

INSPECTION REPORT

**SIR ROBERT HITCHAM'S CE PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Debenham, Stowmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124774

Headteacher: Mr C J Bishop

Reporting inspector: Mrs R S Rodger
10347

Dates of inspection: 30th June – 3rd July 2003

Inspection number: 248629

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Corner
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Stowmarket

Postcode: IP14 6PL

Telephone number: 01728 860201

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Palframan

Date of previous inspection: March 1998

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10347	Mrs R S Rodger	Registered inspector	English The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Educational inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2756	Mr M Barron	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32303	Mr S Dell	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sir Robert Hitcham's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in the small, socially advantaged village of Debenham, about 10 miles from Stowmarket in Suffolk. About one fifth of the pupils attending the school live some distance away. There are 209 pupils on roll including 22 pupils who attend the nursery every morning. There are an equal number of boys and girls in the school, although currently the nursery has 17 girls and five boys on roll. The proportion of pupils who joined and left the school other than at the usual time of first admission is low. The school is about the same size as other primary schools. It has eight classes, including a nursery class where children attend daily for half a day. The largest proportion of pupils is white British, with a small number of mixed race pupils. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. A well below average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal, which is below the figure at the time of the last inspection. Five per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, including four pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is well below the national average. The pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical difficulties. Attainment on entry to the nursery is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good, effective school. Pupils of all abilities, especially higher attaining pupils achieve very well. The attitudes, values and personal relationships throughout the school are excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall; there is some excellent and very good teaching. The curriculum is very good and is considerably enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school activities and visits. Leadership and management are strong. The climate for learning is very good. Taking into account the above average attainment on entry, the good achievement the pupils make throughout the school, the average unit costs and the overall effectiveness, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in Year 6 are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science.
- Standards in Year 2 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher is very good; he is very effectively supported by the governing body.
- The quality and range of the curriculum, including the provision for out-of-school activities are very good.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
- The partnership with parents is very good.
- The care and welfare of the pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- The provision for information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2.

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 March 1998. There has been a good rate of improvement since then. Effective steps have been taken to improve the achievement of higher attaining pupils. Arrangements for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment are more rigorous. Pupils are given an appropriate amount of homework and there is very good monitoring of absences. However, improvements to information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 are limited and this is still an area for development identified by the school and the inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A	A	C
mathematics	A*	A	B	C
science	A*	A*	A	B

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table above refers to the standards achieved by pupils who left the school in July 2002. The average standards achieved compared to schools in similar circumstances in English and mathematics last year have been tackled well with the result that the more recent 2003 national test results show a good improvement in standards by Year 6 in reading and mathematics and standards have been maintained in science. There has been a good rate of improvement since 2002 in raising standards in mathematics and science with almost half of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher Level 5. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in writing is too low at ten per cent compared to 71 per cent achieving Level 5 in reading. Standards in lessons are well above average in mathematics and above average in science and English. They are above average in all other subjects. The 2003 national test results for Year 2 pupils have maintained the well above average levels of last year. All pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 and more than half achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and in the teacher assessments in science, with more than a third achieving Level 3 in writing and 44 per cent doing so in mathematics. Standards on entry to the school are above average. Pupils are articulate and by the time they start in Year 1 standards are at least above average and in some areas of learning they are well above average. The school's trend in results is in line with the national upward trend. The school has exceeded its targets this year. Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards in all other subjects are above average, apart from design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education, which are average by Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their difficulties.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to be involved in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and around the school. There are a small number of boys in Year 3 whose behaviour is sometimes challenging.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and personal development throughout the school are excellent. Pupils respond especially well to the many opportunities provided for them to use their initiative and become independent learners.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. Pupils are punctual and keen to come to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. There is some very good and some excellent teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good throughout the school. A good emphasis is given to teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, especially in other subjects such as history and geography. Pupils show very good levels of interest, concentrate and work well in pairs and small groups. Teaching in the nursery class is very good. It is good overall in the Foundation Stage. Where teachers have high expectations, use a range of innovative teaching methods and make very explicit what pupils are expected to learn, pupils make very good progress. Support staff make a very strong contribution to the work of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils also make good progress. Where teaching is less effective there is a lack of challenge that at times leads to some minor misbehaviour as a result of boredom and lack of involvement in discussions because work is too easy. Informal assessment through questioning and using information from tests is effective, although the quality of marking is very variable throughout the school with too much unmarked work in the books of some pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. A wide range of out-of-school activities very effectively enriches the curriculum. Very good use is made of visits and the outdoor environment to enhance learning. The school meets all statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has a very inclusive ethos and the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in lessons is well established and effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils with English as an additional language in the school
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This is a strength of the school and an improvement since the previous inspection. The provision for moral and social development is excellent. The school's strong Christian ethos has helped to develop a climate in which pupils can grow and flourish.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a very happy, safe and caring environment in which to learn. Adults know the pupils and their families well.

Parents hold very positive views about the school. The very good partnership has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school and makes strong contribution to children's learning by helping at home with reading and other homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher and key staff, including the deputy headteacher, is very good. They are very effective in creating a strong climate for learning. They all work very hard and give substantial additional time to the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a very clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well informed and use their professional expertise to very good effect, especially in relation to performance management. Statutory duties are fulfilled very effectively. Lines of communication between the governors and the school work very well. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall, although the headteacher has a very good understanding of the school's areas for improvement, staff with responsibilities have less opportunity to check the overall quality of teaching. This is a school area for development. Arrangements for checking the development of the headteacher and staff are robust and efficient.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is very efficiently and prudently managed and expenditure is targeted to benefit the pupils. The principles of best value are applied very well; resources are managed efficiently; performance is compared to other schools and high quality appointments have been made in recent years.

The accommodation is good. There is good access for pupils with disabilities and recent improvements to the provision in the Foundation Stage are an asset. The hall is narrow and almost too small for the classes of older pupils. Resources are good. There is a good supply of computers, but they are not very accessible to pupils in Years 1 and 2.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school and make good progress. • Teaching is good and their children behave well. • Their children are expected to work hard and are helped to become mature and responsible. • Parents are kept well informed and would feel very happy to approach the school if they had concerns. • They feel that the school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no aspects of the school's work that parents would like to see improved.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive comments by the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally above average, especially in speaking and listening. They are confident and have a wide range of pre-school experiences they are keen to talk about. They listen to questions and follow instructions well. A small group of children played with puppets, took on a role and took it in turns to entertain a small audience with their story. Mathematical skills are also above average. Many children count forwards and backwards to 20 with great confidence and accuracy. By the time the children leave the nursery, standards of attainment remain above average and in some areas of learning, notably writing and reading, they are well above average. Standards in the reception class are consistently above average, with many children already working in line with the National Curriculum targets in all areas of learning.
2. By Year 2, standards of attainment are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and in science. These standards are reflected in the 2003 unvalidated national test results which show that all pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Fifty-six per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, 36 per cent in writing and 44 per cent in mathematics. A similar proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels in the teacher assessments in science and all pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2. This is a good achievement building on the above average attainment on entry to the school. The school has maintained the high standards from last year. In relation to similar schools, the standards achieved in 2002 were well above average in reading and in line with the top five per cent of schools nationally in writing and mathematics. There is no comparative data available, as yet, to say that this is the case in 2003.
3. By Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. This is an improvement on the standards achieved in the 2002 national tests which were average compared to similar schools in English and mathematics and above average in science. The unvalidated results of the 2003 national tests in English show that 94 per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4. Seventy-one per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in reading, but only ten per cent of pupils did so in writing. Ninety per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 in mathematics, including almost half of the class achieving the higher Level 5. Results in science are similar with the same proportion of pupils achieving Level 5. As a result of the slightly lower standards achieved last year, the school has rightly made higher standards in English and mathematics in 2003 a priority. This has been achieved. The school has exceeded its targets. There are significant improvements in the standards achieved in the national tests this year in English and mathematics. Ninety-four per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4, compared with 86 per cent last year in English. Ninety per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 in mathematics compared with 81 per cent last year. The well above average standards achieved in science have been maintained.
4. Standards of attainment are above average throughout the school in art and design, geography, history, and music. They are above average in design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education by Year 6 and average by Year 2 in design and technology, information and communication

technology and physical education. Pupils in Year 5 achieve very well. Many are already achieving the higher Level 5 in English. This is a direct result of the very good teaching in that year group. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They are well supported by knowledgeable and well-skilled classroom assistants. Higher attaining pupils are very well challenged at all times. As a result, partly of the impressive ways they take responsibility for their own learning, all pupils achieve well.

5. Pupils throughout the school have very good communication skills. They take part in a lively debate and can express their views convincingly and put forward strong arguments to defend their beliefs. Year 6 pupils learn to compare the Caribbean Creole dialect with Standard English. The good standards in information and communication technology achieved by Year 6 are reflected in the skilled use made of the subject to support learning in other subjects. In geography, for example, using the Internet, pupils gathered a wide range of data. Older pupils made a PowerPoint presentation to support new parents in their tour around the school. There are no differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. From the time pupils start in the nursery they have an excellent attitude towards school. In all classes pupils are extremely articulate, enthusiastic and eager to be involved in all learning activities. This makes a strong contribution to their progress and personal development and is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, are happy and enjoy learning. The school is a very pleasant and orderly establishment where pupils get on very well together and are supportive and caring of each other. Parents are very positive in their view that pupils behave well and this is closely linked to the school's high expectations. During the majority of lessons pupils concentrate well on their work both independently and when working in groups. They listen attentively to their teachers and eagerly respond to questions and challenging tasks and topics. For example, during a very well organised debate on the good and bad effects of tourism, pupils in Year 6 displayed a very mature attitude and outstanding debating skills. Pupils very sensibly took turns to share their views thoughtfully with confidence and conviction and listened very attentively to each other. In all classes pupils share resources sensibly and co-operatively, often helping each other to make choices and to apply skills. Pupils in Year 5 worked very well together during an information and communication technology lesson when they willingly offered each other advice and support when sharing a work station. Pupils throughout the school are very friendly and polite, holding doors open and exchanging pleasantries. The helpful and courteous welcome which pupils give to visitors is a significant strength of the school. Children in the nursery and reception class settle quickly into very well organised and established routines and they are happy and secure.
7. Behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent. The high standard of behaviour has been well maintained since the last inspection. Whilst the majority of pupils behave in a very mature and self-controlled manner, there are a small number of boys in Year 3 whose behaviour is occasionally challenging. Pupils value the school's very positive system of reward and celebration for good work and behaviour and enjoy winning certificates and stars. Through the school's very caring ethos and the excellent adult role models pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils behave very well during assemblies, even when they are not directly involved, and they enter and leave the hall in a very quiet and respectful manner. They play very harmoniously together in the playground and older pupils behave very

responsibly when caring for the younger ones. In the dining hall, pupils are polite and well behaved as they sit together in social groups to eat packed and cooked meals. Incidents of bullying or harassment of any kind are very rare and pupils and their parents are confident that any problems are dealt with promptly and effectively. There have been no exclusions during the last academic year.

8. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils in all classes have a very happy and friendly relationship with the headteacher, class teachers and classroom assistants. This has a very positive effect on pupils' self-esteem and personal achievements that are constantly recognised and congratulated. Pupils with special educational needs are very well included by their peers and their contributions are valued by all. The excellent relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school contribute very effectively to the standards achieved.
9. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities for them to use their own initiative and to become independent learners. This is a significant strength of the school. In all classes, pupils very willingly and confidently take responsibility for special jobs in classrooms and assemblies, and they ring the bell and help as door monitors. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 act as receptionists in the office at lunchtime, answering the telephone and welcoming visitors. Each year pupils in Year 6 confidently organise 'The World's Biggest Coffee Morning' for the village in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Relief fund. Children in the nursery have a strong sense of responsibility as they help to tidy up, select their own activity and choose a partner to work with. The newly formed school council is taken very seriously by pupils in Years 5 and 6, with elected representatives who are currently discussing plans to develop the provision for playground equipment. Although younger pupils have the opportunity to meet with the older ones to express their ideas, representatives are not elected from the younger classes and this is insufficient to formally ensure that all pupils have a voice in the running of the school. Many pupils take part in an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs, regular visits to places of cultural and educational interest including a residential trip for older pupils. Through the many very good learning opportunities pupils are developing very good personal and social skills.
10. Attendance is good and at 95.7 per cent is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. A significant number of pupils take holidays during term time although this is discouraged by the school. The majority of pupils are punctual as they are very keen to come to school. A small number of pupils are regularly late by a few minutes in the morning. Lessons start promptly and pupils enjoy an efficient and well-ordered start to the day. This has a very positive effect on their attitude towards school and on their achievements and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Teaching is excellent in four per cent of lessons, very good in five per cent, good in 66 per cent, satisfactory in 23 per cent and unsatisfactory in two per cent. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in the nursery. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage. Teaching in all subjects is good throughout the school. There are examples of very good teaching in information and communication technology and physical education in Year 6 and in English in Year 2. Two excellent lessons in English were observed in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Higher attaining pupils are now effectively challenged and reach their full potential. The very good behaviour management has been maintained.

12. Features of the good teaching in the Foundation Stage includes very effective deployment of support staff, lively and interesting activities which very effectively help to promote the children's concentration and independence in the nursery. At all times, the children take good responsibility for their learning. For example, a group of children used the puppet theatre effectively to take on the roles of seaside characters and sustain a dialogue between them in role. Small group work is carefully planned to build on prior learning and is very challenging. A group of children listened attentively to the instructions to listen to words and name the initial letter and the sound it made. Good use is made of the outdoor environment to extend the curriculum in the nursery, but less so in the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class. The use of the outdoor environment does not feature prominently enough on the weekly planning.
13. Behaviour is excellent. The children listen carefully and obey instructions when required. The management of the mixed-age class of Year 1 and reception-aged pupils is very efficient. Teachers have very high expectations of the children. The children work in their age group for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This arrangement works effectively and ensures that the appropriate basic skills are very well taught to the children. Assessment is generally informal and unobtrusive. Detailed records of achievement are kept up to date via the informal assessments carried out day-by-day. There is very good liaison with parents and they make a good contribution to children's learning, especially in the development of reading skills.
14. In Years 1 and 2, a strong feature of the teaching is the good emphasis given to teaching the basic skills in English and mathematics, but also in other subjects, especially history. For example, in Year 2, pupils learned how to compile a guide to Mountfitchet castle. Following a whole-class session, that introduced the pupils to the ways of writing a guide, the pupils combined their prior learning about alliteration and adjectives as they started by compiling lists of requirements to include 'scrumptious sandwiches' and 'lightweight, disposable camera'. Very good use is made of the classroom assistants and voluntary support staff. They are knowledgeable and well-briefed as to their roles and responsibilities. Lessons are generally very well resourced. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is used well to adjust the requirements of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to other subjects. There is, however, too little use made of information and communication technology to support learning, especially in English. Planning is good and pupils generally behave well. Year 1 pupils in the mixed-age class, at times, are sometimes not challenged enough in the teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics. Year 1 pupils are keen and exuberant and have high levels of intellectual curiosity. As a result, they are challenging and are quick to chatter between themselves. In lessons, where necessary talk is required, the management of the lesson includes a slot of time for this. This is effective. Work is marked satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2.
15. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is good. A strength of the teaching is the high level of challenge. In physical education, Year 6 pupils were encouraged to reflect on their performance and improve their movements, resulting in very good achievement throughout the lesson. An effective English lesson was characterised by very high quality recapitulation of prior learning about connectives and descriptive writing, clear and precise instruction and demonstration to encourage Year 5 pupils to think about what they had to do before starting their work. In this excellent lesson, good use was made of information and communication technology to help pupils to design reports by importing WordArt and designing headlines which enhanced their work. Pupils are well managed and work well in lessons when they are appropriately challenged. This

is less evident in Year 3, where a lack of challenge leads to a small number of pupils losing interest. When learning intentions are shared with pupils either orally or displayed, for example in Year 4, there is a much clearer purpose to the lesson, and pupils understand what they have to do. Overall, the quality of marking in Years 3 to 6 is mixed, but frequently unsatisfactory. Teachers make some reference to targets or make points for improvement but too much work is unmarked.

16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In most classes teachers are aware of these pupils, even though in some cases these needs are not significant. Learning difficulties are well catered for and extra provision is well matched to personal and educational needs. Pupils are usually well supported, both in class and also when given targeted teaching outside the classroom, either on an individual basis or in small groups for subjects such as English and mathematics. However, lesson planning does not always take account of targets in pupils' individual education plans and this can sometimes hinder their achievement.
17. The quality of learning overall is good. The effort and enthusiasm made by the pupils is a particular strength, especially in their independent work. Pupils concentrate and when interested and challenged, are very productive. For example, the Year 5 pupils' efforts to design a guide to Kentwell Hall Castle were exemplary.

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

18. Overall the school provides a very broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which more than meets statutory requirements, although provision for information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 is limited. However, the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are very good overall and this is reflected in the above average and sometimes well above average standards pupils achieve in nearly all subjects. Sex education and drugs awareness education are both provided as part of wider class topics in a broad programme of personal, social and health education, which aims to involve both parents and pupils. The school has maintained the very good range of learning opportunities since the previous inspection and improved the provision for higher attaining pupils.
19. The Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the requirements of the six areas of learning. Many reception-aged children in the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class are now working within the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is entirely appropriate at this stage of the year. Good opportunities are provided in the nursery class to enhance the curriculum by using the outdoor environment to support learning. This is less evident for the reception-aged children.
20. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and is reflected in the good progress made by this group of pupils as they progress through the school. The school has well-established and effective methods for ensuring that all pupils whatever their background or special educational needs, are fully included in all that it does. Efficient systems are in place for the early identification, monitoring and assessment of pupils with possible special educational needs. However, individual education plans do not adequately reflect the overall good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the school is aware that this is an area for development. Presently individual education plans are drawn up without the involvement of the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is seldom evidence of either parental or pupil involvement in either the initial or review stages of planning. As a result, individual education plans are inconsistent and often feature inappropriate targets and success criteria for pupils to achieve.

21. The school has developed very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills and this is reflected in the attainment of pupils in these subjects at Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers work co-operatively to plan the curriculum and, at present, the match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good overall and this assists most pupils to achieve well in nearly all year groups within the school.
22. Provision for out-of-school activities is excellent and pupils have access to a wide range of clubs and other activities aiming to improve skills and understanding in a variety of sporting, musical and artistic areas. These include football, rugby and swimming clubs as well as science, chess and writing clubs. All staff are involved in providing activities outside lessons. An understanding of the wider world is enhanced through regular off-site visits for pupils, including trips to Derbyshire and to Euro Disney in Paris. Pupils also travel less far afield to sites of historical interest. An awareness of the need to care for the environment is effectively fostered via the 'Eco' school status. Pupils understand the importance of recycling.
23. Provision for the personal, social and health education is good. Pupils enjoy each other's company and happily help other pupils if the need arises. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their overall behaviour and are used to working together co-operatively. All year groups follow a relevant curriculum geared to a gradual building up of understanding about self and society.
24. Links with the local community are very good. The school makes effective use of the local leisure centre for sporting and other activities and, as a voluntary aided school, is also closely linked to the local church. In addition, pupils in Year 6 run an annual well attended coffee morning for people living in the village. Pupils are encouraged to be environmentally aware and the school has recently received a silver 'Eco-Schools' award for its activities in this area. It is also presently involved in initiatives to develop local woodland and Year 4 pupils have recently visited a local environmental education centre as part of their science studies.
25. Relationships between the school and partner institutions are very good and contribute very well to pupils' learning. The school is part of a cluster of local primary schools whose headteachers meet on a regular basis to plan, for example, joint in-service training courses for teachers. The school has a very good relationship with the local secondary school and this aids pupils to transfer to the secondary school easily at the age of eleven.
26. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. This strong provision makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and is recognised and much appreciated by parents.
27. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, and an improvement since the previous inspection. The school's Christian ethos has developed a climate within which pupils can grow and flourish. Staff and pupils show respect for each other and this is evident in the high quality of the relationships and the values the school promotes. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives. This is further reinforced by the thoughtful daily acts of collective worship which allow pupils time for reflection. Pupils are also given very good opportunities to express their feelings and opinions in lessons. During a literacy project in Year 5, pupils displayed a very strong sense of empathy and understanding for others while discussing conditions during the Vietnam War. In Year 3, pupils expressed excitement and wonder during the emergence of butterflies from pupae. The good links with the church and local community further contribute to pupils' spiritual development. The school is now

beginning to assess the outcomes of pupil's spiritual development through informal discussions with pupils.

28. The provision for pupils' moral development is excellent, an improvement from the very good provision seen in the previous inspection. Pupils understand the need for rules both in class and the playground. This clear moral code forms a basis for the outstanding behaviour that is modelled consistently through the school. The school also provides many opportunities for pupils to develop self-esteem through praise given by staff in lessons and its longstanding system of awards in 'Spotlight' assemblies. Pupils use circle time to discuss appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and are well aware of the consequences of their actions. The teachers and pupils discuss selected topics very thoughtfully and sensitively. For example, Year 4 pupils discussed the moral implications of the effects of industrial development on a nature reserve. Their opinions on matters such as these are carefully considered and mature for their ages. Posters and images that challenge the pupils to think about their beliefs and behaviour further reinforce the school's values. Discussions of the lives of saints in assemblies provide models of moral and spiritual virtue.
29. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent and shows improvement from the previous inspection when it was very good. Relationships in the school are exceptional and pupils relate very well to other people in a variety of social contexts including assemblies, residential visits and after school activities. In lessons, pupils are given opportunities to work as members of a team or group. For example, pupils frequently need to co-operate in pairs when whole classes share equipment in the activity areas, as a result pupils spontaneously offer support and advice to their peers. Pupils show respect for equipment and the school environment. They take responsibility for distributing books, putting out equipment for assembly and keeping the classroom tidy. The school's system of prefects enables pupils to develop personal qualities, such as courtesy and respect, which are valued in society. Pupils supervise peers during lunch and wet play and answer the office telephones. A group of pupils also made an effective power point presentation for use at the annual meeting for new parents. The new school council is also beginning to provide opportunities for elected representatives to exercise leadership and responsibility, albeit, the membership is restricted to older pupils. Pupils have already secured funds from the friends of the school to improve the provision of equipment at playtime.
30. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery is developed through participation in Indian dance and African music sessions where they are given the opportunity to dress in traditional costume and play traditional instruments. Pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage is extended through trips to the docks at Felixstowe and visits from historical theatre groups. Each week, in assembly, pupils listen to world music such as Balinese Gamelan rhythms. Assemblies also celebrate festivals including Chinese New Year and Diwali, giving pupils the opportunity to appreciate cultural diversity and other people's values and beliefs. In art and design, pupils study the work of famous artists including Picasso, and express opinions on cubism. Pupils' use of cultural imagery is further encouraged, for example, through Kenyan artwork and pottery designs on St Lucian style tiles. The production of Islamic prayer mats featuring pupils most peaceful places, showed an understanding of the use of such imagery. However, the diversity of cultures within the wider community could still be used further to enrich the curriculum, and although provision is good there has been little improvement since the last inspection. The school has rightly identified the need to review planning to ensure that pupils have a regard for the heights of human achievement from all cultures and societies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The provision for the care and welfare of pupils is very good and is a strength of the school. The school is a very happy, safe and caring environment in which to learn. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after in school and that problems are quickly resolved. All adults in the school know the pupils and many of their families well, and they are very alert to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This has a very positive effect on pupils' attitude and behaviour and helps them to learn and gain in confidence. The school's policies provide very clear guidelines on all aspects of safety and pupils' welfare and take account of racial equality. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and this enables them to take full advantage of all educational opportunities. The induction procedures are good and the school ensures that children and their parents understand the organisation of the school to help young children to settle quickly into new routines. Pupils in Year 6 are well supported through good procedures to ensure a smooth transition into secondary education.
32. The health and safety policy is well implemented. The site and accommodation is well monitored and the buildings sub-committee produce an annual risk assessment report for the governing body. The caretaker and staff are vigilant in ensuring that any issues of safety are reported and promptly followed up. Very good attention is paid to the security and health and safety aspect relating to the outdoor swimming pool. Pupils are well supervised during lessons and in the playground and staff ensure that pupils always conduct themselves safely. Electrical equipment and physical education apparatus are checked regularly and fire drills are held each term. The provision for first aid is good with qualified first-aiders on site. All accidents are well recorded and parents are contacted when necessary.
33. Child protection procedures are very good and the policy provides clear guidelines in accordance with the Suffolk Area Child Protection Committee. The Year 5 teacher is the named designated person with overall responsibility and she works closely with the headteacher on any issues of concern. The designated person and a governor with responsibility have both attended a recent training course. The school has ensured that all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of the procedures through regular meetings and training sessions. All pupils have access to outside support agencies. Good up-to-date personal records are kept for all pupils and these include information about any pupil with special medical needs.
34. Since the last inspection the school has improved its procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and these are now very good. The school now has a system of monitoring holidays taken in term time and a late book is kept to record lateness. Registers are completed accurately and consistently. Parents support the school well by reporting absences promptly in the morning and a record is kept of reasons for non-attendance. A system of first day follow-up is now well established to monitor any unauthorised and unexplained absence. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and are followed consistently throughout the school. The manner in which pupils behave and their attitude towards self-discipline reflects the school's very good procedures and high expectations. Excellent procedures are in place to eliminate any bullying or oppressive behaviour which are closely linked to personal, health and social education and relationships. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' educational and personal development are very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and personal achievements are very well

monitored on an informal basis, including the celebration of success in out-of-school activities.

35. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good overall. Assessment procedures are generally clear, consistent and regularly carried out. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when the school's assessment of pupils' progress was judged to be broadly satisfactory. These improvements are based firmly on the shared and clear understanding by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff, of the purpose and use of assessment to raise standards.
36. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. As well as the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6, teachers carry out regular assessment of mathematics, reading, writing and spelling throughout the school. A wide range of standardised tests, including the optional National Curriculum assessments and standardised mathematics tests, are used to compare pupils' performance against national expectations. There is formal teacher assessment against National Curriculum level descriptors for all the foundation subjects and pupils' end-of-year attainment levels are entered into the local education authority software package used by the school for analysis. Teachers are due to receive training on moderation of writing to improve the consistency of these teacher assessments. On a day-to-day basis, co-ordinators and teachers identify learning objectives for each study unit and for individual lessons. They assess pupils' attainment against these criteria using well-planned tasks and their on-going professional judgement. In these ways teachers gather a considerable amount of information about their pupils that builds over time into a detailed picture of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, teachers know their classes well.
37. The school makes very good use of the wide range of assessment information available to inform planning for the whole school and individual pupils. The headteacher and key staff use new technology to carefully analyse the national test and assessment results in English, mathematics and science in order to make comparisons with other schools. They use predicted levels in order to track individual pupil progress and to identify any potential areas for development in the curriculum. The school systematically monitors the results and progress of different groups of pupils by gender, including those with special educational needs, to ensure that all enjoy equal opportunities. Teachers generally make good use of ongoing assessment to inform planning for follow up sessions, but the school does not always ensure that this informal day-to-day assessment made during lessons, is recorded and used consistently.
38. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are very good. Assessment information is also used to form teaching groups and to set challenging school and individual targets. For example, in English and mathematics the results of the optional Year 5 tests are used to identify groups of pupils who will require additional support to reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6. These pupils then receive booster classes in the appropriate subject(s). The school also makes good use of new technology to record National Curriculum levels for individual pupils as they move through the school. As a result, the pace of pupils' progress is easily and regularly reviewed. Targets and levels are also shared with pupils and parents, providing a clear focus for pupils' work at school and at home.
39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The personal development of pupils is central to the school's aims and their

progress is monitored informally by class teachers on a daily basis; any specific pastoral concerns are then raised at weekly staff meetings. Pupils are encouraged to achieve further as a result of regular praise and celebration by class teachers during lessons. Pupils are also awarded stickers for good behaviour and work. There is further recognition of academic and extra-curricular achievement, or valued personal qualities such as kindness or helpfulness, through announcements and presentation of certificates in assembly. During the inspection, pupils' raised self-esteem was clearly evident as they were seen to return brimming with pride following receipt of such awards. In addition, pupils who have achieved or behaved exceptionally well are recognised in special 'Spotlight' assemblies. Although each pupil keeps a portfolio of work there is no formal assessment or record of individual pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school has a very good partnership with parents and this has been well maintained since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive of the school and most make a strong contribution to children's learning by helping at home with reading and homework topics. This additional support has a very positive impact on pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. Parents are welcomed into the school and the vast majority feel that the school works closely with them. They are almost unanimous in their view that they find the school very approachable and are comfortable to ask questions and discuss any concerns with the headteacher and staff. Most parents hold the school in high regard and are very satisfied with their children's progress.
41. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have home/school journals and those in Years 5 and 6 have homework books. These are used effectively by some parents as an additional communication between home and school. A large number of parents help regularly in classrooms, listening to reading, assisting with swimming, cooking and sewing activities. More parents help when pupils go out on visits. During the inspection, several parents were observed listening to pupils read and helping with activities. The parent/volunteer helper information pamphlet which is made available to parents provides good quality helpful information about the school, their helping role and guidance on hearing children read. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well and invited to attend all assessment and review meetings. The Friends of Sir Robert Hitcham School are a very supportive group of parents who organise regular social events and raise considerable extra funding for the school. For example, the Friends financed the provision of changing rooms alongside the swimming pool that are now well used by pupils. A long-term goal for the parents is to raise funds to enclose the swimming pool.
42. The quality of information for parents is very good and parents feel well informed. The headteacher sends out regular newsletters containing a helpful amount of information about events and organisation. Class teachers provide parents with a curriculum newsletter each term which helps them to understand what is being taught and encourages them to help children at home. Separate newsletters from the nursery support parents well and inform them regularly about the activities in which their children are involved. Prior to induction into the nursery, parents and children visit the school and receive a very attractive booklet. They are encouraged to work through this together to provide the school with personal information and achievements. Regular consultation evenings each term and curriculum workshops such as the recent drugs awareness afternoon, are well attended by parents. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet the statutory requirements and both contain

a good amount of clear information about the school and the curriculum. Copies of the policies for admission, homework, complaints and the home school agreement are included.

43. Reports to parents are consistently very good and have improved since the last inspection. Parents are very satisfied with the quality of information they receive about progress. All subjects of the National Curriculum and areas of learning for the Foundation Stage are reported. The reports contain clear information about what has been taught and a very good amount of information about the pupils' response and academic progress. Results of reading and spelling scores and national test results are included. Targets for improvement are clearly stated for English, mathematics and science. The parent page encourages parental comments as well as requesting their agreement that they have been given a clear idea about their children's progress. The pupil page allows pupils to add their own comments about what they like best at school and their views on their own progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. Leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff is very good. A high priority is given to raising standards and meeting the high expectations of parents. The headteacher takes much of the responsibility for analysing national test data and providing everyone with the data analysis. The headteacher's analysis of the 2002 national test data is succinct and correctly identifies improvements in provision for higher attaining pupils throughout the school. The headteacher, staff and governors show a very strong commitment to the school that is evident through their hard work and involvement in the wider life of the school. The school has a very strong climate for learning that is very effectively fostered through the very high levels of interest and excellent attitudes of pupils to learning. Subject leaders are knowledgeable, several lead by example very effectively and all generally take good responsibility for the subjects overall, although the time to do this is limited in most of the foundation subjects.
45. Overall management is good. Arrangements for performance management are secure. The headteacher has been set challenging, but realistic, targets that are measurable and specific. Performance management governors have valued the support provided by their external adviser. Staff have been trained and involved in school self-evaluation to help identify their own strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that they have too little time to check the progress of subjects as rigorously as they wish. Nevertheless, standards are checked through a scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning. All staff are due to have further training on monitoring the teaching of subjects in the near future. Parents are well informed. Communication throughout the school is robust. The school has a strong sense of community and everyone, at all levels, from headteacher to classroom assistant, is valued for their strong contribution.
46. The leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator is satisfactory. Day-to-day support for pupils in class is effective as they achieve well, with many pupils reaching the nationally expected levels of attainment by the time they leave the school. The co-ordinator has many responsibilities in school and very little time to be fully effective in her role. Individual education plans, for example, have targets that are too broad. This may be a consequence of the lack of her involvement in drawing up the plans which are completed by teaching staff.

47. Governors are very well informed and hold the headteacher to account very effectively for the progress made by the pupils. The chair has a secure overview of the future needs of the school and keeps to the forefront of his thinking the need to increase pupil numbers to offset any shortfall in the budget as a consequence of external demands. Communication systems are robust and efficient. Governors are fully aware of the key strengths and weaknesses in the school. For example, the weaknesses in provision for information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 are fully understood. All governors attended a training day to inform them of the requirements of the racial equality policy and know there have been no racist incidents in school and of the procedures to follow should there be any.
48. Financial management is efficient. Resources are used effectively to enhance the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The recent priority to increasing the number of support assistants throughout the school is a great success. They make a very good contribution to the quality of education throughout the school. Despite cutbacks the school has a secure budget balance and a strategy to reduce outgoings should the need arise. Value for money is given a high consideration and overall the governors are successful in achieving good value for money. They apply best principles thoroughly seeking to achieve best value in the ways in which resources are managed and improvements are brought about. Performance is compared yearly as a result of meetings to discuss the national test results and how the school performs relative to schools in similar circumstances. The personnel committee are proud of their record of high quality appointments made in recent years. There is generally very good consultation with parents.
49. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage. All teachers, except the headteacher, are assigned to a class. All have an additional curriculum and management responsibility as subject and special educational needs co-ordinators, although there is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage. Staff attend regular training courses which are well matched to their needs and linked to the school development plan. The improved provision of experienced teaching assistants is good and sufficient to effectively support groups in classrooms and individual pupils. The school makes satisfactory arrangements to ensure that new members of staff are inducted and well supported by the deputy headteacher. The commitment and efficiency of the secretary, lunchtime supervisors and caretaker all ensure the effective day-to-day running of the school.
50. The accommodation is good and provides sufficient space for the delivery of the National Curriculum. The site has good access and facilities for pupils with disabilities. Improvements since the last inspection have provided good accommodation for the nursery unit and reception class. The buildings are very attractive, clean and well maintained. Colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work, pictures and artefacts, particularly in classrooms, create a stimulating learning environment. Classrooms and central areas provide sufficient teaching space to comfortably accommodate the number of pupils on roll. The central library provides an attractive place for pupils to select books, although space is rather limited for large groups. The school has no information and communication technology suite, but a bank of laptop computers to be shared around the school. Other computer areas are in the junior end of the school which limits access by infant classes. The hall, although satisfactory, is narrow and long with a sprung floor which is noisy when used for physical education. There is a separate dining room and kitchen which is satisfactory, although in less favourable decorative order than the rest of the school. Outdoor play facilities are good and include a hard surface playground and an

extensive sports field. With the help of a visitor, pupils have built a large willow shelter on the field. The outdoor swimming pool and changing rooms on site are well maintained and used well as a learning resource during the summer months. The secure outdoor play area for the nursery is good and provides sufficient hard and grassed areas for a range of play activities.

51. The provision and quality of learning resources to support teaching in all subjects of the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage are good. Since the last inspection the school has improved resources for information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2. However, the location of computers does not always ensure that these are conveniently accessible.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. Improve the provision for information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 by:
- 1) including opportunities to use information and communication technology in weekly lesson plans;
 - 2) increasing the software to support the use of information and communication technology in English;
 - 3) providing further training for staff;
 - 4) increasing the number of computers for use in Years 1 and 2 when funds permit.

(Paragraphs 14, 51, 62, 70, 86, 114, 117)

The governors may wish to consider the following minor issues in their action plan.

- improve the quality of marking;
- provide ways to involve all subject co-ordinators in the management of the school;
- increase the special educational needs co-ordinator's involvement in writing individual education plans.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	3	39	14	1	0	0
Percentage	4	5	66	23	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one 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)	10	199
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	10

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	12	9	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (100)	100 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	20	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	11	15
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	31	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (91)	81 (82)	94 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	30	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (94)	86 (91)	86 (91)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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	171	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.23
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
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	£
Total income	515,473
Total expenditure	501,491
Expenditure per pupil	2,,399
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,958
Balance carried forward to next year	34,940

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	58	36	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	36	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	41	7	1	2
The teaching is good.	58	37	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	49	8	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	26	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	43	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	48	6	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	26	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	33	3	0	10

Other issues raised by parents

There were no other issues raised by the parents.

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

53. The children in the Foundation Stage are in the nursery class and in a mixed-age reception and Year 1 class. The reception-aged children follow a curriculum based on the six areas of learning; personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The children start in the nursery when they are three and transfer to the newly built reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Children's standards on entry to the nursery class are above average. By the time they are ready to leave, standards have improved and are well above average. This good progress continues through their time in the reception class and most children have exceeded the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. The children achieve especially well in the nursery class as a result of the well-managed provision, a range of well-focused adult-directed activities and self-sustaining activities. The latter activities allow the children to develop their co-operative and independent skills very effectively. Children demonstrate high levels of concentration and perseverance. In the nursery, there are very good opportunities for children to share, develop curiosity and to be inquisitive. For example, pairs of children discussed the construction models and play-dough cakes they made with good levels of confidence. Opportunities for independent learning are more controlled in the mixed-age class, but nevertheless, the children choose for themselves what they do for periods each day, especially in the afternoons when they work as a mixed-age class with Year 1. The quality of teaching in the nursery is very good and pupils learn very effectively. The teaching takes very good account of the need to build trusting relationships. Teaching in the reception class is good. Planning takes good account of the need for children to explore, follow instructions and to behave appropriately. Relationships are excellent throughout this stage.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Standards on entry to the nursery class are above average in speaking and listening and reading. They are average in writing. Children achieve well and by the time they start in the reception class, standards are above average, with a large proportion of the children achieving within the *green stepping-stones*¹.
56. The children are encouraged to register themselves when they arrive, which is an effective strategy to encourage reading and writing their names. Small group activities are well planned to ensure that the higher attaining children are appropriately challenged. Expectations are high and well matched to the above average attainment of the children, especially in the nursery. Children 'wrote' postcards as part of a seaside theme and most children made good attempts at writing their name. Several

¹ These are the steps children make towards the achievement of the early learning goals in each area of learning

higher attaining children write a simple sentence independently and make acceptable attempts to spell words as they sound. The children are expected to know the names and sounds of initial letters. Taking on the roles of seaside characters in a Punch and Judy show was a good example of taking turns in conversations and speaking to an audience. Reading is a favourite activity for the children in their independent time. They show a good understanding of their favourite books and talk confidently about stories they have read. Older children in the reception class have achieved the early learning goals and are confidently working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They read with accuracy and know how to find their way around an information book. This is good achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The reception children are taught as a single age group for literacy and follow the National Literacy Strategy framework. As a result, they are well challenged and make good progress.

Mathematical development

57. Standards on entry to the nursery are above average. The children continue to achieve above average standards and, by the time they start in Year 1, they have achieved the early learning goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and the reception class. The excellent attitudes of the children make a very good contribution to their learning. In the nursery, the children take part in a range of activities to promote an understanding of numbers. They read numbers to 20 and confidently count forwards and backwards. This is very good attainment. By the time they are in the reception class, the children count and record numbers to 50. Higher attaining children can work out subtraction problems to ten mentally but found the recording of this too difficult. Good use is made of games to develop number recognition. Information and communication technology is used effectively to consolidate understanding of numbers. Practical activities, such as making octopi, help the children to understand the names and properties of different shapes and to count the tentacles on the octopus. The reception-aged children are taught as a single age group for mathematical development and follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Many are working beyond the early learning goals and at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The outdoor environment is used effectively to promote learning in the nursery. Standards on entry to the nursery class are above average and well above average in understanding a sense of place. By the time children start in Year 1 they are exceeding the early learning goals in this area of learning. Children are curious and investigate and explore readily. They enjoyed examining seashells to compare patterns and textures with the help of magnifying glasses in the nursery. While sharing an information book about baby animals to show how animals and people grow, the children showed they had a good grasp of the growing process and talked confidently about the differences between ducks and ducklings and what animals and people do at different times in their lives. Frequent opportunities are provided for the children to use computers in the nursery. There are fewer occasions to do this in the mixed-age class. An impromptu lesson one rainy day was used effectively to encourage children to talk about different weather conditions. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and good in the reception class. For example, as a result of discussions about pictures of the seaside at different times, the children understand that the present is different from the past.

Physical development

59. Standards on entry to the nursery are generally typical of children of this age. By the time they leave the reception class, standards are above average with most children achieving the early learning goals. Outdoor activities are planned well to develop a range of physical skills. Children show good levels of dexterity as they aim and send beanbags hurtling through a hoop. The quality of teaching is good. Frequent opportunities are provided for the reception class children to move around safely and with developing control. In the hall, for example, they practised learning to hop and to develop co-ordination. Support for a child with special educational needs was very good as she wove her way in and out of the other children with a partner as they ran around the room. The hall is rather small for two age groups to work in parallel and poses organisational problems for the teaching which are generally effectively dealt with.

Creative development

60. This area of learning is given a high priority in the nursery and effective use is made of creative activities to apply numeracy and literacy skills. Role-play is used constantly to encourage children to talk about where they have been and experiences they have had. The children's own imagination is effectively fostered through a range of role-play settings available in the nursery; a café outdoors and a post office indoors. All children know their colours and learn to explore the texture of different materials. For example, older children in the reception class moulded and rolled clay to make a plaque decorated with a range of patterns. Standards are above average in exploring media and materials and in the use of imagination in role-play and in art and design. The quality of teaching is good overall. At all times, the children are encouraged to use the appropriate terminology and show confidence in talking about the 'impressions' they make on their plaques.

ENGLISH

61. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 have improved since the last inspection. They are well above average in speaking and listening and reading and are above average in writing by Year 6. The quality of teaching, overall, is good, with some excellent and very good teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6. Actions taken to improve assessment since the previous inspection are good. Leadership of the subject is generally sound; the co-ordinator is well supported by a 'shadow' co-ordinator. Resources are generally plentiful, although the use of information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory.
62. The improvements in the 2003 national test results are a result of the support provided by the additional 'booster' classes and detailed analysis of last year's national tests results to identify where the pupils made errors in their assessments.
63. Based on the pupils' above average attainment on entry to the school and their well above average attainment overall by Year 2 and Year 6, achievement throughout the school is good. A strong factor contributing to their good achievement are their excellent attitudes to learning, the ways in which pupils so effectively support one another and their excellent behaviour at all times in lessons. Parents also play a substantial role in supporting their children's reading development, very effectively supported by well-briefed classroom assistants.

64. Pupils throughout the school are very articulate and talk confidently about their work and lives. By Year 2, they listen carefully and give well thought-out explanations as a result of the high expectations of their teacher. For example, Year 1 pupils discussed with authority the key facts they found in the information books read. At times, they want to talk too much which is generally well managed to planned talk in pairs. By Year 6, pupils take part in discussions, take on roles, listen to and challenge the opinions and ideas of others. A debate in Year 6, about the good and bad effects of tourism on an area, was an excellent example of the ways in which pupils argued their case using convincing examples to support their views for and against building a supermarket in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Pupils used an excellent range of idioms such as 'NIMBY' as they persuasively put forward their views in the debate.
65. Pupils read regularly in school, usually to the teaching assistants supporting pupils in lessons and to their parents very frequently. The impact of this support is very good. As a result, pupils in Year 2 are confident, skilled readers and achieve well above average standards. Higher attaining pupils read widely and show good familiarity with a range of well-known authors such as C S Lewis. They read fluently, accurately and use a range of appropriate strategies to read unfamiliar words such as re-reading, self-correcting and breaking down words into sounds. Understanding is further developed in guided and shared reading sessions, included as part of the literacy hour. For example, in Year 1, pupils learned that information books contain facts. By Year 6, pupils are confident, voracious readers. They have excellent attitudes to books, speak knowledgeably about the characterisation, plots and emotions in their favourite stories. The pupils are familiar with a range of books that is very well reflected in their written work. For instance, a Year 5 pupil's persuasive writing captured the genre in an excellent manner, 'come back to the where you will see the Tudors going about their everyday life. Meet the laughable jester, pound herbs in the stillroom, hold Tudor artefacts and visit the terrifying alchemist'. Another Year 5 pupil described the Pied Piper as:
- 'A dangerous man on the loose!
People call him the 'Pied Piper'
This man hypnotised the children of Hamelin and took them away.
Be warned! He must be caught.
66. By Year 6, pupils' writing is imaginative, good use is made of action and dialogue to capture emotions and create suspense. Many opportunities are provided to improve the quality of writing. For example, pupils understand how to write informal and formal letters, rewrite ambiguous sentences and put forward convincing arguments in their persuasive writing. Complex sentences are commonplace and used throughout Years 3 to 6. However, the presentation of some pupils work is not good enough. The quality of marking is too variable. It ranges from very good assessments showing the levels achieved by the pupils in their work with clear learning objectives heading each piece of work, to self-assessment by the pupils showing how they can improve their work. However, in some classes several pieces of work are unmarked.
67. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good, with examples of excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching where pupils are not challenged sufficiently and what they are expected to learn is unclear. The quality of planning is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and apply the basic skills outlined in the National Literacy Strategy well to support learning in other subjects, especially history. Classroom assistants are used very well to support reading and to help pupils with special educational needs who make good progress throughout the school. Resources are generally good, although there is a lack of

software to support early literacy skills in Year 1. The use of information and communication technology is sound in Years 3 to 6, but unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, based on the limited amount of work seen and lack of use of computers during the inspection.

68. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the ways in which the subject needs to improve. Planning and examples of pupils' work are checked regularly to identify areas for training. In previous years effective action was taken to reduce the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. The library is well resourced and used effectively by individual classes. Parents have been well informed of their expectations when hearing their children read which they do very frequently. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve liaison with the local high school and to make use of the transfer planning to prepare Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education.

MATHEMATICS

69. The standards of work seen during the inspection reflect a similar pattern to the national test results. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are well above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection especially for pupils in Years 1 to 2. Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and almost always good or better. The teaching of basic mathematical skills is generally very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by well-directed teaching assistants and make equally good progress. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls when compared to national patterns.
70. By Year 2, pupils use their knowledge of number bonds, tables, doubling and halving to confidently solve written number problems involving money and measures. Pupils derive the multiplication facts for the two, five and ten times tables and recognise that division is the inverse of multiplication. They successfully count on and back in tens beyond 100 from various starting positions. Less able pupils complete multiplication problems with the aid of multilink cubes, while the more able use a range of mental strategies to find missing multipliers and the output from functions. Pupils estimate lengths and mass using standard and non-standard units. Pupils make appropriate use of mathematical vocabulary when naming common two- and three-dimensional shapes and describing their properties, but need support when attempting to classify them. Pupils use co-ordinates to describe positions on a grid in the first quadrant and read time to the quarter hour on an analogue clock. The most able pupils can read time to five minutes and are beginning to use fractions to find proportions of whole numbers. However, there was no evidence of pupils' use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics.
71. By Year 6, pupils choose the most appropriate mental, paper and pencil or calculator methods to solve calculations. They carry out inverse operations and use this knowledge in conjunction with sensible approximations to check the accuracy of their answers. Pupils begin to give explanations for their reasoning but cannot always justify these mathematically. They use long multiplication and long-division methods accurately and compare equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. They can round up or down to one decimal place and use brackets correctly to show the order of operations in a calculation. More able pupils are able to multiply and divide decimals by 10, 100 and 1000, and reduce fractions to their lowest forms by cancelling common factors. They understand symmetry and plot co-ordinates in all four

quadrants to produce polygons and reflected designs. Pupils know and use the probability scale from 0-1 to predict the likelihood of events, but are not always clear that repeating an experiment may result in different outcomes. There is little evidence of pupils' use of data handling to construct and interpret graphs and draw conclusions.

72. The school recognised the need to improve standards further especially by the end of Year 6. Through self-evaluation, various ways to achieve this improvement were identified and as a result, the school's strategies for teaching numeracy are good. Effective whole-school planning and target setting, combined with reliable assessment procedures, have improved the consistency of teaching and learning throughout and contributed well to pupils' increased attainment. Teachers' planning builds successfully on what pupils already know and understand. Booster classes have provided focused support for pupils who were unlikely to achieve Level 4. Teachers have matched work accurately to the specific needs of the individuals within these groups, and, as a result, pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Higher attaining pupils have been challenged more effectively through challenging activities in lessons and, as a result, work quickly, confidently and accurately, producing a good volume of well-presented work. Use of homework to support learning has been more consistent with a focus on mental recall of multiplication facts. The impact of these improvements is evident in test results where the current trend in standards of achievement shows significant gains on previous years.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are generally well planned to cover the National Numeracy Strategy objectives and the good pace and stimulating and challenging activities maintain pupils' interest. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were completely engaged in the construction of a four metre high three-dimensional tessellated pyramid and, as a result, were able to identify two-dimensional plane figures within the structure. Characteristic strengths include teacher's good subject knowledge, systematic planning and the good use of available resources to support learning. In another Year 6 lesson the teacher made good use of information and communication technology to support learning and provide a good level of challenge for the most able pupils. As a result pupils used spreadsheets to write formulae involving one or two operations and used them to solve problems for a range of values. Classroom assistants are deployed effectively to help pupils, particularly the lower attainers or those with special educational needs. They make good use of practical aids to support pupils' developing mental calculation strategies.
74. Teachers consistently follow an agreed structure to lessons with clearly stated objectives. This helps learning because pupils are clear about what is to be achieved by the end of the lesson. The well-planned starter sessions are pursued at a brisk, sharp pace and teachers encourage the use of mental calculations to particularly good effect. In a good Year 4 lesson, effective use of a counting stick enabled pupils to count quickly in threes and fours and rapidly identify links with division. Mathematical vocabulary is used frequently and, consequently, pupils become fully conversant with correct mathematical terminology. In a good Year 2 lesson, effective use of questioning, praise and encouragement enabled pupils to suggest a wide variety of alternative terms for multiplication. Teachers make good use of opportunities for questioning, particularly to develop pupils' mathematical thinking when reviewing learning at the end of lessons.
75. Where teaching is less successful, teachers have often deviated from the agreed lesson structure and there are often too many learning objectives for the pupils to gain a clear grasp of what they are learning. Elsewhere, when teaching is less effective, it

is because teachers do not have good enough subject knowledge and do not match work appropriately to the ability levels of pupils within the group. Marking is generally inconsistent and could be developed to ensure that pupils know exactly where and how they could improve further in a particular exercise. On occasion, when classroom assistants are supporting groups of lower attaining pupils, individual pupils with special educational needs are unsupported and can distract their immediate neighbours, who do not make good progress as a result.

76. Management of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator has overseen the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. She has a clear view of standards and a secure awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. This knowledge has been achieved through the effective monitoring of colleagues' teaching and planning, analysis of pupils' work and the evaluation of progress towards agreed priorities for raising standards. For example, the co-ordinator recognised that the previous scheme of work was insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. As a result, teachers have been encouraged to use ideas for lessons from a wider range of sources including the local education authority Intranet. Very good procedures for checking and supporting pupils' progress have been established. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress against the key objectives of the National Numeracy Strategy at the end of units and set individual targets that are shared with pupils on a regular basis. While resources are good in quantity, the co-ordinator has initiated a review to ensure that new equipment is available to support the National Numeracy Strategy more effectively.

SCIENCE

77. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. This is comparable to the standards attained in the previous inspection. The results of the 2003 unvalidated national test results show that standards have generally been maintained since last year. Ninety-four per cent of pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4+ and 48 per cent achieved the higher Level 5. This is generally above average, although at this stage there is no comparative data to judge how the school achieved compared to similar schools.
78. The weaknesses at the time of the last inspection: no unified scheme of work; underdeveloped assessment procedures and work not well matched to the needs of all pupils, have all been improved. As a result, the good standards have been maintained. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in nearly all year groups. Provision for science is very good and the curriculum is broad, very well balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils is very good and is enhanced through activities for pupils outside lessons, such as the school's science club, which has a good impact on learning and achievement.
79. As pupils move through the school they are given regular opportunities to develop their understanding of investigative skills including prediction, fair testing, observing, measuring, recording and interpreting data. Pupils learn about materials and their properties, physical processes and life and living things in all year groups and this is evident in their written work. However, there are some inconsistencies in learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, have only a limited understanding of electrical circuits.
80. Year 1 pupils learn about their body and work is linked well to their personal development. Pupils in Year 2 carry out investigations into simple electrical circuits and study how plants grow. They are able to offer good explanations about similarities

and differences. *This plant has furry leaves, probably to catch rain!* They have developed a good understanding of how to carry out an investigation and use this well when observing mini-beasts.

81. There is some over-reliance on worksheets in Year 3. Nevertheless, pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of all relevant areas of the subject. By Year 5 pupils have developed the experimental skills necessary to investigate thoroughly, for instance, the best conditions for paper spinners to fall. They fully understand the conditions of fair testing and are able to formulate relevant hypotheses when carrying out investigations.
82. Although pupils in Year 6 apply their growing understanding of experimental science when investigating, for example, how candles burn, there is a more knowledge-based approach to the subject in the work of this year group. However, coverage of all aspects of science in Year 6 is very good and contains evidence of a high level of understanding of nearly all areas of science with the exception of electrical circuitry.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall. Planning is generally effective. Learning objectives are clearly stated and sometimes displayed. Good use is made of resources and pupils are very well managed. Features of the good teaching include briskly paced lessons, high expectations and effective teaching methods. For example, Year 4 pupils shared ideas about the animal habitats based on their prior learning from the previous day when they visited a farm. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and, as a result, they are keen to talk about their work. Achievement is good overall. When teaching is less effective, planning does not always take account of pupils' abilities and prior knowledge and, as a result, achievement is limited. Most pupils enjoy their work, especially the investigative aspects.
84. Leadership and management of the subject are good and has helped to maintain standards. The co-ordinator has developed the school's scheme of work so that it reflects the needs of the pupils and uses the expertise of the staff. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has limited opportunities to check the quality of teaching of the subject, but monitors the coverage of the requirements of the scheme of work by seeing the medium- and long-term planning on a regular basis. She has a good understanding of the strengths of the subject and areas for improvement.
85. Resources for teaching science are good and cover all areas of study associated with the National Curriculum. They are centrally stored, up-to-date and are well used. Resources for investigative aspects of the subject are particularly good.
86. The use of information and communication technology is limited, especially in Years 1 and 2. Links between science and other subjects, design and technology for instance, are good. There are plenty of good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills when recording the outcomes of investigations.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above national expectations and the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils make good progress in learning the subject in all year groups. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection when it was reported that they were above

those expected nationally and that the subject made a good contribution to pupils' creative arts education.

88. The subject has a high profile within the school. Teachers talk enthusiastically about the subject and are proud of pupils' achievements. Several teachers have increased their knowledge by attending relevant courses. As a result the level of staff expertise is good and is reflected in the very good quality of curricular provision and in the good standard of pupils' work.
89. Pupils are very enthusiastic about art and design. As a result, their attitudes towards the subject are very good and the sense of achievement they feel when they complete work is often shared with others.
90. All year groups follow the same scheme of work and this aids progression in learning. Pupils are given regular, structured opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject as they progress through the school. Year 1 pupils learn weaving skills using a range of materials and Year 2 pupils describe how to mix colours and why they use wax for effect in paintings because '*it doesn't like water*'. The work of this year group contains evidence of a gradual build up of different techniques in painting, clay-work and three-dimensional work.
91. By Year 4, pupils are able to produce work in clay of a very good quality. They use colour well to express theme and mood. Year 5 work contains links to history in Tudor paintings as well as evidence of links to design and technology and also the use of information and communication technology when designing and making brochures. Year 6 pupils study different types of art and paint in the styles of various artists such as Picasso when learning about the *Cubist Movement*. Work in this year group is a good overall standard and reflects not only the good attitudes and achievement of pupils in Year 6 but also reflects the very good breadth, balance and relevance of the art and design curriculum throughout the whole school.
92. The quality of teaching overall is good. For example, Year 6 pupils learned how to reflect the images of Picasso. In discussion they shared an understanding of Cubism with good levels of knowledge based on prior learning. Pupils learn effectively as a result of clear planning, good classroom management and clearly stated learning objectives matched to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. Pupils made good progress in learning about different styles of painting. Where teaching was less successful pupils worked within their capabilities and were not suitably challenged by tasks they completed with some ease. This was noticeable in one lesson when pupils applied colour to suggest perspective on a horizon. The tasks were repetitive and unchallenging and this affected pupils' overall achievement.
93. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has helped to maintain the high profile of art and design within the school and recognises many of the strengths of the subject and areas for further development. There are presently few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching or planning and this is a recognised area for future development.
94. Resources for teaching the subject are good. They are well used and cover all aspects of teaching the National Curriculum Programme of Study for the subject. Links between art and design and other subjects, such as history and geography, are good. Good use is made of information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6 but less so in Years 1 and 2.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are comparable to those expected nationally and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards above those expected nationally and their achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Year 3 to Year 6. Standards are slightly lower than the last inspection as a result of less time allocated to the subject.
96. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are good overall and pupils are given regular, structured opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject in all year groups. Younger pupils make pizzas and design, make and evaluate clothes to '*keep teddy warm*'. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed the skills needed to use and handle a range of appropriate tools safely and effectively and are able to select appropriate materials for tasks.
97. Older pupils are given opportunities to continue to develop their growing confidence in the subject. Year 5 pupils designed '*night-lights*' and were given the opportunity to make soup in food technology. They confidently discuss their work and the processes they use to evaluate and improve the products they make. Pupils' attitudes are very good in all year groups. The school encourages parents to contribute to the learning process and this was evident in the good quality model ships, constructed by pupils with parental help, on display in the Year 4 classroom. In other year groups, parent volunteer helpers use their expertise and experience in various aspects of design and technology and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
98. The quality of teaching is good overall, but ranges from satisfactory to good. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6. . During a well-taught lesson in clay-work Year 1 pupils in a mixed Year 1 and reception class achieved well as they designed and made decorated clay tiles. Management of the lesson was good. Expectations were high and pupils understood what they had to do as a result of clear instructions given in the introductory session. When teaching was less successful, tasks were not matched to pupils' abilities, lesson planning was inappropriate and the use of resources was limited. As a result pupils' achievement was affected and learning compromised.
99. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths of the subject but has yet to monitor teaching and learning in a structured way, although this is recognised as an area for future development. As a result the co-ordinator has only had a limited impact on standards in the subject.
100. The school possesses a satisfactory range of equipment for teaching all aspects of design and technology and consumable and durable resources are located both within individual classrooms and in an easily accessed central storage base. There are some resources to link design and technology to information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6. This is more limited in Years 1 and 2.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Standards in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are above nationally expected levels. Pupils cover a balanced curriculum and develop specific subject skills in a structured and systematic manner as they move through the school. As a

result, pupils of all ability levels including those with special educational needs achieve well.

102. By Year 2, pupils show an awareness of places beyond their own locality. They locate countries and continents such as Peru and Antarctica on an atlas and use geographical vocabulary to describe their position in relation to the United Kingdom, especially the higher attaining pupils. Pupils are aware that different places have both similar and different characteristics and describe environments such as deserts and rainforests in terms of landscape and weather. They use photographs and informative texts as sources of information for geographical enquiry. Pupils understand that the different ways in which information is presented, for example a bird's eye view, may give a different impression of the physical features. Pupils' ability to differentiate between physical and human features is also well developed, for example when describing features such as hills and embankments.
103. By Year 6, pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of places in different parts of the world. This was particularly evident when Year 5 pupils drew on their knowledge to produce promotional booklets for popular tourist destinations including Sri Lanka, Greece and Holland. These emphasised the natural geographical features such as mountains, beaches and weather, while recognising the human activities that had resulted due to the effects of tourism. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to support their geographical investigations, incorporating maps, pictures and factual information researched from the Internet. Pupils are able to explain how people can damage or improve the environment, giving reasons for, and expressing opinions on, these changes. For example, pupils felt strongly that banana plantation owners in St Lucia should change their farming methods in order to prevent pollution of the rivers. Pupils are less able to describe why physical processes operating at a wider scale lead to changes in the environment.
104. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good overall. Teachers set interesting tasks designed to develop pupils' study skills and made effective use of the resources provided. In a good lesson in Year 4, teaching made effective use of questioning enabling pupils to draw conclusions about the likely impact of dock expansion on a nearby nature reserve. A pupil with a statement of special educational needs was well supported by the teacher who carefully recorded their observations. Where teaching was less successful, it was as a result of insufficient support for less able pupils or a lack of challenging activities for most able pupils. In the work samples seen, marking did not clearly state whether the aims of the lesson had been met and only gave occasional points for development.
105. The subject is well managed by a newly appointed co-ordinator who monitors teachers' planning and use of resources thoroughly to ensure that the scheme of work is being followed consistently. The co-ordinator actively encourages teachers to attend any relevant training courses and gives feedback from regular borough geography co-ordinators' meetings. She has used release time well to revise the policy and long-term planning to ensure broad and balanced coverage of the national curriculum with a good focus on local geography. Pupils' standards are assessed carefully through levelled scrutiny of work, pupil discussions and observation of themed assemblies. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to check teaching in the subject in order to raise standards further.

HISTORY

106. Standards in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are above nationally expected levels. These standards have been successfully maintained since the previous inspection. The school has adopted the borough's scheme of work to support teachers in their planning. This ensures that pupils cover a balanced history curriculum with an appropriate local focus. As a result, pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
107. By Year 2 pupils are developing a good sense of chronology and are able to recall knowledge from previous units such as old toys and seaside holidays. Pupils in Year 1 show an interest in the past and can identify changes in their own lives and in the lives of familiar adults. Pupils then go on to acquire knowledge about people and events in the more distant past. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to carry out independent historical enquiry. They were able to produce an account of an aspect of life in Anglo-Saxon Britain, drawing on a range of sources of information. However only the most able pupils were able to interpret rather than copy information and no use was made of available information and communication technology as a research tool.
108. Pupils in Year 5 begin to identify some of the different ways in which the past is represented, including ideas and beliefs. During their study of Britain and the wider world in Tudor times, pupils explored what life was like for famous historical figures, including Henry VIII's wives and Shakespeare. Pupils were able to select and combine information from different sources, including the Internet, in order to ask and answer questions about the past.
109. By Year 6, it is clear that pupils have a great enthusiasm for history. They have an increased depth of factual knowledge and are able to talk animatedly about previous units such as Ancient Egypt and the Romans, describing the main events, people and changes. Pupils have a well-developed sense of chronology and the more able pupils are able to recall specific dates. While pupils are beginning to recognise that people and events can be viewed in different ways, for example the alchemist in Tudor times, they need encouragement to suggest reasons for this and do not always question the validity of different sources of information.
110. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make good use of historical artefacts to bring the past to life. For example, a ships and seafarers display was enhanced by a timeline of high quality model vessels from Viking long ships to modern ocean liners. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils were shown fabric samples coloured with a Tudor onion dye that had been produced by a parent. Effective questioning often enabled pupils to draw on their prior learning, as a result pupils in Year 6 were able to give valid reasons for land invasion, including religious conflict and financial gain. Where teaching was less successful it was often as a result of a lack of challenge or extended activities for the most able pupils.
111. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator shows great enthusiasm for the subject and this is reflected in the interesting and challenging tasks designed to develop pupils' study skills. Continued visits to educational venues, including Mountfitchet Castle and Kentwell Hall, have contributed to the development of pupils' historical understanding. The co-ordinator has raised the profile of history further by sampling teachers' medium-term plans and highlighting cross-curricular opportunities. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to update the portfolio of work and to monitor teaching of the subject in order to raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
113. The school has adopted the national guidelines for information technology to support teachers in their planning. This ensures that pupils cover a balanced curriculum and develop specific subject skills in a structured and systematic manner as they move through the school. There is no computer suite but the school makes good use of the available resources, which provide Internet access and opportunities for research and independent learning for pupils. The overall ratio of pupils to computers is 10:1, which is very good. However this figure includes eight recently purchased laptops, which are shared between teachers and pupils and as a result are not always readily available. Therefore the number of computers that are easily accessible to pupils is often less satisfactory. National funding has provided extensive training for teachers and learning support assistants and has improved their knowledge of the subject since the last inspection. As a result pupils of all attainment levels, with special educational needs generally make at least satisfactory progress in learning basic skills by Year 2 and good progress by Year 6.
114. By Year 2, pupils share their ideas in different forms including text and images. When word processing pupils are able to select the font style and size of text for themselves. They edit passages adding full stops, capital letters and line breaks using the cursor keys and press the enter key. Higher attaining pupils open, save and print work independently. There was however little evidence of pupils' use of art and design programs or data handling programs to collect and display information. The coverage of the curriculum and volume of work produced is barely satisfactory.
115. By Year 6, pupils are using spreadsheet modelling to solve a variety of mathematical problems and investigate the effects of changing variables in simple formulae. They are able to calculate the sum of data in a column and express formulae for totals in different forms. They are able to transfer information from a frequency table and present information graphically as pie and bar charts. When word processing pupils use fonts appropriately according to the audience, for example when designing tourism brochures or logos for a supermarket bag. Pupils do not spend sufficient time reflecting critically to improve future work. Art and design programs are used very well for drawing and pattern making. Pupils use a variety of different tools and fill shapes with graduated colour and texture creating images in the style of Mondrian. Photographs taken with a digital camera are manipulated and repeated to produce pictures in the style of Picasso and Warhol. Pupils use CD-Roms and the Internet effectively as research tools for historical and geographical enquiry, refining and presenting the information in different forms. Pupils create sequences of instructions to control events, for example the rotation of a model fairground ride. While pupils have used information technology to record their findings in science investigations, there was little evidence of pupils logging data from sensors, for example when using a temperature probe.
116. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good overall and the benefits of the improved curriculum and teacher confidence are becoming evident in the standards achieved by Year 6. No teaching of ICT for pupils up to Year 2 was planned or seen during the inspection, however work scrutiny and discussion with pupils indicated that teaching was satisfactory. The good quality teaching seen was as a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and effective use of available resources. In a good Year 5 lesson on databases, the teacher made effective use of a

multimedia projector to demonstrate data and field entry. As a result the pupils were attentive and keen to discuss and evaluate their work as it was displayed on the large screen. In a very good lesson in Year 6 learning was further enhanced as a result of very clear instructions and high expectations from the teacher. Where teaching was less successful it was often as a result of inadequate resources that did not allow all pupils to complete the activity or retrieve their previous work. Pupils with special educational needs were supported effectively by both learning support assistants and their peers in mixed ability pairs. However while pupils that were sharing computers worked co-operatively, teachers did not always ensure they had the opportunity to produce individual work. In addition there were often too few opportunities for more able pupils to extend their work, other than by level of achievement.

117. Curricular links are promoted during the direct teaching of information technology, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to support learning before the end of Year 2. By Year 6 computers are used well as an effective research tool for history and geography but could be used further to support learning in core subjects particularly English and science.
118. The co-ordinator was appointed before the last inspection and shows satisfactory management of the subject. Although there is a very clear action plan for raising standards, improvement since the last inspection has been limited as the pace of improvement has not always matched the pace of changes in technology and expectations. The co-ordinator supports colleagues through regular in-service training and informal drop-in sessions. An Internet safety policy is in place, although it is not signed by parents. The co-ordinator has ensured that Internet access is software filtered and inappropriate sites are barred effectively. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to produce portfolios of pupils' levelled work and to check teaching of the subject in order to raise standards further.

MUSIC

119. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected nationally and the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, which reported that pupils made good progress in all year groups and enjoyed all aspects of the subject.
120. Pupils enjoy music making activities and their attitudes to the subject are very good in nearly all year groups. Provision is now very good overall and the music curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. It is enhanced through not only a range of out-of-school activities, such as choir and recorder groups, but also through the additional music tuition, funded by the school, and made available to pupils wishing to learn to play musical instruments such as the guitar, violin and trumpet. As a result, the standard of instrument playing observed during the inspection was good.
121. Pupils in all year groups are given regular opportunities to increase their knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of music as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make steady improvement in developing their performing, composing, appraising and listening skills. When singing they show a sense of melody and shape and many pupils sing with expression. They recognise and explore the ways in which sounds can be arranged and use simple non-standard notation in composition. This was evident during a Year 2 lesson when pupils used a variety of percussive instruments well to build up rhythms and accompany other pupils singing.

122. Older pupils are able to maintain their own part whilst singing 'rounds' and this was evident during a whole school assembly. Pupils in Year 3 recognise and explore the musical and physical characteristics of singing games whilst Year 4 pupils understand how pitch, rhythm and timbre can alter a piece of music and create different effects. By Year 6 pupils describe and compare different types of music and many are able to evaluate different musical features in compositions.
123. The quality of teaching of music is good. Teaching is more effective when planning is effective, expectations are high and lessons briskly paced and well structured. Resources are used well to maintain pupils' interest and to enhance learning opportunities. All these elements are present in a good lesson in Year 2 where pupils learn to use percussion to accompany singing. In a short period of time pupils improved their understanding of how to beat out more complex rhythm patterns and learned how to use non-standard notation when using percussive instruments. As a result achievement was good overall. When teaching was less successful activities did not sufficiently challenge pupils who worked well within their capabilities. Teacher expectations were low and, as a result, pupils did not achieve what they were capable of.
124. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are good. She has had a good impact on standards. The co-ordinator has a firm idea of standards and has helped to ensure that the subject has a high profile within the school. Staff are enthusiastic about all aspects of music and several help provide opportunities outside the classroom to further enhance subject provision.
125. Overall, the school's well-used instrumental resources are good and meet the needs of teaching the National Curriculum. All classes have access to a good range of pitched and unpitched percussion instruments and a narrower range of melodic instruments, such as keyboards. The provision of music reproduction equipment, such as compact disc players, is good and pupils have access to a range of books about most areas of the subject. Few links between music and information technology were observed during the period of the inspection and this remains an area for development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. The standards attained by pupils in Year 2 are comparable to those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards above national expectations. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in Year 1 and Year 2 and good in Year 3 to Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, which reported that, whilst the subject was very well organised, the assessment of pupils' attainment was an area for further development, as was the monitoring of teaching of physical education. Standards by Year 6 are considerably enhanced by the contribution of the out-of-school activities such as football, rugby and swimming.
127. These concerns have now been addressed. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who has high expectations and a clear idea of standards and how physical education should be developed in the school. He monitors teaching and planning on a regular basis and has helped to ensure that the school has adopted simple, yet effective, assessment procedures to check pupils' progress and measure attainment against national expectations. This has assisted the school to maintain standards. The co-ordinator has also helped to ensure that physical education has a very high profile in school life. The expertise of teachers and support staff has been

enhanced through recent in-service training and the school provides pupils with a wide range of sporting activities outside lessons which further improve achievement.

128. Pupils have a positive attitude towards all aspects of physical education and the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to them are very good throughout the school. They are given regular opportunities in all year groups to acquire and develop new skills and techniques and apply them to their own performances. Pupils in Year 1, for example, develop movement skills showing basic control and co-ordination whilst Year 2 pupils increase their hand/eye co-ordination by practicing ball skills such as catching and throwing. By the end of Year 2 most pupils are able to explore simple actions with a good amount of control.
129. By Year 5 pupils have developed a good degree of proficiency in many aspects of physical education, such as gymnastics and swimming, and are able to compare and comment on their own performances and those of others. By Year 6, nearly all pupils can apply skills, techniques and ideas accurately. Most are able to suggest ways of improving performances and can evaluate and discuss skills and techniques. Year 6 pupils show a good degree of precision, control and accuracy in their work and have developed the confidence to attempt challenging tasks and this was evident in a very well taught dance lesson when pupils worked in pairs independently to prepare and present difficult dance sequences of a high standard.
130. The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of very good teaching. Lessons are well planned, have a brisk pace and are well resourced. Subject knowledge is usually good. For example, a very good Year 6 lesson featured, a very brisk pace and high expectations. Pupils work effectively in pairs and are encouraged to set their own level of challenge and try to improve their partner's performance by evaluating and discussing their work. Innovative ideas are regularly shared with the rest of the class and, as a result, achievement is very good and pupils' attainment is good overall. When teaching is less successful the level of challenge is inappropriately set and planned activities left many pupils as spectators for long periods. This affects their learning and, as a result, pupils' achievement is limited.
131. Resources are good and contribute well to the overall achievement of pupils. They are easily accessed and cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study for the subject. The school benefits from a large field and very good facilities for teaching swimming but the school's hall is small and this has an effect on how it is used to support physical education, especially in Year 5 and Year 6 where pupils are bigger! Links between physical education and information and communication technology are good and are used well to enhance learning. The use of video photography has helped the school to assess standards in physical education and compare them to national expectations through the use of CD Roms featuring action samples of work based on national expectations.