

INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT PAXTON
CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Paxton, St Neots

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110815

Headteacher: Mrs J Hallam

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Gough
22361

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th December 2002

Inspection number: 247056

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mount Pleasant Great Paxton St Neots
Postcode:	PE19 6YJ
Telephone number:	01480 472132
Fax number:	01480 471735
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Leddington-Hill
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22361	Mrs M Gough	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What could the school do to improve further
31753	Mrs D Thomas	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils or students How well does the school work in partnership with parents
31807	Mr D Carpenter	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
29688	Mr M Brammer	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Great Paxton, close to the town of St Neots. There are currently one hundred and twenty one pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of white ethnicity and no pupil has English as an additional language. One pupil is known to be eligible for free school meals. This represents 0.8% of the school population and is well below the national average. The free school meals figure does not accurately reflect the socio-economic circumstances of the families, which are very mixed. Twelve pupils are on the school's special educational needs list, and this represents 10% of the school population and is well below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Levels of pupil mobility are relatively high given the size of the school, with six pupils having joined the school other than at the usual point of entry and seven pupils having left the school other than at the usual point of transfer. The pupils' attainment when they start school varies from year to year and is at the expected level for the current group of Reception children. The school building is the only village meeting place, and the school is a central focus for the local community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school. Following a very turbulent period in terms of staffing, the school is now more settled, and under the very strong leadership of the new headteacher, very good improvement is occurring across many areas of its work. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is at the expected level in English, mathematics and science. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and many examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching is good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good, and have a positive impact on their learning. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good, and she has a very good appreciation of what needs to be done to help the school to improve even further. Within a very short time she has set a clear agenda to raise standards, and has prioritised areas for development. The Governing Body is effective and provides good support for the school and the headteacher. Teachers are extremely hard working and conscientious, and are committed to driving the school forward. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision for the Reception children is good, and they achieve good standards in their work.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Standards in design and technology and religious education are good at the end of both key stages.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good, and the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's links with the parents are very good, and there are high levels of parental satisfaction.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school and is well supported by an effective Governing Body.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages, standards in music at the end of Key Stage 2, and standards in history at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Curriculum planning throughout the school.
- Assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators.

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 February 1998. At that time standards were unsatisfactory in physical education and design and technology at the end of Key Stage 1. There were also weaknesses in music and information and communication technology. Teachers' planning was not always sufficiently clear and there was no whole-school approach to assessment. The school did not make enough provision for the physical development of children under the age of five.

Despite good efforts by individual staff, the school has not made enough improvement since the time of the last inspection, and this is almost entirely because of the high levels of staff turnover in the past four years, including the change of headteacher. Standards in design and technology and physical education have improved, but standards in music at the end of Key Stage 2 and information and communication technology across the school are still not as high as they could be. In addition, on the basis of the end of key stage test results, standards in English, mathematics and science, are not as good as they were. Although the school started to develop a whole school curriculum plan after the last inspection, this plan now needs updating and revising to reflect the move from four to five classes. The development of the curriculum is now a priority so that teachers can ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress as they move through the school. Some good work has been done in developing assessment in English, mathematics and science, and teachers know their pupils very well. However more needs to be done so that teachers can systematically track and measure pupils' progress in other subjects. The provision for the physical development of Reception children is now satisfactory.

The current headteacher has been in post for less than one term, but already she has grasped what needs to be done to ensure continued development in the school, and has established a clear plan for improvement. She has the full and loyal support of a committed and hard-working staff and the Governing Body. This means that the school is very well placed for further development.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	C	C	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	D	D	E	
Science	C	C	D	E	

The 2002 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in English, but below the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is below average in English and well below average in science and mathematics. The school has identified that the girls did not perform as well as the boys in mathematics, but otherwise there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. On the basis of the test results, standards have

dropped over recent years, and this is because of staff changes, high levels of pupil mobility and a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs in some of the groups. In addition, some of the groups of pupils entered for the tests are small, and this means that the performance of an individual pupil can skew the results quite significantly.

The inspection findings paint a much more positive picture than the end of key stage test results at the end of Key Stage 2, and show that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, and is poised to improve even further as the newly introduced initiatives become more firmly embedded in practice. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are both being more rigorously implemented, and the new commercial scheme of work for science is having a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, and is ensuring good levels of continuity in pupils' learning as they move through the school.

The 2002 end of Key Stage 1 test results show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, and above the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. Over the past two years standards have dropped from being well above the national average to the current position. This is partly because of the significant staff changes that have taken place, and also because the most recent groups of pupils have contained a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1.

In religious education, pupils' attainment is above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. In art and design and physical education, standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Standards in music are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. In history, pupils' attainment is at the expected level in Key Stage 2, but below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. In information and communication technology, pupils' attainment is below national expectations at the end of both key stages. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in geography. Standards in design and technology are above national expectations at the end of both key stages.

The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs and most teachers offer good levels of challenge to higher attaining pupils. Currently standards in some subjects are adversely affected by the lack of good schemes of work, and the lack of a whole-school curriculum overview. Teachers have already identified these shortcomings, and under the clear direction of the headteacher are starting to address this issue. Assessment is used effectively in English, mathematics and science to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and to set accurate and achievable targets for the pupils.

The children's attainment when they start school varies from year to year, and is average for the current group of Reception children. The children make good progress and attain the Early Learning Goals, and sometimes beyond the expected level, across all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and tackle their learning with high levels of enthusiasm and motivation.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are well behaved throughout the school and work co-operatively with one another.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development and encourages them to be mature and sensitive individuals. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national figure.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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, teaching is good throughout the school, and during the inspection some very good examples of teaching were seen. Teachers prepare well, and often deliver lessons with high levels of enthusiasm. They have excellent relationships with the pupils, and cater well for pupils of all abilities. They use a good combination of teaching methods, and provide good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate independence in their learning. In the Reception class, there is a good combination of activities that the children undertake and organise themselves and those that are directed by an adult. Throughout the school, teachers use practical tasks very well to promote the pupils' learning, although on occasions, the very good levels of learning that occur during these sessions are not fully reflected in the pupils' recorded work, which is not always at a high enough level. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are given very good opportunities to evaluate the extent of their own learning, and this helps them to see how they might improve their work further.

Although teaching is good overall, there is some variability in the teaching of different subjects, where the quality of teaching is determined by the teachers' individual expertise and subject knowledge. Teaching is not sufficiently supported by a good quality whole-school curriculum plan to guide teachers in their long-term planning, and this sometimes leads to the duplication of some work. The teaching of English and science is good throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily promoted across the curriculum, but even more could be done to promote pupils' use of information and communication technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for pupils in the Foundation Stage. Unsatisfactory for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. There is no whole-school overview of what is being taught and there is some unnecessary duplication of work. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. This aspect of the school's work is well managed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good, and provision for their personal and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring and supportive learning environment. Assessment is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but assessment in other subjects is unsatisfactory. The school has a good race equality policy which is reflected in practice and all pupils have full and equal access to the school's life and work.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. The school's partnership with parents is very strong and has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the new headteacher has set the school on a clear course of rapid development, and newly introduced initiatives are already starting to have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Almost all co-ordinators are newly appointed to their posts, and therefore they are not yet having enough impact on the way in which their subjects develop.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The Governing Body fulfils its statutory obligations, and takes a keen and very active interest in the life of the school. Governors regularly visit the school and are well known to staff and pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher has a good grasp of the school's performance, but individual subject co-ordinators are not yet fully informed about their areas of responsibility. Good use is made of national assessment data to compare the school's performance with that of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its budget appropriately to support the pupils' education.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources	The school has a generous number of teaching staff. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the shared classrooms adversely affect teaching and learning. There are enough resources, but the library is limited in terms of the number and range of books.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents like the ethos of the school and agree that it promotes strong Christian values. • Parents like the way in which the school celebrates pupils' achievements. • Parents agree that they are welcome to come into school at any time to discuss their concerns or to voice suggestions. • Parents are pleased with the quality and range of information they receive from the school. • Most parents are satisfied with the amount and frequency of homework. • Parents agree that behaviour in the school is good. • Parents agree that their children are very enthusiastic about coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more homework for their children.

The inspection findings support the parents' very positive views of the school. Pupils receive an appropriate amount of homework in English and mathematics, but even more use could be made of homework in other subjects to extend the pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of the children when they start school varies from year to year, and is average for the current group of Reception children. The children make good progress, and by the end of the Reception year, they attain the Early Learning Goals across all areas of their learning.
2. The 2002 end of Key Stage 1 test results show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, and above the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. Over the past two years standards have dropped from being well above the national average to the current position. This is partly because of the significant staff changes that have taken place, and also because the most recent groups of pupils have contained a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs.
3. The 2002 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in English, but below the national average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is below average in English and well below average in science and mathematics. The school has identified that the girls did not perform as well as the boys in mathematics, but otherwise there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. As in Key Stage 1, standards, on the basis of the test results, have dropped over recent years, and this is because of staff changes, high levels of pupil mobility and a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs in some of the groups. In addition, some of the groups of pupils entered for the tests are small, and this means that the performance of an individual pupil can skew the results quite significantly. The school sets targets for Key Stage 2 pupils in English and mathematics which are appropriately challenging.
4. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and that they are poised to rise further as new initiatives become more firmly embedded in practice. The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress towards their individual targets and to attain the overall standards of which they are capable. Pupils who are gifted or talented are informally identified, and are often well stretched, especially in Key Stage 2, by the tasks they are given. There are occasions in Key Stage 1 when the highest attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged because of the overuse of worksheets which sometimes constrain their learning.
5. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils attain the expected level in their reading, and a good percentage of pupils read well, with good levels of expression and fluency. Pupils benefit from good support at home as well as regular reading opportunities in school. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils become progressively more skilled in their reading, and all pupils, including those who have some difficulty, show high levels of enthusiasm for books. The practice of pupils sharing favourite books with their friends is effective, and promotes good levels of discussion. In writing, pupils of all ages make steady progress as they move through the school, and higher attainers in both key stages produce well structured pieces which are grammatically correct and which are well presented. However, lower attainers struggle to spell complex words, and in both

key stages, have difficulty in sustaining their ideas and bringing their writing to life. Standards of speaking and listening are at the expected level at the end of both key stages, but pupils often lack the necessary subject specific vocabulary to help them to articulate their ideas clearly and concisely. This is most evident in mathematics and science. Teachers have been working hard to address this issue in recent months and pupils are now making good progress in expanding their vocabulary. Skills of literacy are satisfactorily promoted in both key stages, although even more could be done to provide writing opportunities across the curriculum, by reducing the amount of worksheets that are used for recording. Overall, pupils make good progress in English because of good teaching.

6. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In both key stages, pupils demonstrate a secure grasp of number and pattern although some pupils are not sufficiently speedy when answering mental mathematics questions. Because of recent improvements in teaching, pupils are becoming more skilled in explaining their methods of working, and this is having a positive impact on their learning as it helps them to clarify their thinking. A relatively weaker aspect of pupils' learning is their knowledge of some aspects of shape, space and measure. Pupils have some difficulty in making sensible estimates of weight and capacity, and in Key Stage 1 do not have a secure grasp of standard units of measurement. A strength in pupils' learning is their ability to unravel word problems, and this is the result of a recent and intensive thrust by teachers. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum, but these opportunities are not sufficiently orchestrated or planned. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, and good progress in Key Stage 2.
7. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations. Pupils in both key stages benefit from good and frequent opportunities to carry out investigations and experiments, but older Key Stage 2 pupils especially lack the necessary vocabulary to explain their ideas clearly. Pupils' scientific knowledge is generally secure, but because of weaknesses in the way in which pupils record their work, this is not always evident from pupils' books. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but could do even better in some aspects of their work.
8. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils attain the expected standards in art and design, and physical education. In design and technology, and religious education, pupils attain beyond the expected level in their work at the end of both key stages. In history, pupils attain national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, but do not attain the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 where their knowledge is weak. In music, pupils attain national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but do not achieve the expected standards in their work at the end of Key Stage 2, mainly because of lack of opportunities for them to develop their compositional skills. Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations at the end of both key stages, and this is because of the lack of direct teaching time given to the subject, and the way in which the computers are physically positioned in the school.
9. Over the past two years, the progress of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils has been adversely affected in some subjects by the changes in staffing, and by the lack of a whole-school curriculum plan that fully meets the needs of the five mixed age classes. The new headteacher has identified the downward trend in the national test results in both key stages, and has already introduced a variety of strategies which will improve pupils' progress and attainment. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are being more rigorously implemented, and a new commercial scheme of work for science is ensuring good levels of continuity and

progression in the pupils' learning. However, these initiatives are new and their impact is only just evident.

10. Within individual lessons, pupils of all abilities often make good progress, but their progress has not been consistent over time because of weaknesses in the curriculum. There is some duplication and some omissions in terms of the content that is taught, and this has been exacerbated by the staffing changes. The new headteacher and staff are already working towards a whole-school curriculum plan, and have identified areas where schemes of work are needed to give more guidance to teachers in their long-term planning.
11. There are often unusually high levels of pupil mobility in Key Stage 2, as the area is one that is popular for 'first time buyers'. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is high in some year groups, and this is also a factor that has affected pupils' overall progress and attainment. The staffing is now stable, and teachers are committed to putting firm procedures in place that will guarantee that pupils make steady and good progress, and that the curriculum is robustly planned to ensure good levels of continuity in pupils' learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils throughout the school make a significant contribution to the standards they achieve and the progress they make, and add to the quality of school life overall.
13. There has been a good improvement in pupils' attitudes to learning since the school was last inspected, and the vast majority of pupils of all ages and abilities have very positive attitudes to school and to work. Most pupils enjoy being in school, and this is reflected in the way in which they proudly discuss and share their work and achievements, and in the committed and enthusiastic way they approach all aspects of their education. In lessons, pupils of all ages listen attentively and with interest to explanations from their teachers, and most respond promptly and in a positive manner to any requests or instructions. Pupils enjoy a challenge, and will readily tackle any new areas of learning, persevering to overcome any difficulties they encounter. This was particularly evident in a Reception /Year One design and technology lesson when pupils were given the task of making a book mark which involved punching holes and threading ribbon. Even the youngest of these pupils were fully engrossed in what they were doing, and were keen to master the new techniques they had been shown.
14. The vast majority of pupils throughout the school have developed very good levels of confidence and independence and can be trusted to carry on working when not directly supervised by teachers. In class discussions pupils patiently listen to what others have to say, and show respect for the views and suggestions of their classmates. Pupils are proud of their school community and try very hard to make it a pleasant learning environment for all. From an early age pupils are encouraged to keep classrooms neat and tidy and are expected to help to put away resources at the end of lessons. Monitorial duties, such as setting out lunchboxes in the dining hall and taking registers to the office, are carried out promptly and efficiently, and pupils are keen to do these tasks. Older pupils show a good sense of responsibility towards the younger ones, and help them in small but significant ways. Their awareness of the need to be sensitive and caring towards one another ensures that new pupils quickly settle and are comfortable in school. The members of the school council take the job of representing their classmates seriously and are able to sensibly put forward their views to staff in order to bring about changes.

15. The very good behaviour, which was identified in the previous inspection, has been maintained since the school was last inspected. Pupils are courteous helpful and friendly to visitors to the school. They know that the school has high expectations of behaviour and are very much aware that incidents of bullying, or oppressive or racist attitudes would not be tolerated. They enjoy the praise they receive from teachers when they behave well and show an obvious delight when they receive a reward for effort, achievement or good behaviour. Pupils show a great deal of respect for all of the adults with whom they come into contact on a daily basis and for one another. Pupils are fully aware of the school rules and code of conduct and recognise the consequences of their actions. Behaviour in the dining hall is very good. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion where pupils of all ages mix well together chatting in a friendly manner discussing the day's events. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
16. Relationships are excellent on all levels throughout the school. Pupils work very well in groups and pairs, sharing and taking turns willingly. A significant strength is the way in which pupils positively evaluate the work of their classmates, and celebrate and share their success. During the inspection there were several occasions when pupils burst into spontaneous applause when their classmates achieved some particular distinction. Pupils of all ages have a well-developed sense of fair play and are aware of the need to respect people who have different religious beliefs or viewpoints to that of their own.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are very well behaved, and have developed positive attitudes to their work, and confidence in their abilities, because of the good support and encouragement they receive from adults. They maintain very good levels of concentration and approach any tasks or activities given to them with commitment and a sense of enjoyment. They are co-operative when working in groups, and respond in a positive manner to teachers and support staff.
18. Attendance is very good and well above the national average. The school fulfils statutory requirements in terms of registration.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good overall, and some very good and excellent examples of teaching were seen in some classes. Of the thirty one lessons seen during the inspection, 6% were excellent, 23% were very good, 45% were good and 26% were satisfactory.
20. The Foundation Stage children are taught in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. This arrangement works well, and the teacher is very effective in ensuring that each of the age groups receives very different learning experiences. Good emphasis is placed on the children learning through play and practical activities, and there is a good balance between activities that the teachers direct and those that the children choose themselves. The teaching of early skills of reading and writing is particularly good and ensures that the children make very good progress in this aspect of their learning. The teacher has high expectations of the children who respond well. The children are keen learners, and are enthusiastic in their response. They work very well with one another, and show very good levels of concentration in their work.
21. The teaching of English is good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are well taught. Pupils of all abilities respond

well and make good progress. Pupils experience a good range of activities which build on their previous learning, and teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to guide their planning for the different age groups. However, there are occasions in both key stages when worksheets are used too much as a means of recording in other subjects, and this prevents pupils from extending and practising their literacy skills.

22. In mathematics, teaching is good in Key Stage 2, where one of the teachers is a leading mathematics teacher, and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. The National Numeracy Strategy is more firmly established in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1, and this is the main reason why teaching is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. In both key stages there are strengths in the way in which aspects of number are taught, especially word problems, and pupils make good progress in this aspect of their work. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about some aspects of shape, space and measure and this has led to some gaps in pupils' learning. In Key Stage 1, too much work is recorded on worksheets, or in commercially produced workbooks, and this means that pupils have too few opportunities to set work out for themselves. Teachers throughout the school place good emphasis on developing pupils' subject vocabulary, and this is helping pupils to explain their work more clearly and to clarify their thinking. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily promoted across the school.
23. The teaching of science is good overall in both key stages. The practical element of science is very well taught in both key stages. Teachers are very successful in the way in which they promote scientific vocabulary, and in the way in which they encourage pupils to be independent in their investigative work. Lessons are presented in an enthusiastic way and pupils of all abilities respond with good levels of motivation. However, in both key stages, there are shortcomings in the way in which pupils record their work. In Key Stage 1, too much use is made of worksheets as a means of recording and this prevents pupils from practising their literacy skills. In Key Stage 2, older pupils record their work in small exercise books which are unsuitable for the amount of written work these pupils are capable of producing.
24. In religious education and design and technology, teaching is good in both key stages. These subjects benefit from having comprehensive schemes of work which guide the teachers' planning and ensure good levels of progression in the pupils' learning. Teachers are confident when they present new topics and have high levels of enthusiasm. Pupils of all abilities respond well and enjoy their learning.
25. In art and design, music, physical education, history, geography and information and communication technology, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but varies from teacher to teacher. The quality of teaching is most variable in physical education where the difference in the teachers' individual levels of expertise is most pronounced. Teaching in art and design, music, geography and history is sometimes adversely affected by the lack of whole-school planning. In these subjects, lessons do not always build enough on what the pupils already know and can do and therefore pupils' progress is sometimes inconsistent. There is not always enough difference between the work given to the different age groups within the class, and some duplication and repetition of work at the same level occurs. In information and communication technology, teachers are hampered by the unsatisfactory physical organisation of the computers which makes it extremely difficult for them to teach whole class or large group lessons. Currently not enough use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, and this is a whole-school area of development that has already been identified.

26. Teachers throughout the school have excellent relationships with the pupils. They create a very positive learning environment where pupils of all ages and abilities feel confident about expressing their views, or giving answers to questions. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities are included in discussion sessions, and where the support staff are most effective, they unobtrusively help individual pupils with special educational needs to ensure they are fully included in all activities. Teachers use questions very skilfully to check the pupils' thinking and to extend their learning, and vary questions well to match the needs of individual pupils. Without exception, teachers give clear instructions about what they expect the pupils to do, and this means that pupils are secure in their learning and able to pursue activities independently.
27. Where the best teaching occurs, teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to evaluate their own learning and that of others. Pupils know that they must be positive in their critical appraisals and take account of the feelings of their classmates. During these sessions there are often occasions when pupils break into spontaneous applause as they celebrate the achievements of their friends. Teachers encourage this positive recognition, and are equally congratulatory of pupils who try hard and do well. Teachers throughout the school make good use of praise and encouragement to motivate the pupils in their learning, and are very successful in the way in which they raise the self-esteem of those pupils who lack confidence.
28. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour to which the pupils respond positively. They manage pupils well, and use consistent strategies for supporting the small number of pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Classroom organisation skills are good in all classes, and teachers combine a good range of teaching methods, including whole-class, group, paired and individual teaching. Pupils are encouraged to be independent in their work, and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and most classroom assistants play an important role in supporting these pupils in their learning. Teachers are involved in writing individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs, and take good account of these targets when planning lessons. The school has no pupils who have English as an additional language. Although the school does not have a formal policy for the identification of pupils who are gifted and talented, in practice, teachers are well aware of these pupils, and cater well for their needs.
30. The quality of pupils' learning reflects the teaching, and is at its best when teaching is most effective. Pupils of all ages and abilities have high levels of enthusiasm for school, and for work, and take a full and active part in all activities. In lessons pupils are keen to tackle new learning, and do so with good levels of confidence. A strength of learning is the way in which pupils undertake practical tasks. They show good levels of organisation, and work conscientiously and with high levels of enjoyment. However, pupils do not always put the same amount of effort into their written work, especially in the upper part of Key Stage 2 where work is sometimes untidily presented. Most pupils work at a good rate, and produce good amounts of written work in the allocated time. Pupils listen well to one another, and are keen to make contributions in class discussions. Pupils throughout the school are very effective at working collaboratively and show high levels of co-operation when working on joint tasks. Higher attaining pupils are often very kind to, and supportive of, those who have difficulties with their learning, and during the inspection there were several occasions when pupils spontaneously helped one another. Homework is used well in English and

mathematics to extend and support the pupils' learning, but there are missed opportunities in other subjects.

31. It is not possible to judge the extent to which the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection because of the significant changes to the teaching staff over the past four years. The current teaching staff is very committed to driving standards upwards, and to developing the curriculum, so that some aspects of teaching can be strengthened further. The school is very well placed for developing teaching and learning in the future.

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

32. The school provides a very good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, which reflects the national guidelines for children in this age group. Children in the Reception/Year 1 class enjoy a wide range of opportunities that effectively promotes their learning. The teacher plans a good combination of activities that are led by an adult and those that the children direct themselves. Good emphasis is placed on the children learning through first hand experience which promotes independent learning skills, and children are encouraged to be creative in their work. The provision for Reception children has improved since the time of the last inspection.
33. The curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils meets statutory requirements, but not enough progress has been made since the last inspection in developing the curricular provision. The quality of the curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils is currently unsatisfactory, as there are shortcomings which adversely affect pupils' progress. Although provision for English and mathematics is good, and is guided by the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, the whole-school planning for other subjects is unsatisfactory. There is some unnecessary duplication of activities, and not always enough planned progression in pupils' learning. In addition, there are also times when activities do not link sufficiently closely with the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The new headteacher has recognised the need to develop the curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils, and the Senior Management Team and staff have already made great strides in devising and implementing whole-school schemes of work which will ensure that pupils in the mixed age classes are consistently working at the appropriate level for their age and maturity. The statutory curriculum is well supported by educational visits and there are good opportunities for pupils in the upper part of Key Stage 2 to participate in residential visits that significantly enhance their social development.
34. The school currently provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, and whilst this is commendable, staff can not sustain this level of commitment indefinitely. The wide range of additional activities reduces the amount of time that staff have to give to developing other areas of the school's work, and the headteacher is aware that the current very high level of additional activities needs to be reduced. Some of the extra-curricular activities are very well supported by parents, who run them jointly with staff, and this is a very good example of the parents' commitment to the school.
35. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very good. All staff provide very good role models, and do much to encourage pupils to work and play co-operatively. In lessons, pupils are given opportunities to voice their opinions by evaluating the work of classmates, putting forward their suggestions for improvement, and 'Circle Time' sessions enable them to air their views and share their thoughts and

feelings. The 'School Council' provides pupils throughout the school with the valuable experience of representing their classmates and putting forward their suggestions to staff in a mature and sensible manner. Sex education is taught in a sensitive manner and questions are answered in an increasingly detailed way as pupils move through the school. Sex education is taught on a more formal basis in Year 6, and parents are encouraged to view the teaching material so they are clear about what is taught. The school uses outside expertise very well in order to raise pupils' awareness of issues relating to their health and safety, including drugs awareness, and this aspect is also well taught through the science curriculum. The school is very effective in the way in which it promotes independent learning and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils have good levels of confidence in their ability to solve personal problems by the time they leave school at the age of eleven to transfer to secondary education.

36. The school is very much the focal point of the local community and many outside clubs and organisations use the school's community room as their meeting place. The school is very welcoming to visitors from the local area, and the very strong links developed with the Playgroup, and with the Mother and Toddler group, ensure that pupils entering the Reception class are familiar with some of the school's routines and procedures, and with the staff. The school has established very good links with the receiving high school, enabling Year 6 pupils to move confidently on to the next stage of their education. The school has benefited from donations made by the local business community, and the school intends to develop this link further by inviting visitors to school to talk to pupils about the world of work. The school makes good use of the local and wider community and there are regular visits to the Parish Church, and church representatives add a sense of occasion by their attendance at school assemblies.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and this aspect of the school's work is well led and managed by an experienced and committed co-ordinator. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage in their education so that additional support can be quickly targeted. The school has established very good links with parents of pupils who have special educational needs, and parents agree that they receive very good levels of support from the school, and are pleased with the school's efforts to help and support their children. Individual education plans are in place for pupils who have special educational needs, and these are well written by the classteachers in conjunction with the co-ordinator. Teachers know their pupils well and provide additional and sensitive support in lessons for those pupils who have special educational needs. Most learning support assistants are equally helpful, although not all are trained in working with pupils with special educational needs, and do not always know the best way of responding to individual needs. The school has no pupil for whom English is an additional language, and no looked after children. Gifted and talented pupils receive additional challenge in some lessons, and teachers know who the pupils are who can be stretched even further in their learning. However, the school does not have a formal mechanism for providing additional stimulation for pupils with individual or special talents.
38. As at the time of the last inspection, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school's strength lies in the way in which it promotes pupils' social development. A clearly written policy emphasises the central importance of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to the life of the school and gives guidance related to each area of the curriculum.
39. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Stimulating displays in the foyer and around the school encourage the pupils to reflect, and there are some good

opportunities in lessons for pupils to consider their responses and feelings. For example, in the Year 3 /4 class, pupils have recently written about their feelings and about being special. Teachers are not afraid to share their own feelings with pupils, and promote a comfortable learning environment where pupils feel secure about expressing their thoughts. There are some missed opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality further through the appreciation of music, literature and art, because of weaknesses in some parts of the curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils.

40. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's code about 'Paxton People' is displayed around the building, and is a constant reminder to the pupils about how they should behave and relate to one another. The pupils have contributed to the consideration of specific issues and, in an attractive display, they record that playtimes are fun when 'we treat others how we would like to be treated' and 'when we take care of our beautiful environment'. The vast majority of the pupils understand the difference between what is right and what is wrong and behave according to these principles. Pupils treat one another with respect and listen to and value the opinions of others. This notion of respect is reinforced by teachers who praise good behaviour, and set an excellent example in the way in which they listen thoughtfully to pupils' comments. Because of weaknesses in the curriculum, there are missed opportunities for pupils to consider wider moral issues such as the destruction of rainforests, or pollution, and this is an area where more could be done.
41. The provision for the pupils' social development is very good. Teaching and non-teaching staff are excellent role models for the pupils and actively support and encourage good social behaviour. The pupils undertake responsibilities that are appropriate to their age and which promote the smooth running of the school. Very good examples of pupils working well together in pairs and small groups are seen in many lessons. Physical education and games lessons help the pupils to understand the value of team work, and there are many opportunities where pupils work collaboratively, and demonstrate their understanding of the notion of negotiation. Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential visits and for all pupils day visits enrich the curriculum, and their social competence. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities provides a further opportunity for social development, as pupils from different year groups mix together.
42. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Activities such as a visit from a Science Theatre Group, taking pupils to Stibbington to gain a greater understanding of Victorian Life, and to a toy museum and castle, help them to appreciate aspects of the British culture. The annual book week, which took as its theme 'Children in Britain', explored other faiths, and representatives from the Hindu and Jewish faiths came to talk to the pupils, so enlarging their knowledge of other traditions. During the inspection, the use of African music in assembly successfully promoted the music of other cultures, although even more could be done in music and art lessons to promote pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. As at the time of the last inspection, the school cares well for all pupils, and good levels of support and guidance from staff ensure that pupils feel confident and happy when they are in school. Pupils are taught in a warm, caring environment where they are valued and respected as individuals. All staff particularly the headteacher, who has only been in the school a short time, know the pupils well and are able to identify individual strengths and weaknesses. In lessons teachers provide pupils of all abilities with good levels of constructive educational guidance in a manner that raises pupils

levels of confidence and self esteem. Pupils are praised for effort as well as achievement, errors are corrected in a tactful manner and this enables even the youngest pupils to confidently accept challenges and to tackle any new areas of learning.

44. The school's provision for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare is satisfactory overall, and good attention is paid to ensuring the pupils' health and safety. The Governing Body has a committee which ensures that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of health and safety, and teachers are especially vigilant of the pupils in their care when carrying out practical activities, such as physical education, science and design and technology. Risk assessments are properly carried out and good systems are in place to ensure pupils' safety when they take part in educational visits.
45. Staff ensure that they are readily available to talk to pupils who may need to share their worries or concerns, and the 'social skills group' and 'Circle Time' sessions provide pupils with time to talk about their innermost thoughts and feelings. Children entering the Reception class are able to spend time in the school prior to admission and teachers make home visits in order to develop the important first steps towards a positive home school link. The 'Dragonfly Club', is a much valued facility and ensures that children of working parents are well cared for before and after school.
46. The school's behaviour and discipline policy is good and successfully promotes very high standards of behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are applied fairly and used consistently by staff throughout the school. The rewards, particularly the 'Gold Award', is a much sought after incentive, and pupils show a great deal of delight when they are presented with the award in the 'sharing assembly'. 'Wet playtime' boxes enable pupils to be fully occupied and stimulated during the times when they are unable to go outside to play, and do much to promote good standards of behaviour. Good levels of supervision from the midday support staff ensure that pupils behave appropriately in the dining hall and in the playground and that all pupils feel comfortable and happy in school.
47. Teachers effectively monitor pupils' personal development through a regular exchange of information during staff discussions, and through the very good 'Records of Achievement' which enable pupils' personal development to be tracked as they move through the school.
48. Effective procedures are in place for ensuring that pupils who become sick or are injured are well cared for until their parents can be contacted, and pupils are fully aware of the person they need to approach if they suffer an accident or feel unwell. The school benefits from having a medical room which provides a quiet area for pupils who are unwell.
49. The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and they receive good levels of additional support in class from their teachers and from most learning support assistants. Staff are sensitive when working with pupils with special educational needs, and take great care to ensure that they feel valued and are fully included in all activities. The school has an effective racial harassment policy, and pupils know that bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
50. The school's procedures for promoting regular attendance are good overall, and the school complies fully with statutory requirements for recording pupils' attendance. Registers are analysed regularly by staff for any emerging patterns of persistent or non-attendance and any cases of a worrying nature are promptly referred to the

Education Welfare Services for further action. Registration is carried out promptly and efficiently and pupils are able to benefit from an immediate start to lessons

51. In the Foundation Stage, good procedures are in place to monitor the children's progress, and to ensure that they are achieving the expected standards for their age. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics. In the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, assessment is unsatisfactory overall, and insufficient progress has been made in developing a whole-school assessment system since the time of the last inspection. There are few formal assessment systems in place, and this makes it difficult for teachers to monitor and track pupils' progress from year to year. The school has recognised the need to develop assessment systems for all subjects, and this is an identified priority in the School Improvement Plan. Teachers know their pupils very well on an individual basis, and accurately identify pupils who have special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
52. The recently appointed assessment co-ordinator is making good progress in building the use of a computerised assessment management system for collating and analysing data for pupils in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, this system is still in its formative period and has yet to have a significant impact on the curriculum and assessment as a whole. The policy for assessment and recording has recently been reviewed and new procedures are currently being implemented.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. This aspect of the school's work is a strength and has improved since the time of the last inspection. The school's partnership with parents is very good. Much has been done by the headteacher and staff to maintain, develop and strengthen both formal and informal lines of communication, and the vast majority of parents are happy with all aspects of their children's education. Parents are warmly welcomed, and are encouraged to become actively involved in the daily life and work of the school. A good number of parents regularly assist in classrooms, and help out with extra-curricular activities and on educational visits. Their assistance, which is very much appreciated by the headteacher and staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning, for example, in design and technology, when they help with the practical activities, and in literacy, when they listen to pupils read. Pupils are pleased and proud when their parents attend special events at the school, and during the inspection, the parents' presence at the sharing assembly really added to the sense of occasion.
54. Parents are particularly pleased with the school's ethos, the family atmosphere and the way in which pupils' achievements are celebrated and shared. They appreciate the way in which they are welcomed into the school, and agree that teachers and the headteacher are readily accessible, and willing to listen to, and sort out, any problems or concerns. Parents are very pleased with the range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides, and agree that teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Although the majority of parents are pleased with the level and frequency of homework provided by the school, some parents believe that pupils receive too much homework, and some too little. The inspection findings support the parents' positive views of the school, and indicate that homework is at a satisfactory level for English and mathematics, but that little use is made of homework in other subjects to extend the pupils' learning.

55. The school's formal links with parents are good. The prospectus, which is in the process of being reviewed, conveys positive messages about the school and enables new parents to be fully informed of school routines and procedures. The monthly newsletters and information on noticeboards ensure that parents are regularly updated on all aspects of the life and work of the school, including forthcoming special events. Annual reports give parents a good indication of how well their children are doing, and show clearly the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and areas where they need to improve. Reports also contain thoughtful comments on pupils' personal development.
56. There are frequent opportunities for parents and staff to talk with one another, both on a formal and informal basis. Consultation meetings are well attended, and the headteacher and staff ensure that they are available at the start and end of the school days to talk to parents regarding their children's progress and to alleviate any worries or concerns they may have. The school ensures that parents gain an insight into the work their children do by organising various workshops and curriculum evenings, and by encouraging them to help with homework. The Parents' Association works hard to support the school financially and the much appreciated funds that are raised are put to good use by the school. For example, the 'Trim Trail' is a very good outside resource which is used well by pupils of all ages.
57. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process, and are appropriately informed when their child has been identified as having special educational needs. Regular reviews are held for all pupils who have special educational needs, and the school reflects the guidance of the new Code of Practice by involving pupils as well as their parents in these discussions.
58. The school's very strong home school partnership, through which valuable information regarding pupils' progress, welfare, and personal development is regularly exchanged makes a significant impact on pupils' learning, the standards they achieve and the progress they make.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good. Although the headteacher has been in post for less than one term, she already has a very good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has established a clear and very appropriate agenda for future development. The headteacher's appointment follows a very unsettled period of staffing which has adversely affected the school's ability to develop over the past few years. As a result, some of the key issues identified in the previous report, such as whole school curriculum development, and assessment, are still outstanding and are now a matter of urgency so that the school can move forward. Because of the determination and commitment of the teaching and non-teaching staff, the loyal support and expertise of the Governing Body, and the headteacher's ability to prioritise development issues, the school is very well placed for improvement.
60. The deputy headteacher and headteacher have worked closely together over the past term to highlight areas of strength and weakness in the school's work. The newly compiled School Improvement Plan shows clearly the steps the school must take to build further upon its many strengths, and to address those areas where more input is required. Priorities are costed, both in terms of time and funding, and targets are challenging, but realistic and achievable. The Governing Body and staff are fully involved in identifying priorities for school improvement, and progress towards the targets is regularly reviewed in Governing Body meetings.

61. The leadership and management of individual subjects have been unsatisfactory over recent years because of the many staff changes. Little monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place by co-ordinators, and action plans to show how the subjects might be developed have not been drawn up. Co-ordinators are now in place for all subjects and for important areas of the school's work. They are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility and are keen to take their subjects forward. However, because they have only recently assumed responsibility for their areas, their leadership and management roles have not yet been developed, and they are not yet taking an active role in monitoring teaching and learning through classroom observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work. The headteacher is aware that the responsibilities of subject co-ordinators need to be considered carefully within this small school so that co-ordinators do not become over-burdened by their roles, and so that there is a prioritised system of monitoring across the curriculum. The co-ordinators for special educational needs and assessment are effective in their work, and are developing their roles further under the leadership and direction of the new headteacher.
62. The Governing Body effectively fulfils its statutory duties, and is very supportive of the school. A number of governors regularly visit the school to monitor aspects of its work. For example, governors have been into school to evaluate the impact of the shared classrooms on teaching and learning, and to monitor the quality of behaviour in the school. In addition, governors regularly help in school by supporting teachers in class. The Governing Body supports school events well, and parent governors offer their support when the school takes pupils on residential visits. Both the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chair of the Finance Committee are relatively new to these positions, but already they have a good grasp of their areas of responsibility, and are very effective in the way in which they carry out their duties. The Governing Body provides very good support for the new headteacher, and takes an active interest and involvement in the decision making process. Governors contribute well to the School Improvement Plan, and ensure that progress towards the identified priorities is regularly reviewed. The Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher work very well together and meet frequently. Individual governors who have responsibility for important aspects of the school's work such as child protection and special educational needs fulfil their roles conscientiously and have undergone appropriate training.
63. The school has good financial systems in place to ensure that income and expenditure are closely aligned. Finances are used well to support educational development, and grants and additional funds are used appropriately. The school secretary, who is also a governor, is instrumental in ensuring that the Finance Committee receives accurate and up to date information about the budget, and this enables spending to be monitored closely. Although the school is effective in securing the best value for money in terms of the services and products it purchases, currently, there are no formal measures in place for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions, and this is an aspect of monitoring that has been identified for development. The Finance Committee recognises that the current level of teachers is generous, and makes regular and sensible financial forecasts so that any necessary economies can be made in good time. The school has an appropriate level of reserve funds.
64. The school has a strong policy for inclusion which is fully reflected in practice. All pupils are valued as individuals, and parents are appreciative of the way in which the school celebrates the pupils' achievements, both in school and at home. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, have full and equal access to all aspects of the school's life and work. A racial discrimination policy is in place, and there are good levels of racial harmony. The school building is easily accessible for children and adults who have disabilities, and there are good facilities

for the disabled. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and takes full account of the recommendations of the new Code of Practice.

65. The school employs a good number of suitably qualified teachers. Most support staff have received relevant training and they are usually well deployed in lessons. However, the quality of support varies, and not all support staff are fully conversant with how to work effectively with pupils who have special educational needs. There is a very strong sense of team spirit amongst the staff, and under the enthusiastic direction of the new headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff work harmoniously together to create a pleasant, well ordered learning environment. Arrangements for staff development are good, and training is linked to priorities in the School Improvement Plan, and to individual need. However, because the headteacher is so new to the school, current training priorities have not yet been identified. There are appropriate procedures in place for the induction of new members of staff, and for supporting newly qualified teachers. The school meets statutory requirements in relation to performance management. The school secretary provides an excellent welcome to parents and visitors to the school, and administrative duties are carried out very efficiently. The midday staff work effectively to ensure that lunchtimes are a pleasant social occasion for all pupils, and the school is very well maintained by the cleaning staff who work hard to ensure that there are high standards of cleanliness throughout the school building.
66. The school is housed in a well-maintained building and staff try hard to make the best possible use of available space. Classrooms and internal areas of the building are in good decorative order and are significantly enhanced by the bright, colourful displays of pupils' work. However, the two large shared classrooms, which are used by R/Year 1 and Year 1/Year 2 pupils, and Year 3/Year 4 pupils and Year 6 pupils, present problems for the teachers with regard to the organisation of lessons. Despite the efforts of the pupils and staff, noise from the adjoining areas disrupts pupils' learning, and the layout of these classrooms makes it very difficult for pupils to access the computers. The school has a good sized hall for physical education, and 'wet areas' in classrooms enhance the provision for investigative science and practical activities. The medical room provides pupils who are injured or feeling unwell with somewhere quiet to sit whilst being attended to. The pleasant school grounds do much to enhance the outside of the building and provide a good learning resource.
67. Resources are satisfactory overall and are used effectively to support pupils' learning. However, the library facilities are unsatisfactory and there is a shortage of fiction and non-fiction books. The school has plans to relocate the library and to increase the range of books. Although the school has enough computers, the location and organisation of them inhibits teaching and learning, and makes it almost impossible for teachers to deliver whole class lessons. Resources in general are clearly labelled and easily accessible to pupils.
68. In the light of the standards attained, the quality of education the school provides and the quality of leadership and management, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 1) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should improve curriculum planning throughout the school by ensuring that:-**
 - schemes of work are implemented for subjects other than English, mathematics and religious education;
 - a whole-school plan is drawn up to show the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils in different year groups will acquire as they move through the school;
 - pupils in the same class, but who are in different year groups, do not repeat work at the same level.
(paragraphs 9, 10, 33)

- 2) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should improve standards in information and communication technology at the end of both key stages by:-**
 - relocating the computers so that whole-class teaching can take place;
 - continuing with the planned programme of staff training;
 - introducing assessment procedures to highlight strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning;
 - making more use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
(paragraphs 8, 25, 31, 147 – 151, 156, 167)

- 3) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should improve standards in music at the end of Key Stage 2 by:-**
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to develop their composing skills;
 - introducing a whole-school scheme of work that will support teachers who are non-specialists, and that will ensure progression in pupils' learning;
 - ensuring that assessment systems are in place to track and monitor pupils' progress and attainment;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to appraise the music from different eras and cultures.
(paragraphs 8, 152 – 157)

- 4) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should improve standards in history at the end of Key Stage 1 by:-**
 - ensuring that pupils take part in a broader and richer range of activities;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn about historical events and important people of the times;
 - ensuring that all activities are closely linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study.
(paragraphs 142 – 146)

- 5) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should ensure that assessment procedures are improved for subjects other than English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and that more use is made of assessment information to inform curriculum planning.**
(paragraphs 51, 59, 131, 136, 141, 146, 163, 168)

- 6) **The headteacher, staff and Governing Body should review and clarify the role of subject co-ordinators so that they can have more impact on the development of their subjects.**
(paragraph 61)

Minor issues that the school may wish to consider:

- more use might be made of homework to support pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics;
(paragraphs 30, 54, 130, 135, 145, 156, 167)
- some learning support assistants would benefit from additional training;
(paragraph 65)
- the library does not have enough books, and would benefit from being relocated.
(paragraph 67)

** The new headteacher has already identified most of the areas for improvement, and they are included in the new School Improvement Plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	14	8			
Percentage	6	23	45	26			

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 three 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)	N/A	121
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	12

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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
	2002	9	8	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (90)	94 (85)	94 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (90)	94 (90)	94 (85)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Details of boys' and girls' results are not published separately when there are 10 or fewer boys or girls in the year group.

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
	2002	11	8	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (90)	68 (70)	84 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	17	15	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (90)	79 (80)	84 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Details of boys' and girls' results are not published separately when there are 10 or fewer boys or girls in the year group.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	117		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian	1		
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group	3		
No ethnic group recorded			

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

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	2001/2002
	£
Total income	302056
Total expenditure	306892
Expenditure per pupil	2436
Balance brought forward from previous year	19335
Balance carried forward to next year	14499

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	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	121
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	56	0	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	58	17	0	0
The teaching is good.	36	60	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	52	10	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	58	6	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	40	46	0	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	42	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	46	2	2	6

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

69. Children join the Reception class in the year of their fifth birthday. The children's attainment when they start school varies from year to year, and is average for the current group of Reception children. The Reception children make good progress from their different starting points, and by the time they enter Year 1, the vast majority attain the Early Learning goals in all areas of their learning. The Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils, and very effective classroom organisation ensures that the needs of both age groups are fully met. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for the Reception children since the last inspection.
70. The quality of teaching for the Reception children is good overall, and during the course of the inspection some very good and excellent teaching was observed. The teacher's planning ensures effective and detailed coverage of all the areas of learning. The teacher works closely with the classroom assistant, and ensures that she is well briefed about her roles and responsibilities. The Reception teacher makes good use of a variety of different approaches and methods, enabling the children to work as a whole class, in groups and as individuals. The children are confident, secure and happy, and already show a good level of independence in their work and play, and the good quality of the ongoing discussion between adults and children helps the children in the understanding of their own learning. The teacher makes good ongoing assessments of the children's progress and attainment and uses this information well when planning the next stage of their learning, and to identify children who may have special educational needs.
71. The teaching area for the Reception children is relatively spacious, and the children have good access to an area where they can carry out practical tasks. However, the room is shared with the Year 1/Year 2 class, and this arrangement is far from satisfactory. The noise level from each class disturbs the other, and teachers often struggle to maintain the attention and concentration of the children in this distracting situation. This problem arises from the ordinary activities of each class and is not associated with excessive noise from either group.
72. Resources are satisfactory overall and are of good quality. The school is reviewing and extending the range of resources available as funding allows. Funds raised by the Parent Teacher Association have been used to create a 'Trim Trail', available for use by the whole school, but also used on a regular basis by the children in the Reception class. Use of the large, fixed apparatus on the trail makes an important contribution to the physical development of the children in the Foundation Stage. At the present time the children do not have access to a secure outdoor play area and the school has no outdoor covered area where the children might experience time in the fresh air on wet days. The matter of an outdoor play area is now being prioritised in the school development plan and will, if realised, provide a valuable additional resource for the age group.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. The vast majority of children come into school with good personal and social skills, and good quality teaching ensures that they continue to make good progress throughout

the Reception year. By the time they start Year 1 the children attain the expected level in terms of their personal, social and emotional development.

74. Good quality liaison with the local pre-school group ensures that the school is well informed about the skills and experiences acquired by the children before they enter school, and these are effectively built upon and extended in the Reception class. Most children play co-operatively and share resources well. The social routines of the day such as snack-time and shared whole-school assemblies make a valuable contribution to the children's personal, social and emotional development. The children chatter happily to one another and to their teacher during the course of the day, and are very secure in their dealings with adults. When participating in whole school activities such as the assemblies the children follow the teacher's instructions sensibly and benefit from the very good role model provided by older pupils.
75. The teacher is very effective in the way in which she promotes the children's independence and personal initiative, and they confidently use resources with the minimum of adult help. The children have regular opportunities for sharing their experiences with their classmates, and they are encouraged to discuss their feelings and to listen to the views of others. The classteacher is very skilled in the way in which she involves the Reception children and the Year 1 pupils in some whole class activities, and these opportunities for interaction with older children are a very positive experience for the Reception children. When preparing for outdoor play or for indoor physical education activities most Reception children dress and undress independently or with the minimum of help. They can be relied upon to observe the routines of personal hygiene.
76. By the time they transfer to Year 1, the children are very well behaved and fully aware of the school's few rules. Reception children demonstrate very good levels of concentration and perseverance, and are enthusiastic about taking part in daily activities. Most children are very confident in their dealings with others, and take on the role of class 'helper' with pride.

Communication, language and literacy

77. By the end of the Reception year, most children attain beyond the early Learning Goals across all elements of the area of communication, language and literacy. The children benefit from very good teaching which enables them to make very good progress from their individual starting points.
78. Throughout the day children have regular and valuable opportunities for sharing their experiences verbally and listening to the views and suggestions of their classmates. When talking to one another, and with adults, the children demonstrate high levels of confidence and are keen to join in with ongoing conversations. Because of very good teaching, the children are acquiring a wide ranging vocabulary which helps them to express their ideas clearly. For example, during the inspection children learned the names of a range of fruits and vegetables and this activity successfully increased their vocabulary. The adults in the classroom provide good models of spoken language, and take every opportunity for talking with the children as they work. The quality of the dialogue in small group activities is very effective in helping the children in the development of their subject vocabularies. Role-play is used with great effect in the development of language skills and the children fantasise happily as they take on a variety of different roles.
79. All children in the Reception class enjoy listening to stories and respond with high levels of interest when the class teacher reads to them. They enthusiastically follow

the progress of the story and join in with parts that they know well. During the course of the inspection the classteacher very skilfully used the story, 'The Trouble With Jack', to bring the Reception and Year 1 children together at the end of the day. The Reception children benefit from listening to the comments of the older pupils, and gain pleasure from sharing a story with their classmates. The children's early reading skills are enhanced by good levels of parental support and from the regular opportunities for reading development provided during the school day.

80. The Reception children make very good progress in their writing, and benefit from taking part in a variety of activities that promote writing as an enjoyable activity. Most children quickly move from mark-making tasks to free writing, and the more able children enjoy more formal writing activities, such as making lists of the items required for the 'Three Bears' Party'. The teacher provides regular opportunities for the children to develop their pencil control, and these activities are carefully targeted so that the children make very good progress in developing their handwriting skills.

Mathematical development

81. Teaching in this area of learning is good and children of all abilities make good progress in developing their understanding of number, shape, size and capacity. By the time they enter Year 1, the children attain the Early Learning goals in their mathematical development. Teaching and non-teaching staff make good use of formal and incidental opportunities for enhancing the children's mathematical understanding and regularly assess their ongoing progress so that tasks are closely matched to the children's ability.
82. The classroom has a variety of number displays and apparatus which help the Reception children with their learning, and provide constant reminders of the sequence and pattern of numbers. When working as a whole class the children are confident in their counting and enthusiastically follow the lead given by the teacher. The higher attaining pupils happily go beyond ten and are beginning to experience the pleasure of using 'big' numbers, which they love to share with adults. Many children already know that numbers can be 'as big as you want them to be', although they have their own personal ceiling, which for some, is 'as big as a thousand'. Daily mathematical games and conundrums help the children in the growth of their mental skills, and they are eager to show their prowess in question and answer sessions. In shared activities such as snack-time, the incidental counting and calculation that arises from dividing up food and drinks is well used by the staff to develop the concept of sharing and partitioning given quantities.
83. Many of the children possess a good mathematical vocabulary which they use well to make comparisons such as heavier/lighter than, longer/shorter than and more/less than. Most children recognise and name triangles, squares, circles and hexagons. They have good sorting and matching skills and the most able children choose their own criteria for sorting, such as colour, size or shape. In their work relating to their knowledge and understanding of the world, the children cut out and sort pictures of everyday objects into categories, such as those that are magnetic. This ongoing reinforcement has a positive impact on their learning and provides a meaningful context.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. The children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live, and their attainment, by the time they reach Year 1, is in line with the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is

good and engages the children's enthusiasm and interest as it builds on what they already know and can do.

85. The children have a good awareness of the immediate environment of the classroom and they know the location of the main areas for their learning and the resources that accompany them. They also have a good sense of how the day unfolds, and confidently describe most of the activities they will pursue, even though they are not always sure of their time and location during the day. Significant events such as assemblies are awaited with a degree of anticipation and most children know when breaks and lunchtime will occur.
86. Most of the children name key members of their family, and more able children are developing an understanding of some of the more obscure relationships within families. The children know that families are structured by age, and are fascinated by the advanced age of some of the adults in their own families. They also understand, often with some amusement, that adults were once as young as they are themselves. Much of their sense of history comes from the skilful use of the local environment, and the children have successfully investigated the age of one of the older buildings in Great Paxton. In conversation they explain that the present school building replaces an older one, and some children know the location of the older building. Their knowledge of the local geography of the area is also developing successfully, as the children describe their journey to school and some of the key features passed on the way.
87. The children are keen to experiment with resources and materials, and they have good opportunities to handle and classify materials that are rough, smooth, hard and soft. As part of their topic work, they have cut out and attached labels to a body outline and know and identify the limbs, the head, hands and feet. Most children describe in simple terms the life cycle of a frog, and through their work looking at human growth and development know that humans start life as babies and grow and change until they reach 'old age'. Good teaching ensures that the children have many first hand and practical activities which ensure that they have a secure grasp of new learning.
88. Statutory requirements are met in respect of teaching religious education to the Reception children. Most children have an emerging knowledge of some of the major stories from the Bible and other religious sources. They have looked at a video of Diwali celebrations and the higher attaining children know this to be a festival of light, for which they have made Diwali candle holders using clay. The children have begun to look at other faith communities, and have drawn prayer mats as part of their work linked to Islam.
89. The children have access to two computers located in the classroom and they are beginning to develop their computer skills. The children are working at the expected level in this area of their learning.

Physical development

90. The children make good progress in this area of their development and achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. The quality of the teaching is good and the children experience a good mix of structured physical education activities and free-play activities. The lack of a secure, dedicated, outdoor play area restricts the children's use of large mobile apparatus as part of their physical development. However, in good weather, the children have regular access to the fixed apparatus of the 'Trim Trail' which they use with great enthusiasm, confidence and skill.

91. The children's movements in and around the classroom are careful and purposeful, and they recognise that space has to be negotiated with care for the safety of others. When writing, drawing, cutting and constructing the children use an effective range of fine-motor skills, and most have good control of pencils, scissors and paintbrushes. Good teaching of pencil control skills ensures that the children make good progress and that they acquire good writing habits which will serve them well in later years.
92. During their indoor physical education sessions the children use the space in the school hall with confidence and they are aware of the rules of safety. When getting out apparatus such as floor mats, for example, they do so in strict accordance with the instructions from the teachers. Physical education lessons have a very positive impact on the children's social development as they learn to take turns and to demonstrate good levels of self discipline to ensure their own safety and that of others. More able children show good levels of originality in their work, and during floor exercises seen during the course of the inspection, they introduced their own variations into the movement repertoire that had been suggested by the teacher.

Creative development

93. The children make good progress in this area of their development and they attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is good and there is a good combination of activities that the children choose themselves and those that are directed by an adult.
94. Throughout the day the children have the opportunity for acquiring and practising the skills of cutting, painting, sticking and joining and constructing. They are adept at using found materials, commercial and educational kits and the consumable resources provided by the school. Painting is a favourite activity for many of the children, and they clearly enjoy the possibilities for being 'messy' as well as painting with control to achieve a specific aim. In art and role-play the children demonstrate good levels of originality, and the teacher and support staff encourage creative imagination and the creative use of language. During creative activities the children interact well with one another, and with adults, and they enjoy sharing their creative endeavours with the rest of the class at the end of the session or at the end of the day.
95. The classroom and work areas are enhanced by displays of the work done by the children and they are keen to share these achievements with visitors. They are encouraged in taking pride of ownership of their own work but they are also able to share the work completed successfully by other children. During the day the children have the opportunity for singing and playing musical instruments. Children from the Reception class play a full part in the assemblies, and make a good attempt to join in with their older peers during the hymns and prayers. They listen attentively to the music played by other pupils, and respond well to recorded music.

ENGLISH

96. The 2002 end of Key Stage 1 test results in reading and writing show that the pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is below average in reading and average in writing. The 2002 end of Key Stage 2 results show that the pupils' attainment in English is in line with the national average but below average in comparison with similar schools.
97. On the basis of the test results, standards have declined at the end of both key stages in recent years. There are several reasons for this decline. In the past three years

there have been unusually high levels of pupil mobility, and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs has increased. These factors have had a significant impact on the test results. In addition, the school has been through a period of very unsettled staffing, and whilst everything possible has been done to minimise this disruption, the quality of teaching and learning has been affected in some classes, and this has adversely affected the progress of some pupils. Because of the staffing problems, progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, the school now has a very stable and committed team of staff, and the capacity for improvement is very good.

98. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations, and that pupils of all abilities are now making good progress because of good teaching. However, some of the initiatives the school has introduced to raise standards further are very new, and will take some time before they impact fully throughout the school.
99. Standards of speaking and listening are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In most lessons, pupils of all ages and abilities listen well, and this is reflected in the appropriate answers they give to questions that are asked. The vast majority of pupils are keen to take part in class discussions, and older Key Stage 2 pupils are often very keen to make suggestions, and to explain their ideas. There are occasions in both key stages when pupils are hampered in their speaking by lack of subject specific vocabulary, and teachers have recognised this problem and are working hard to address it. Most classroom discussion is purposeful, and is managed well by the teachers, who effectively involve less confident pupils, and target questions well to different ability groups. Many pupils have very good levels of confidence when speaking, and are keen to perform to the whole school, such as when Year 6 pupils enacted a short story in assembly.
100. Standards of reading are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented effectively, and good use is made of 'Big Books' in literacy lessons to help the pupils to read with expression, and to focus on aspects of grammar such as the use of adjectives. By the end of the key stage, most pupils recognise an appropriate number of commonly used words and know how to decode more complex words. Higher attaining pupils read with good levels of expression, and have a good understanding of what they have read. Lower attainers make good use of pictorial cues to help them to understand the text, and to give pointers when they encounter unknown words. Pupils' individual reading records are carefully monitored, and most pupils benefit from good support at home which complements the opportunities for reading in school.
101. Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations, and a good percentage of the current Year 6 pupils are reading at a high level. These pupils read books of good quality, and have very positive attitudes to reading which are evident when they discuss their choice of book. A small number of pupils struggle with their reading, and lack fluency and expression, but they nevertheless have positive attitudes and confidence in themselves as readers. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read well enough to decode worksheets and test papers, and recent work related to word problems in mathematics has helped Year 6 pupils to focus on key words and to search for meaning. In the upper part of Key Stage 2, teachers encourage pupils to write book reviews on a half-termly basis, and to recommend books to their friends. Pupils often take up their friends' suggestions, and this promotes good levels of discussion as the pupils compare their responses. A weekly book club and the annual book week help to encourage reading and made a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

102. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations. By the end of the key stage, pupils write in a range of styles, and produce imaginative stories, diary writing, and instructions. Although average and higher attaining pupils often write at length, and sustain their ideas well, lower attainers produce only small amounts of work, and are not sufficiently consistent in their use of grammar and spelling. For the most part, higher attainers make good attempts at spelling complex words, and in using punctuation, although there are times when they become so involved in telling the story that they abandon all but the most established rules of grammar. Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work, and benefit from regular handwriting practice.
103. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in writing are in line with national expectations. There is a wide spread of ability in the current Year 6 class and some of the best writing is of a very good standard. However, this is offset by the work produced by the lower attaining pupils which reflects the difficulty the pupils have in sustaining and developing their ideas. Higher attainers have a good grasp of punctuation and use vocabulary well to present and explain their opinions and suggestions clearly and imaginatively. For example, when writing an argument about a proposed road scheme, higher attainers used words such as 'environment', 'pollute' and 'distract' to effectively advance their argument. Pupils have some opportunities to use computers to draft and edit their written work, but even more could be done to promote this aspect of pupils' learning.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection in both key stages. Pupils of all abilities are now making good progress, but over the past few years, pupils' progress has been adversely affected by very high levels of staff mobility, and this is reflected in the downward trend of the end of key stage test results. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge, and activities are often presented in an exciting and clear manner. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established, and lessons generally move at a good pace, although where the teaching is less effective, there is not enough sense of urgency or excitement. There are good opportunities in all classes for pupils to practise reading, and this has a positive impact on their progress. In some classes, good levels of additional support for lower attaining pupils are very effective in helping them to make good progress, but there are occasions when support staff are not used enough to support learning, especially in introductory discussion sessions. Where the best teaching occurs, teachers set high expectations of behaviour and in terms of what they expect the pupils to achieve during the course of a lesson. This serves to motivate the pupils and to encourage them to plan their work effectively and systematically. In a very good lesson seen during the inspection, pupils made very good progress when they dramatised the roles of characters from the book, the 'Kindlekrax'. They worked extremely well together, developing appropriate vocabulary, and experimenting with new ideas. The activity was very successful in developing both spoken language and social skills. Most pupils throughout the school have very positive attitudes to work and take pride in the presentation of their written work. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall and some good examples are seen in the work of upper Key Stage 2 pupils. Homework is set regularly in all classes, and makes a good contribution to the pupils' progress, especially in reading where the vast majority of parents are keen to support their children at home.
105. The co-ordinator has only very recently assumed responsibility for the subject, and it is therefore not possible to evaluate her leadership and management skills. Good systems are in place to track and monitor the progress and attainment of individual pupils. These are proving to be most helpful to the school, as high levels of pupil mobility in recent years mean that the end of key stage test results are not always a

reliable indicator of pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of additional support from their teachers, but although pupils who are gifted and talented are identified, there are as yet no specific schemes to raise their levels of achievement further. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve the library, and this project has received the support of the Parent Teacher Association. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning, and teachers use them well to enliven lessons. Good use is made of computers to support learning in some Key Stage 2 lessons, but even more could be done to encourage pupils to regard computers as 'tools for learning'. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

106. On the basis of the end of Key Stage 1 2002 test results, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average, but well below average in comparison with similar schools. The end of Key Stage 2 test results for 2002 show that pupils' attainment is below the national average and well below average in comparison with similar schools. Key Stage 2 girls did not achieve as well the boys in the 2002 tests, but generally there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
107. Standards have declined in both key stages over the last few years, and this is attributable to several factors. There have been considerable changes within the teaching staff, and this has adversely affected the pupils' progress and has resulted in a lack of continuity in pupils' learning. In recent years, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs has increased, and there have been unusually high levels of pupil mobility, both significant factors in terms of the test results. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly established in most classes, but this was not the case until recently, and the different approaches to teaching mathematics also led to inconsistent progress for some groups of pupils.
108. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1, there is too much reliance on worksheets as a means of recording, and pupils do not have enough opportunities to select their own methods of recording or to set out their work in different ways. Throughout the school good emphasis is placed on teaching pupils number skills, and pupils of all ages make good progress in this area of their learning, but there are some gaps in pupils' knowledge of aspects of shape, space and measure in both key stages, which there are firm plans to address by the end of the year. A general weakness in pupils' learning is their ability to explain their mathematical ideas clearly and concisely. This is partly because of lack of practice, which is currently being addressed, and partly because pupils do not always have a sufficiently broad mathematical vocabulary on which to draw.
109. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure grasp of number and pattern. In mental mathematics activities, pupils of all abilities respond keenly, and in a lesson seen during the inspection, quickly and accurately moved forwards and backwards in jumps of ones and tens. However, many pupils do not have immediate recall of number facts up to twenty, and this slows them down in mental mathematics sessions, and when making written calculations. Most pupils have a good understanding of the notion of an 'inverse operation' and know that addition can be checked by using subtraction and vice versa. Most pupils know and recognise odd and even numbers, but are not yet making generalisations about the outcomes of adding even/odd, even/even, odd/odd numbers together. Pupils of all abilities are secure in their

understanding of place value, and higher attainers work confidently with numbers that go well beyond twenty thousand, and have a growing understanding of the infinity of number. Pupils are taught a range of appropriate strategies for addition and subtraction, such as counting on using number lines, and 'planting' a starting number in their heads, but most have difficulty in explaining their methods of working verbally. There are currently not enough opportunities for older Key Stage 1 pupils to select their own methods of recording, and the over-reliance on worksheets as a means of recording places a ceiling on the learning of higher attainers especially.

110. Key Stage 1 pupils are making satisfactory progress in the aspect of shape, space and measure, and attain the appropriate level in most aspects of their work, but there are gaps in their learning. Very few pupils are confident about using standard units of measurement, and most pupils have difficulty in making reasonable estimates of length, weight and capacity. However, the majority of pupils confidently use non-standard units of measurement, such as cubes and pencils. Pupils recognise a variety of two and three dimensional shapes, but higher attainers especially are not sufficiently challenged in this aspect of their work. Most pupils have a good idea of telling the time, and confidently work with both analogue and digital displays.
111. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain the expected level overall in their number work, and are making good progress in developing skills for unravelling word problems. Having recognised that many pupils have difficulty in explaining their work clearly, teachers are now working hard to rectify this situation, and provide some very good opportunities for pupils to describe the methods they have used for solving problems. Throughout the key stage, pupils are often well challenged in their number work, and pupils of all abilities benefit from taking part in open-ended tasks which enable them to practise and apply existing knowledge and skills. For example, during the inspection, Year 4/Year 5 pupils explored the properties of square numbers, and higher attaining pupils used the information very well to make generalisations. Mental sessions in numeracy lessons are often well used to reinforce pupils' understanding of number, but in some cases, they lack pace, and this means that pupils are too leisurely in reaching their answers. Whilst a few higher attaining pupils have immediate recall of important number and multiplication facts, this is not the case for most average and lower attainers, and this lack of immediate recall slows them down in their written work. By the end of the key stage, most average and higher attaining pupils are confident in their ability to change fractions to decimals and percentages, although lower attainers find this difficult. Pupils are encouraged to use their knowledge of number facts to check the reasonableness of their answers, and most respond well to this expectation.
112. As in Key Stage 1, there are gaps in Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of aspects of shape, space and measure. By the end of the key stage, pupils attain the expected level in this aspect of their work overall, but lack confidence when working with units of measure for weight and capacity. Although pupils make sensible estimates of length, they are not as secure when estimating weight and capacity, and lack the necessary practical experience. Pupils of all abilities have a secure knowledge and understanding of the properties of two and three dimensional shapes. They know how to calculate lines of symmetry but are less confident about the notion of rotational symmetry. Older Key Stage 2 pupils know how to measure and calculate the perimeter and area of both regular and irregular shapes, and confidently name different types of triangle and quadrilateral.
113. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of data handling. They understand terms such as the 'mode', 'median', 'range' and 'mean', and explain probability well in terms of whether there is a poor, even, or good chance of an event

taking place. Pupils know how to use tally charts when collecting data, and have experience of constructing different types of charts and graphs. In a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 6 confidently interpreted given data to solve word problems, and higher attaining pupils showed a good understanding of how data can be presented in a distorted way to make accurate interpretation more difficult. Currently too little use is made of computers to support pupils' work in data handling, and they have too little experience of using spreadsheets to represent information.

114. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2, and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, and during the inspection, some very good teaching was seen in Key Stage 2. Introductory mental mathematics sessions are often used well to promote immediate recall of number facts and to help the pupils to make challenging mental calculations, but occasionally in both key stages these sessions are not sufficiently rigorous. Throughout the school teachers are working hard to promote mathematical vocabulary so that the pupils can explain their ideas more clearly, and this strategy is starting to have a positive impact already on the pupils' learning. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils create a very positive learning environment and this means that pupils have high levels of confidence when giving answers in discussion sessions, and when tackling new work. With the exception of Key Stage 1 where the overuse of worksheets and workbooks sometimes constrains the learning of the higher attainers, pupils of all abilities are well challenged and work is well matched to their needs. In most lessons, support staff play a good role in helping the lower attaining pupils, and they are often skilful and sensitive in their dealings with pupils. However, in some lessons seen during the inspection, support staff did not play a sufficiently active role in promoting effective learning. Teachers are often very enthusiastic in the presentation of lessons and this serves to motivate the pupils and to promote mathematics as an enjoyable activity. The vast majority of pupils respond very well in lessons, and work with high levels of concentration and co-operation on the set tasks. Pupils in the shared classrooms cope very well with the unavoidable noise from the neighbouring classes, and show consideration for others by keeping their working noise level as low as possible. Good use is made of homework to support and extend the pupils' learning, and pupils usually complete homework tasks conscientiously. Work is marked regularly, but although satisfactory, more use could be made of marking to show pupils how to improve their work still further.
115. Although the co-ordinator is newly appointed, she is already starting to have a very significant and powerful influence on standards and pupils' progress. She is an experienced leading mathematics teacher, and is very knowledgeable and passionate about the subject. Following the detailed analysis of past end of key stage test papers, she has highlighted areas that the school needs to develop, and has the full support and commitment of staff. She recognises the need to reduce the number of worksheets being used in Key Stage 1 for recording, and is providing very good support for teachers who are new to the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment systems are good and are both practical and manageable. The school is able to track the progress and attainment of individual pupils, and this is crucial given the high levels of pupil mobility, especially in Key Stage 2, which mean that the end of key stage test results are not very reliable as measures of pupils' progress. The school has enough resources for the subject, although the co-ordinator plans to supplement these to ensure that the National Numeracy Strategy can be fully delivered in all classes. The school has recognised that Key Stage 2 pupils are not making enough use of computers to support their learning and this is an identified area for development. Although not enough has been done to develop the subject in recent years because of staff changes, the school now has the capacity for very good improvement.

SCIENCE

116. On the basis of the 2002 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments, pupils' attainment is average. On the basis of the 2002 end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils' attainment is below the national average and well below average in comparison with similar schools. There has been a decline in standards on the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 test results over recent years, and this is mainly because of significant changes in the teaching staff which have led to inconsistencies in the pupils' progress, an unsatisfactory curriculum, an increase in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and unusually high level of pupil mobility. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations, and this improvement in Key Stage 2 reflects the positive impact of the new initiatives which have been introduced. Pupils of all ages and abilities are currently making good progress, and standards are poised to rise further.
117. Pupils' investigative skills are well developed at the end of both key stages, and their attainment in this aspect of their work is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair-test, and they make sensible predictions based on their previous knowledge and understanding. They observe carefully, and have a confident approach when finding things out for themselves. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities make good progress in their investigative work, and by the end of the key stage are keen to test emerging hypotheses and predictions, and to carry out investigations and experiments. Higher attainers have the capacity to set up their own investigations, and the school recognises the need to encourage these pupils to do this.
118. Although pupils' investigative skills are good, many pupils in both key stages have only a limited scientific vocabulary. This weakness has been picked up by the school and teachers are making every effort to encourage pupils to explain their thinking using the appropriate scientific terms. There are also weaknesses in pupils' recording skills in both key stages, and pupils' written work does not fully reflect their scientific knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 1, there is an over-dependence on worksheets as a means of recording, which constrains the pupils' creativity, and places a ceiling on the learning of the higher attaining pupils. In Key Stage 2, pupils record their work in small exercise books, and this discourages the pupils from writing extended accounts, and from producing detailed and clearly labelled diagrams.
119. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge of living things is secure and they attain the expected level in this aspect of their work. Pupils know the main needs of living things, and understand that different species live in different habitats. However, most pupils have difficulty in explaining ways in which animals have adapted to their environments. Pupils of all abilities make a clear distinction between things that are living and those that are dead and have never had life. Most pupils classify living things according to their distinguishing characteristics, but lower attainers have difficulty with this. Pupils understand how diet affects teeth, and the importance of exercise.
120. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a secure grasp of living things, and their attainment in this element of the science curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils understand the stages of human life, and know that all living things reproduce. Although pupils can name some of the main organs of the human body, they are less secure about identifying the position of these organs, and are not sure about their relative size. Most pupils confidently describe food chains, but lack the subject specific vocabulary, such as 'consumer', 'predator' and 'prey', which would sharpen up and clarify their explanations. Pupils understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and

Year 4 pupils have made good use of information and communication technology to find information about different groups of food. Drugs education is very well taught through the science curriculum, and by the end of the key stage, pupils have a very good understanding of the dangers of drug misuse and abuse.

121. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of materials and their properties. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils considered which materials would dissolve in water, which would float and which would sink. They showed good understanding of the notion of fair-testing when they carried out their experiments, and their predictions were accurate and sensible. This particular activity also provided good opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical skills as they measured different amounts of water and substances. Most pupils are confident about what effect heating and cooling would have on a range of different materials, and understand the difference between permanent and reversible changes, but a small number of pupils have difficulty with this.
122. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties. Most pupils make a distinction between solids, liquids and gases, but some have difficulty in explaining processes such as evaporation and condensation because of their lack of scientific vocabulary. Pupils carry out a good range of investigations and experiments into the different ways in which materials can be changed, and there are often good opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills, for example, when they investigated the effect of temperature when dissolving brown sugar. Pupils know and explain how to separate solid materials by filtration, but are less secure when asked how to separate solutions. Most pupils make a distinction between materials that would make good conductors and those that would be effective insulators.
123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' understanding of physical processes is satisfactory. Pupils identify sources of light and sound, and know that sound becomes fainter as the distance is increased. Pupils know how to make a simple circuit, but are not secure in their understanding of how a switch can break a circuit. Higher attainers are beginning to understand the effect of a stronger battery on a light bulb, or conversely what would happen if two bulbs were run off the same battery. They understand force in terms of 'pushes' and 'pulls', and know that the speed and shape of an object can be altered by force.
124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain satisfactory standards in terms of their knowledge and understanding of physical processes. Pupils' understanding of how light and sound travel is good, and pupils of all abilities show good interest in this aspect of their work. In a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 6 pupils confidently investigated the angle at which a mirror reflects light, and experimented with different types of paper to find out which one was the most effective for reflecting light. Pupils have a secure knowledge of forces, and higher attainers explain forces such as gravity and air resistance well. The weaker aspect of pupils' learning is their knowledge and understanding of the earth and beyond. There is some confusion as to the relative roles of the earth, the sun and the moon, in terms of the passage of night and day, and the length of the year.
125. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although there are some shortcomings in both key stages which are linked to the recording of pupils' work. Teachers are very effective in the way in which they promote investigative activities, and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. A strength of teaching is the way in which teachers promote scientific vocabulary and encourage the pupils to explain their ideas clearly. This was picked up as a weakness through the analysis of

past test papers, and is now being well addressed. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils, and motivate them well through their own enthusiasm for the subject. As a result pupils of all ages and abilities are very confident when carrying out practical work, and are keen to find things out for themselves. Activities are often exciting and pupils respond very well. Although teachers often have very high expectations of what the pupils can achieve in their practical work, they are not always sufficiently rigorous in terms of their expectations of pupils' written work. Pupils do not always make the same effort with their recording as they do when carrying out investigations and as a result, written work is sometimes poorly presented in both key stages. Some good use is made of homework to extend the pupils' learning. Information and communication technology is well used by Key Stage 2 pupils for trawling information, and there has been some limited use of control technology, such as light and temperature sensors.

126. Until recently, the leadership and management of science were unsatisfactory, and weaknesses in the curriculum had not been identified. The newly appointed science co-ordinator is extremely keen and enthusiastic, but has only recently assumed the role, and therefore her monitoring and evaluating role has not yet been developed. She is gradually building up a picture of standards throughout the school, and has started to evaluate past end of key stage test papers to enable the school to focus on what needs to be done to raise standards even further. The science curriculum in the past has lacked cohesion, and this has had a negative impact on pupils' learning. A new commercial scheme of work has recently been introduced, and this is already starting to have a very positive impact on teaching and learning. The school has few formal systems in place for monitoring and tracking pupils' attainment and progress but teachers know the pupils well and make regular ongoing informal assessments which guide the next stage of their planning. There are enough resources to support teaching and learning, and they are well used. Although the school benefits from shared wet areas where pupils can carry out practical investigative work, the main accommodation provided by the shared classrooms is not conducive to practical science activities as the noise travels between the class areas and is distracting for the other class. Nevertheless, staff cope well with the constraints, and are very co-operative with one another. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are some very good opportunities in both key stages for pupils to work collaboratively on shared tasks, and good opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues such as pollution, and drug abuse. Because of the new commercial scheme, and the very high levels of commitment from the teaching staff and new co-ordinator, the subject is very placed for further improvement, and standards are poised to rise.

ART AND DESIGN

127. Pupils' attainment in art and design is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. Satisfactory progress has been made since the time of the previous inspection, and standards are broadly the same as they were then. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
128. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to mix colours and predict the effects of the mixing. They know that primary colours can be combined to create secondary colours, and that the shade or tone of a colour can be altered by adding different amounts of white and black. Pupils have experience of working with media such as pencils and pastels, and they combine these effectively in their work. Pupils make good use of sketchbooks to record their preliminary ideas, and for practising mark-making skills, and experimenting with techniques to achieve effects such as texture, light and shade.

Pupils' observational drawing skills are good, and the vast majority of pupils show good attention to detail when looking at objects such as fruit and flowers. Pupils have experience of drawing self-portraits and portraits of their friends, and whilst they achieve satisfactory standards in this aspect of their work, most pupils are still struggling to draw human bodies that are in proportion. Patterns in art and nature have been used well as a stimulus, and most pupils are aware of the patterns produced by the use of bricks in the building of the school or in the metal covers they have used for rubbings. On their day visits during the course of the year to locations such as Ely Cathedral the children are able to reflect on the artistic glories of their own cultural heritage, but their knowledge and understanding of the artistic heritage of other cultures is underdeveloped at present. The pupils' knowledge of the work of famous artists is a weaker area of their learning, but is satisfactory overall.

129. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve the expected level in their art and design work. They use a variety of tools and techniques, and enjoy participating in a suitably broad range of activities. Pupils continue to use sketchbooks, but are sometimes reluctant to use them for practising skills and collecting preparatory materials, seeing them more as a means of recording the 'finished product'. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to mix and blend colours to achieve different effects, and they understand that the work of well-known artists can often be identified from the way in which colour is used. For example, in discussion Year 6 pupils explained that Picasso had a 'blue period', and Van Gogh a 'brown period'. Some good work has been produced when pupils have used similar styles to those used by other artists, such as Holbein. Effective connections have been established with other areas of the curriculum, science for example, when pupils in Year 4 have been able to produce paintings on silk to illustrate their work on healthy eating. In the past, Year 6 pupils have undertaken the study of artists from other cultures such as the work done by the Japanese artist Hokusai. In general, however, they have only a limited knowledge of the artistic traditions associated with other cultures. In recalling the work they have done pupils show a familiarity with the work of artists as varied as Leonardo da Vinci and Modigliani but most of their knowledge is of painters in the European tradition. Pupils are beginning to use the art programmes available on the computer to support their learning in art and design, but this area of their work is underdeveloped.
130. The quality of teaching in art and design is satisfactory in both key stages. Individual lessons are often well taught, but there are weaknesses in teaching in both key stages, which arise from the lack of a cohesive whole-school curriculum. This makes it difficult for teachers to build effectively on what the pupils already know and can do, and has led to some gaps in pupils' knowledge. A strength of teaching is the way in which some teachers encourage and promote creativity, and this is evident by the individual outcomes which reflect the pupils' own interpretations. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the school and there are occasions when teachers over-direct activities with the result that the outcomes are all very similar. Where the best teaching occurs, there are good opportunities for pupils to compare their own work with that of their classmates, or in some cases, the work of well-known artists. These opportunities heighten the pupils' awareness of their own learning. All teachers value the work done by their pupils, and do their best to display it to maximum advantage. Pupils take pride in pointing their work out to others, and are keen to explain its origins. Pupils experience a good range of activities and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Behaviour in class is very good and pupils are always ready to share resources with one another when they work. Currently too little use is made of homework to extend the pupils' learning, and in particular, insufficient use is made of sketchbooks in Key Stage 2 for the collection of preparatory materials and ideas.

131. The leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory in the past, with little monitoring of teaching and learning to focus school development, and to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The new co-ordinator is keen to raise standards in the subject, and has already recognised the need for the school to develop or adopt a whole-school art and design curriculum that will ensure that pupils make steady progress in terms of the skills, knowledge and understanding they acquire as they move through the school. Teachers make good ongoing informal assessments of the pupils' progress and attainment, but there are currently no formal systems in place making it difficult for teachers to track and monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. Basic resources are satisfactory overall but there are shortages in support materials such as textbooks, examples of the work of well-known artists, and information and communication technology software. The shared accommodation presents some organisational problems, although these classes benefit from access to purpose built 'wet areas'. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good opportunities in both key stages for the pupils to work collaboratively and to share the work of others, although even more opportunities for pupils to celebrate the art work beyond the European culture would enhance pupils' learning still further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Pupil's attainment is above national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Standards in both key stages have risen significantly since the time of the previous inspection.
133. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their basic skills in designing and making systematically. They gain experience of using a variety of tools and techniques and they begin to address the problem of making their designs work. During the course of the inspection pupils in Year 2 were observed making a large card, based on the design of a house. In order to complete the card they had to cut with accuracy, use a sense of proportion and hinge their design so that it opened in an appropriate manner. Some good links were made with previous work that had been done in art and design, relating to the way in which the texture and pattern of brickwork could be interpreted, and these links enhanced the pupils' learning. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand how to make moving and static models and they are beginning to come to terms with the idea that an initial design may be modified a number of times before the end product is suitable for its intended purpose. In their discussions pupils in Key Stage 1 evaluate the changes that they have made and the reasons for making them.
134. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to increase their knowledge and understanding of methods and materials. They work with materials of varying resistances and, partly as a result of their regular use of sketchbooks in art and design, they plan their designs properly and do not rush directly into the making stage. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils wrestled with the problem of making a product worthy of sale for raising funds at Christmas and were able to appreciate the problems faced by designers in the commercial world. In their discussions they showed a good understanding of the links between aesthetics and design, and realised that sometimes appearance might count for more than good function. The classteacher encouraged this spirit of enquiry with challenging questions and placed a high value on the pupils' responses, which raised their levels of confidence. Pupils have experience of using a satisfactory range of tools, although in discussion they expressed the view that they would like even more opportunity. All pupils are able to experience aspects of food technology as part of their learning at some point during their progress through the key stage. Currently

pupils do not make enough use of computers to support their learning in design and technology, and this is a proposed area of development.

135. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good, and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and they have high expectations of their pupils. They present lessons with high levels of enthusiasm and this motivates the pupils in their learning. Teachers use praise well to boost the pupils' confidence, and challenge them to experiment. A good example of this was seen during the inspection when the Year 1 teacher encouraged pupils to punch holes in their bookmarks to enable them to thread ribbon through. Where the very best teaching occurs, very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to consider the work of others, and to critically evaluate their own work. A very good example of this was seen during the inspection when the Year 4/Year 5 teacher showed pupils how to improve their cross-stitching, and through discussion led pupils to reaching conclusions about how their own work could be enhanced. Teachers create some very meaningful links between design and technology and other subjects and these links provide a meaningful context for the pupils' learning. However, currently not enough links are forged between design and technology and information and communication technology mainly because of a shortage of appropriate software. Pupils enjoy their design and technology lessons and have very positive attitudes to the subject. They willingly share equipment and ideas, and have a good subject vocabulary when discussing their work. Pupils of all ages and abilities concentrate well and are highly motivated. Design sheets accompany the pupils' displayed work, and the use of sketchbooks for preliminary ideas, and the level of recording are good. Limited use is made of homework to extend pupils' learning in the subject.
136. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and it is therefore not possible to evaluate the quality of her leadership and management. Nevertheless, there has been significant improvement since the time of the last inspection, mainly because of the introduction of a cohesive whole-school curriculum plan for the subject and better teaching, which is the result of the professional development of staff. Although teachers make effective ongoing assessments of the pupils' progress and attainment, there are no formal assessment systems in place to enable the progress of individual pupils to be closely tracked and monitored. There are enough resources to support teaching and learning, with the exception of software for information and communication technology which is unsatisfactory. The shared accommodation places some constraints on teachers, which are overcome because of the very good team spirit that prevails. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY

137. It is not possible to judge the pupils' attainment in geography at the end of either key stage. Only a small amount of work is recorded in pupils' books, and no lessons were observed during the inspection. Discussion with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 indicates that there is satisfactory coverage of the programmes of study, but does not provide enough evidence about the standards pupils attain and the progress they make. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment in geography was reported to be in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.
138. In Key Stage 1 the pupils appear to have a satisfactory knowledge of the immediate locality. Year 1 pupils have sorted photographs into buildings that are near and far away and have made a block graph of how they travel to school. They have formed

their own view about the area by looking for 'nice' and 'nasty' features. In Year 2, pupils have built on this foundation by looking in more detail at the local area, and have developed mapping skills as they drew their route to school. The pupils are introduced to the wider world through the travels of 'Paxton Bear'. Pupils have little recall of work about other localities.

139. Discussion with older pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrates that they have a good knowledge and understanding of rivers, and a good knowledge of the local area. However, when the pupils talk about other countries, it is unclear whether this is the result of what they have learned in school, or whether they have gained this knowledge from their home experiences. In Year 4/Year 5 the pupils have practised mapping skills and have used co-ordinates.
140. On the basis of the small amount of work available for analysis, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Throughout the school good use is made of the local area, and appropriate links are made with mathematics as the pupils draw charts to record information and information and communication technology to find information. The good quality of the presentation of work in the pupils' books, and the very positive comments made by the older pupils, indicate that pupils have very good attitudes to the subject.
141. The leadership and management of the subject have been unsatisfactory in the past, and there has been no monitoring of teaching or learning to highlight areas for development. The new co-ordinator is very keen to see the subject develop, and has recognised that the curriculum needs to be reviewed so that there is a cohesive whole-school approach to the teaching of geography that takes account of what the pupils already know and can do. Assessment in geography is unsatisfactory. There are currently no formal assessment systems in place to enable the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment as they move through the school, although teachers know the pupils well and make regular ongoing assessments. The policy document is several years old, and takes no account of recent revisions to the National Curriculum, inclusion issues, or the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good use is made of educational visits and these help to encourage the pupils' social and cultural development. There are sufficient resources.

HISTORY

142. The pupils' attainment is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations at the end of key Stage 2. At the last inspection standards were reported to be in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have declined as a result of teacher changes, which have been exacerbated by the lack of a whole-school cohesive curriculum plan. In addition, some of the Key Stage 1 activities are not sufficiently closely linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Although pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in terms of the activities they undertake, their progress over time is unsatisfactory because of gaps in their knowledge and understanding and in their historical enquiry skills.
143. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of some of the differences between the past and the present through their study of houses. Year 1 pupils have made good use of the village website to look at old and new houses, and have followed this up by identifying clothing from the past and the present. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand that old toys were made from quite different

materials than those of the present, and that this is a way of dating artefacts. Pupils' knowledge of important historical figures and events is very limited and this is a weakness in their learning.

144. Year 6 pupils have good recall of their work in history and have very positive attitudes to the subject. They demonstrate a secure understanding of chronology as they talk about the Ancient Egyptians, the Tudors and Stuarts, the Victorians and the Second World War. Pupils know significant developments and events in each of the periods they have studied, and this is a strong feature of their learning. For example, in a lesson seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 3/Year 4 talked about why bananas were in short supply during World War II, and understood what is meant by rationing. Pupils access historical information from different sources, including the library, CD ROMs and the information provided by their teachers, but not all pupils are secure in their grasp of the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence.
145. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but there are some weaknesses that are linked to the lack of good quality whole-school planning. Individual lessons are well planned and prepared but do not always take full account of what the pupils already know and can do. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, and enthuse the pupils. In a lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher brought the era of World War II to life for the pupils and made an effective link between home and school when she asked the pupils to compare their current food consumption with what was available on ration. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and are keen to find things out. Their work is well presented. Only limited use is made of homework to extend the pupils' learning and even more could be done in some classes to encourage pupils to use computers for historical research.
146. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very keen to develop the subject, but has not yet had time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The school has recognised the need to develop a more effective whole-school curriculum plan for history which would show clearly the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to acquire as they move through the school. This would enhance the pupils' long-term progress and would make it easier for teachers to cope with the mixed age classes. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall and teachers are unable to track and monitor the progress of pupils as they move through the school. The policy document for the subject is out of date and does not reflect the recent revisions to the National Curriculum. Good use is made of educational visits to places of historical interest and these are very effective in promoting aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are sufficient resources to enable the curriculum to be delivered to pupils of all abilities, although the range of computer software is limited. Although the accommodation is spacious, the shared classrooms present organisational problems when teachers want to conduct practical lessons, or when they want pupils to work on independent tasks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. Pupils' attainment is below expectations at the end of each key stage. The dip in standards since the time of the last inspection is because the school has been unable to keep pace with the rising demands in the subject. This is because of staffing changes and also because of the difficulties posed by the organisation of the computers in the school. It is very difficult for teachers to conduct whole-class or group activities because, although there are enough computers overall, they are grouped in such a way that only small numbers of pupils can gather round them at any one time. Although pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory

progress in the activities they undertake, their overall progress over time is unsatisfactory. This is because of limited direct teaching and lack of opportunities for the pupils to practise their skills and to increase their knowledge.

148. In Key Stage 1 the pupils use computers regularly for word processing. They confidently enter titles for stories, change the font size and know how to print their work. Pupils have some experience of using the paint programme, and Year 1 pupils have recently used the computer to draw a picture of their favourite meal. Pupils' mouse control is at the expected level for their age, and most find their way around the keyboard with reasonable levels of dexterity. Pupils have limited opportunities to use the programmable toy, and to learn how commands can control external events, and this is an aspect of their learning where more could be done.
149. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils continue to use computers for word-processing, but they do not make enough use of computers for editing and drafting their written work, and tend to regard 'computers' more as a subject than as a tool for learning. Pupils make some use of computers for research, and use CD ROMs and the Internet, but opportunities are limited. Pupils have not yet had opportunity to use electronic mail in school, but most have experience of this from home. Pupils develop their use of computers for collecting and handling data and know how to produce charts and graphs. Pupils have a satisfactory appreciation of the use of computers in the world in which they live, and a growing understanding of their potential for transmitting information worldwide.
150. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory within the narrow range of activities that is offered to pupils. Weaknesses in teaching arise from the lack of opportunities for teachers to give whole-class or large group lessons, and the lack of appropriate software for some subjects. During the inspection, good use was made of a teaching assistant in the Year 4/Year 5 class, who entered the text into the computer, that the teacher had modelled on the white board, and produced copies for each pupil to use later in the lesson. The pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and co-operate well when they work together on the computers.
151. It is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator, as she is very new to the post. The school has already identified information and communication technology as an area of whole-school development and recognises that the resources need reorganising so that pupils and teachers can have easier and more frequent access to the computers. The school effectively monitors pupils' progress and attainment and tries hard to redress any weaknesses in the school curriculum. For example, during the last school year, a residential visit to an activity centre was arranged, so that pupils could have good access to computers and different programmes. The school knows that cross-curricular links need to be developed further and is keen to introduce pupils to electronic mail. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development as they work together co-operatively, often with higher attainers helping those who are experiencing some difficulties.

MUSIC

152. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. Not enough has been done to raise standards in music, and this is mainly because of significant staff changes, resulting in the lack of clear leadership for the subject over the past few years. The school does not have a

comprehensive scheme of work to guide the teaching of music, and this means that non-specialist teachers do not have enough support when planning lessons. Although individual teachers often plan lessons well, and provide some good musical experiences for the pupils, these activities are often taught in isolation and do not take sufficient account of what the pupils already know and can do. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, but their progress in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory, especially in the element of composing where there are too few creative music making opportunities.

153. The quality of singing is good throughout the school, although musically some of the songs are insufficiently challenging for the older and higher attaining pupils. Whole school assemblies provide very good daily opportunities for the pupils to sing to the accompaniment of recorded music, or live music, which is provided by the school 'band', which consists of recorders, guitars and percussion instruments. Pupils of all ages sing with very good levels of enthusiasm, and older Key Stage 2 pupils join in well and set a very good example for the younger pupils. In a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 6 pupils very quickly learned and then confidently performed a song from 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. Following the good advice from their teacher, they varied the tone of their voices to capture the different characters of Bottom and Titania. In this lesson pupils achieved particularly good standards when they were encouraged to improvise simple melodic patterns using their voices, and they did this with very good levels of confidence and high levels of enjoyment.
154. Pupils throughout the school have satisfactory opportunities to listen to and appraise recorded music, but appraising activities are not systematically planned in either key stage, and there is not enough progression in this aspect of pupils' learning. Each day, pupils of all ages are encouraged to listen attentively to the music that is played as they enter the hall for assembly. This music is varied, and during the inspection, pupils enjoyed and appreciated the distinct characteristics of African music. Year 4/Year 5 pupils have recent experience of listening to extracts of 'Finlandia' by Sibelius, and understand that this music is strongly patriotic, but are unable to link it with other composers of pieces that follow the same theme. Pupils in both key stages are familiar with appraising music in dance lessons, and understand that music conveys different moods. However, pupils lack knowledge of the work and styles of composers from different eras and traditions, and do not have the necessary musical vocabulary to explain elements of music such as texture and timbre.
155. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain satisfactory standards in their composing work. They generate and repeat different clapping patterns, and combine them to produce simple accompaniments to their singing. Pupils distinguish easily between high/low, fast/slow sounds and are familiar with the sounds produced by a wide range of percussion instruments. A weakness in pupils' learning is the lack of opportunity for them to compose pieces that are not directed and guided by the teacher. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' composing skills are below the expected level. Pupils have difficulty in sustaining different rhythmic patterns when they are combined, and have little experience of devising their own compositions. In a lesson seen during the inspection, Year 4/Year 5 pupils successfully composed a piece using body percussion, but needed a great deal of support from their teacher to organise their ideas.
156. The teaching of music is satisfactory in both key stages, but weaknesses in the curriculum prevent the Key Stage 2 pupils from making the progress of which they are capable. Individual teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching, and this is communicated to the pupils who respond with high levels of interest and motivation. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils create a very positive learning

environment and this means that pupils are willing to take risks in their learning without fear of failure. In some lessons, activities are over-directed by the teachers, and this constrains the pupils' creativity. Although no teacher is a 'specialist' all have sufficient knowledge to deliver the National Curriculum programmes of study, and there are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. Currently little use is made of homework or information and communication technology to extend the pupils' learning, and these are areas which could be further improved.

157. The leadership and management of music have been unsatisfactory in the past and not enough has been done since the last inspection to raise standards at the end of Key Stage 2. The new co-ordinator is very keen and enthusiastic, and has recognised the need to provide staff with clear guidance about what is to be taught so that pupils can make systematic progress in the development of skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Currently there are no formal systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress in music, although teachers know the pupils well, and identify those who are struggling and those who may have a particular talent. The accommodation makes it extremely difficult for classes in shared classrooms to carry out music lessons in class, and there is a need for more flexible timetabling so that teachers can make the best use of the hall or library area when they are available. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as there are many shared opportunities for the whole school to experience the pleasure of singing together and some good opportunities for pupils to listen to the music of other cultures when they enter and leave the hall for assemblies. However, with a more systematic programme for pupils to appraise music, these opportunities could be further enhanced and extended.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, and this represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection. During the course of the year, pupils have experience of all elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study, but during the inspection, only gymnastics, dance and games activities were seen. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils swim the recommended twenty five metres.
159. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show satisfactory levels of co-ordination when they move around the hall. They make satisfactory progress as they respond to different types of music, interpreting it through their movements. Most pupils understand the impact of exercise on their bodies and understand the need for 'warm-up' sessions. Pupils work well with partners and show good levels of co-operation, but do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work, or that of others, so that they can improve the quality of their performance.
160. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 2, and by the end of the key stage most achieve the expected level in gymnastics work and in games activities. Most pupils show satisfactory levels of control when rolling, jumping, balancing and travelling on the floor and on apparatus. They link movements together to form short sequences but their performances are not always sufficiently fluid. Pupils are often original in their gymnastics work, and use a variety of different jumps when moving from boxes and platforms to ground level. Where teachers encourage pupils to evaluate the performance of others, this serves to focus their minds on how they can improve their own work further. Pupils make perceptive but positive comments about how well their classmates stretch, or use the apparatus, and there is often spontaneous applause when individuals achieve a feat of some distinction.

161. Key Stage 2 pupils regularly play hockey and other ball games such as football and netball. They work well together in teams and recognise the value of the 'team approach'. Where the teachers gives them specific targets for improvement within the lesson, pupils respond well and improve their performance. Most pupils show good levels of control when they pass the ball to their partners using chest or bounce passes, and they catch and throw over appropriate distances. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand tactics of attacking and defending, and their skills in this aspect of their work are at a satisfactory level.
162. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory throughout the school, and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching is variable however, and is determined by the expertise and knowledge of individual teachers. Where the best teaching occurs, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of their classmates, but this good practice is not a consistent feature of all lessons. Most teachers provide good support for pupils in lessons, and show them how they can improve their work further. When this happens, pupils respond well and willingly take on board the teachers' suggestions. Teachers in both key stages pay good attention to matters of health and safety, and regularly remind pupils about the need to ensure that apparatus is handled and set up correctly. Generally lessons move at a good pace, and contain a variety of activities that maintain the pupils' interest and concentration, but where teaching is less satisfactory there is not always enough sense of urgency in the lesson.
163. The co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject and it is not possible therefore to judge the quality of leadership and management. However, the improvements that have occurred since the last inspection indicate that leadership and management of the subjects were previously at least satisfactory. The school currently does not have formal assessment procedures for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and attainment, but individual teachers make and record informal observations during lessons and have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the learning of individual pupils. Curriculum coverage is satisfactory overall, and good use is made of residential visits for Key Stage 2 pupils to extend their learning through participating in outdoor adventurous activities. The accommodation is good for physical education, and pupils benefit from a good sized hall and ample outdoor space. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, and there are opportunities for older Key Stage 2 pupils to take part in inter-school tournaments. These additional activities successfully promote pupils' social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

164. Pupils' attainment is above expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs make good progress. There has been good improvement since the time of the last inspection, and the school is very well placed for further and continued improvement.
165. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure understanding and knowledge of many aspects of Christianity and other world faiths. They are aware, mainly from the good links with the local church, that churches are important buildings in the community. The school receives regular visits from the local minister and she is a popular figure amongst the pupils. Pupils are able to visit the church and gain an insight into some of its artefacts, and this first hand experience has a positive impact on their learning. Studies of other faiths allow pupils to gain an appreciation of the widespread worship of the same God and they know that a number of faiths can be

found amongst the population of the United Kingdom. Most pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading and listening to Bible stories, and confidently name significant days and dates in the Christian Year. They are aware of the distinction between ceremonies and festivals, and can explain Diwali as a Festival of Light. Pupils have a growing understanding of the Islam faith, and make good comparisons between aspects of Islam and aspects of Christianity. For example, they know that Moslems worship in a mosque and that this building has the same importance as the church for Christians. They recognise that all faiths follow a set of rules, and know of the Ten Commandments. Pupils are less secure in their knowledge of the Five Pillars of Islam, but know some of the important rituals that Moslems observe.

166. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, and gain a good understanding of the complex nature of the relationship between the worlds' great faith groups. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 they confidently describe the similarities and differences between Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. They know the importance of the sacred texts to each religion and have a good knowledge of the Bible and its component parts. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 can described the moral message of many of the stories told by or associated with Jesus. They know that Judaism uses many aspects of the Old Testament, and have a good understanding of the Ten Commandments. Pupils understand the nature of worship and appreciate the importance of sacred buildings to the different faiths they have studied.
167. The teaching of religious education is good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned and prepared and link closely to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers encourage pupils to examine their thoughts and feelings and they promote the tolerance of other beliefs and faiths, and this is effective in promoting the pupils' spirituality. Pupils respond well to their teacher's high expectations and behave very well in lessons. Resources are used well to extend and enhance the pupils' learning, and they are generally satisfactory in range and quality. However, there is a lack of religious books in the school library. Although pupils' learning is well supported by visits to the local church, and further afield to Ely Cathedral, not enough use is made of information and communication technology to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion. Little use is made of homework and this is an aspect that could be improved.
168. The leadership and management of the subject have been good in the past, enabling the school to make good progress since the last inspection. Teachers make good informal assessments of pupils' progress and attainment and know the pupils well. However, there are no formal assessment procedures in place to enable teachers to track the learning of individual pupils as they move through the school. There are weaknesses in the accommodation which adversely impact on teaching and learning in the shared classrooms where the natural noise level affects all groups of pupils.