well the process of representing a wicker model of the human form. Through discussion and example, she successfully drew the pupils' attention to problems of representations and how they could be overcome. This helped the pupils when they came to tackle new assignments. By the end of the lesson nearly all of the pupils produced very pleasing representations of the object they had been asked to draw.

13. One of the strongest features of the teaching is the way the teachers share the planned learning intentions with the pupils, and then help them to review the learning outcomes at the end of each lesson. In a science lesson for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, the teacher carefully reviewed with the pupils what they had learned in previous lessons. She used their responses to indicate the links between what they already knew and what she wanted them to learn next. The pupils, therefore, were given a firm foundation on which to build future success. This helped them to make predictions about the likely outcome of the activities they were about to undertake. At the end of the lesson, the teacher provided good opportunities for the pupils to review what they had learned in relation to their predictions. This helped the pupils, for example, to correct earlier misconceptions and to deepen their understanding of the relationship between pulse rates and exercise. The teacher allowed ample opportunity for the pupils to evaluate the data they had collected. She also made skilful use of open-ended questions that helped the pupils draw informed conclusions. As a result, the pupils were able to establish a connection between the speed at which the pulse returns to its resting rate and a person's level of fitness.

14. Another strength of the teaching is the way in which the teachers establish good levels of discipline and positive relationships among the pupils. The pupils, therefore, work well together and concentrate hard on what it is they are doing. The pace of teaching and learning is good because there are few interruptions. The pupils listen carefully and settle to independent tasks quickly. Even the pupils who have emotional or behavioural special educational needs rarely interrupt the pace of learning because the teachers and their support assistants work very well together in anticipating and meeting their needs. The teaching clearly values the work the pupils do, and this helps to develop good levels of self-esteem among all pupils. Consequently, challenging work does not easily discourage the pupils from doing their best and overcoming problems.

The school's links with parents and the wider community are strong and used well to support the pupils' learning

15. The school uses its many links with parents and the local community well to enrich the curriculum and support the pupils' learning. The school and the parents have established a very strong and mutually supportive partnership that benefits the pupils in many ways. This was clearly reflected in the discussions with parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, and in the response to the pre-inspection questionnaire to parents. The parents feel very comfortable about approaching school with concerns and ideas and have very positive views about the quality of teaching and learning, and the way the school is led and managed. The school welcomes parents as volunteers in the classroom, supporting activities in art and design technology. The parents have contributed significantly to amenities within the school grounds that have provided the pupils with good facilities for studying aspects of the natural world. Parents' meetings are well attended and school events enthusiastically supported. Some joint initiatives are having a significant impact upon the lives of the pupils. For example, the school asked parents to take part in a transportation survey and map-work exercise that provided important data to inform the local community's drive to greater travel safety. The school publishes a regular newsletter to parents. It is very well presented, and contains information that the parents value and find useful. The school provides the parents with very good information about what

the pupils are learning each term. It also keeps them well informed about their children's progress. It has very good arrangements for parents to meet informally with their children's teachers. This ensures that most problems and concerns are addressed promptly and successfully.

16. The school has important links with the local community. For example, its partnership with the parish church is very strong. Many of the pupils regularly attend the church as a school group, accompanied by the headteacher. The local vicar visits school regularly to lead assemblies. As a result, the pupils have a very good knowledge of their local church's traditions and an excellent knowledge and understanding of the life and works of Jesus. For example, the pupils participated fully in an assembly led by the vicar on infant baptism. The pupils gave detailed and enthusiastic answers to his questions and showed, in their behaviour, demeanour and answers, a deeper than usual understanding of the spiritual dimension to aspects of everyday life.

17. The school is developing an ambitious sports programme that is providing the pupils with many opportunities to play competitive team games with pupils from other local schools and organisations. For example, pupils from the school compete in a local Cub Scout swimming gala. They also participate in local hockey, football and tennis competitions. The school's provision of opportunities for its pupils to meet and compete with children from other schools and villages has a strong impact upon the personal and social development of those who participate. They are keen sportspeople whose enthusiasm is not dented by defeat on the field of play.

18. The school encourages its pupils to reach out to those less fortunate than themselves. The pupils have become enthusiastic and effective charity workers, supporting a wide range of good causes, locally and further a field. For example, the pupils collect and distribute food to the local needy, respond very well to shoebox appeals for children around the world, and hold bring and buy sales to raise funds in support of Blue Peter appeals. The school's links with parents and the wider community make a significant contribution to the pupils' understanding of citizenship. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils showed a strong sense of community and a commendable enthusiasm and commitment to the welfare of others.

The headteacher and the well-informed and active governing body provide very effective leadership that enables the school to plan and implement change very effectively.

19. The school is very well led and managed. Many aspects of the recently appointed headteacher's leadership are excellent. He has, for example, a very clear and well-informed vision of the school's future development. He has communicated his vision effectively to all staff and has been successful in building a team that relishes the challenge of striving for continuous improvement. This is most clearly seen in the ambitious, but very well constructed school development plan. The plan clearly reflects the context of the school from which the strategic issues arise. These are well defined and given substance in the accompanying action plans. Because the governors of the school, as well as the members of the staff, have been encouraged to play a full role in constructing the improvement and development plan, they are able to talk knowledgeably about what changes need to be made and how they will be effected.

20. The headteacher and the governing body have very good arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the plan, and evaluating the outcomes. The school, therefore, has a very strong sense of purpose that focuses upon raising the pupils' levels of attainment and achievement by making well-chosen changes to the quality of educational provision. For example, the school identified the need to improve attainment in writing. The inspection evidence indicates that this was an important area of under-attainment and that the way the school responded has led to significant improvement. It achieved this by reviewing thoroughly its policies in order to bring them into line with the best current

practice. It identified and implemented a range of key teaching strategies to improve writing for all pupils. It has also begun to develop portfolios of levelled examples of writing across a broad range of types. It has recently begun to trial methods of using drama workshops for targeted groups of pupils, including the higher attaining pupils. These measures are already having a significant impact upon the quality of the writing the pupils produce. The school expects the effectiveness of these measures to be reflected in higher levels of attainment among pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The inspection evidence supports this prediction.

21. The headteacher, members of the staff and the governing body work closely together to invest the school with a common purpose. This ensures that the school's aims and values are very well reflected in its work. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. Its members diligently monitor the school's work. They are very effective in evaluating its strengths and weaknesses because they have a clear plan, a good set of procedures and a detailed knowledge of the school. The governors record the outcome of their monitoring across a range of issues, including the following: the standards attained by the pupils, the quality of the curriculum, the pupils' attitudes and relationships, the provision and use of resources, and the way the school is led and managed. These records form the basis of discussions with the headteacher and among themselves at formal meetings of the Governing Body. The governors, therefore, have developed the expertise they need to act very effectively as a critical friend of the school, and are able to hold it to account for the quality of its work.

22. A very strong feature of the headteacher's leadership is the breadth and depth of his knowledge and understanding of how children learn. This has enabled him to identify where best to effect changes that will have the most telling impact upon the quality of learning. His analysis of what should be done to improve learning anticipated many of the judgements arising from the inspection evidence. These include the need to devise more opportunities for pupils to develop greater levels of independence, particularly in planning and carrying out scientific investigations and in responding to literary and other texts. Other changes, on which the headteacher has worked closely with staff and governors, that have had a significant impact on the quality of learning and the level of attainment, include the better use of resources. Recently, the school has invested heavily in improvement works to its grounds. These have allowed the pupils many more opportunities to benefit from outdoor exercise and activities such as sport and compass work. The school is currently preparing an area of its grounds to accommodate an attractive set of large outdoor equipment to meet the needs of the younger pupils. The school has also improved the way it uses its human resources. For example, it makes very good use of a specialist teacher of information and communication technology to help raise standards across the year groups. One outcome of this is that standards that were judged to be below average at the time of the last inspection are now about average and continuing to improve, year on year. The evidence for this lies in the excellent arrangements the school has for assessing and recording the pupils' attainment across every aspect of the subject. The headteacher ensures that the school invests wisely in new technology and that teachers use it effectively to support learning. During the inspection, for example, teachers and pupils used the recently acquired digital project and laptop very effectively to support teaching and learning across a number of subjects. In a science lesson, the pupils used it very well to present and evaluate data collected and presented in the form of graphs.

23. The headteacher ensures that the school has very good arrangements for deploying classroom support staff. The learning support assistants are well trained and make a very effective contribution to lessons by supporting the lower attaining pupils, supervising other groups of pupils and providing essential feedback to teachers on how well the pupils understand and use what they are learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The opportunities the school provides for the older pupils to plan and carry out investigative work in science and develop independent responses to challenging texts in literacy lessons.

24. Elsewhere in the report, the inspectors judge one of the strengths of the teaching and learning to be the way the teachers plan many opportunities for the pupils to work without close supervision, and the mature and responsible way the pupils respond to such opportunities. In the light of these judgements, a comparative weakness in the teaching is the teachers' failure to build sufficiently well upon these solid foundations in order to develop even greater independence among the pupils that encourages them to take more responsibility for appropriate aspects of their learning.

25. In an otherwise very good literacy lesson, for example, the teacher missed opportunities to arrange the learning in a way that would encourage the pupils to respond to the text they were reading, without the need for the teacher's intervention. Whilst the teacher was working with one half of the class, the higher attaining pupils were required to read a challenging text, the novel *The Machine Gunners* by Robert Westall. The pupils organised themselves for reading it aloud to one another. They read it carefully and conscientiously – and helped each other over difficult passages, but the pupils did not discuss the text among themselves because they were not expected to. As a result, the teacher missed a very good opportunity to encourage the pupils to respond to texts and develop their ideas about it without adult support. Some simple but effective techniques, such as providing a sheet with a number of questions the pupils could consider before, during and after reading the text, were not used. Consequently the pupils read the text, enjoyed it, but did not test or extend their understanding of it, until the teacher joined them.

26. Similarly, in science lessons, where the pupils showed admirable ability and willingness to work independently of the teacher – the planning did not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to design and carry out investigations for themselves. The teachers very clearly set out the steps by which the pupils are to create and collect their data. They do not, however, provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to plan them for themselves. In a science lesson for a class of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, the teacher shared the learning intention in a way that precluded the pupils from arriving at different conclusions. She wrote on the board 'To understand that the higher the light source the shorter the shadow will be', then set up the activity for the pupils to carry out the 'investigation' and corroborate the statement. The teacher could have set up the learning intention in a way that gave the pupils greater opportunity to arrive at their own conclusions by, for example, a more careful drafting of the learning intention. One such draft might have been 'To understand the relationship between a light source and the length of the shadow cast.' This would have made the activity a real investigation. Had the teacher also allowed the pupils greater freedom to plan how they would go about establishing the relationship, the pupils would have needed to draw more heavily upon their own organisational and social skills, and their knowledge of fair testing, thus providing greater opportunities to develop a more 'scientific' approach.

The range of activities in drama

27. Although some drama is used, the teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for its use as a means of supporting the pupils' learning. In literacy lessons, for example, the teaching misses opportunities to use drama as a means of getting pupils to work through problems they meet when responding to challenging texts. In a lesson for a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils, in which the pupils were learning how to write in the style of the author, the teacher missed opportunities for the pupils to act out dialogue. This could have strengthened the grasp some of the lower attaining pupils had on how the author used dialect to present important information about his characters. Similarly, in a literacy lesson for a class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, the teacher did not consider how drama might have been useful to help unlock aspects of the text that the pupils found problematical. There are missed opportunities, too, in other subjects. In a lesson in religious education, for example, pupils were asked to consider what they had learned about the use of symbolism in relation to the attributes of Hindu gods. Part of the teacher's intention was to help her pupils to explore how aspects of their own characters might be symbolised. Some of the pupils failed to grasp the main point of the lesson because it was too abstract for them. Some opportunity to render their attributes in dramatic situations could have supported the pupils' learning and led to a better understanding of the religious use of symbols.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

28. The governors, headteacher and staff should build upon the existing good practice in teaching and curriculum planning at the school to:

- (1) Ensure that the pupils accept greater responsibility for some aspects of their own learning by:
 - Providing more opportunities for the pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations in science
 - Provide more opportunities for the pupils to develop their own responses to texts, without the direct intervention of the teacher.
- (2) Ensure that better use is made of drama to support learning in other subjects by:
 - Improving the teachers' knowledge and awareness of how drama might support learning in other subjects
 - Identifying in the planning, opportunities for using drama to support learning

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

15

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	10	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	67	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six percentage points

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)	0	111
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	26

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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	8	8	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	13	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	75 (86)	81 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	13	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	(81 (100))	94 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

* Where the number of boys or girls in the cohort is less than ten, the data by gender is not published.

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	10	12	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	18	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (75)	82 (92)	91 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	7	7	9
	Total	16	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (83)	76 (83)	90 (100)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	111
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	124

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	321438
Total expenditure	322706
Expenditure per pupil	2759
Balance brought forward from previous year	22519
Balance carried forward to next year	21251

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4
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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	111
Number of questionnaires returned	56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	48	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	41	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	54	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	43	14	4	0
The teaching is good.	64	34	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	52	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	23	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	36	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	53	2	2	0