

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BOXFORD CE (VC) FIRST SCHOOL**

Sudbury

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number 124691

Headteacher: Mr R. Giles

Lead inspector: Peter Sudworth

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 255573

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 3-9 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 179

School address: Stone St  
Boxford  
Sudbury  
Suffolk

Postcode: CO10 5NP

Telephone number: 01787 210332

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Diana Taylor

Date of previous inspection: June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average six class primary school for pupils aged three to nine years is situated in the centre of Boxford. There are 179 pupils on roll. Boys outnumber the girls by almost two to one. There are six classes, two of which have mixed ages in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 based on age. The school has a part-time nursery, which operates in the mornings. Attainment on entry is above average. Most pupils come from the village itself and the villages of Assington, Newton, Groton and Edwardstone. About 40 per cent come from other areas. Most homes are privately owned; a small number are local authority housing, so pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are more favourable than usual. A below average number are entitled to free school meals. All pupils are white British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion have special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties, and an average number of these have a statement of their special educational need. Few pupils leave or join the school at times other than at the end and beginning of the school.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2700	Peter Sudworth	Lead inspector	English; geography; history; religious education; Special educational needs
34164	Julia Hammond	Lay inspector	
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	Foundation stage; science; Art and design; music
32948	Mary Walduck	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; design and technology; physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Boxford CE VC Primary is a successful school with many strengths.** Committed leadership, good teaching, supportive teamwork, an imaginative curriculum and a genuine concern for individual pupils' progress and welfare ensure that the pupils achieve well. These positive features result in above average attainment in several areas of the pupils' learning. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well in many areas of their learning and reach well above average levels of attainment in English, and above average standards in mathematics, science, information communications and technology (ICT), history and art and design by the end of Years 2 and 4
- On average, boys achieve well against boys nationally in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, but not as well as the school's girls
- Teachers use computer technology very effectively to motivate and engage pupils' interest in many lessons
- Pupils are very well cared for. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils' handwriting and their skills in tackling mathematical investigations could be improved
- The headteacher, supported very well by his deputy and other staff, provides very strong and caring leadership
- The curriculum is organised imaginatively, although geography could be given a higher profile, and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities
- Pupils enjoy school, attend very well and have very good attitudes to their learning
- There are very good links with the parents, other schools and the community
- Marking is not consistent and work is not always regularly dated, especially when completed on loose-leaf sheets

**The school has made good progress since the last inspection.** Standards are higher by the end of reception. Science, reading and speaking and listening standards are much improved by the end of Year 4. There is better provision for religious education and for pupils' cultural development. Handwriting remains an area for improvement. There are more opportunities for children in the nursery to be independent and to use their initiative. The support, care and arrangements for the pupils' welfare are better. The links with parents have improved well.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	B	A	C
writing	A*	A	B	C
mathematics	A*	A	A	B

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals  
A\* indicates very high results; in the top five per cent of schools.*

**Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school.** Children in the nursery and reception make good progress because of the good and often very good teaching. Most attain beyond the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of their learning. A similar good quality of teaching in Years 1 to 4 helps the pupils to reach well above average standards in English, though handwriting is of average quality. Pupils attain above average standards in mathematics, science, ICT, history and art and meet local expectations in religious education. Other subjects were sampled. The school has always obtained either above or well above average results against all schools nationally in the past three years in national tests. In 2001, results in mathematics and writing were in the top five per cent of schools in the country. In recognition of these results, the school received an achievement award in 2000 and 2001. In 2003, the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs brought about a slight fall in the trend of results, but nevertheless, they still reflected well against other schools. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and pupils with above average attainment are challenged well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are nurtured well.** Pupils' moral and social development are **very good** and their spiritual and cultural development are good. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are very good. Pupils are punctual and attendance in the last academic year was well above the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides pupils with a good quality of education.** There are many strengths. **Teaching and learning are good.** Eighty-two per cent of lessons observed were good and better. Teachers have high expectations and challenge the pupils effectively with an imaginative curriculum, which is very well planned and supported further by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have a very good attitude to their work as a result. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they progress well. Assessment of pupils' work is good and supports their progress well. The staff take very good care of all the pupils, make very good arrangements for their welfare and have very good relationships with them. There is a very strong partnership with the parents and very good links with the community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of both leadership and management is very good.** The headteacher leads the school very effectively and forms a very effective working partnership with the deputy head. The school is well managed. There is very good teamwork amongst all the staff. Subject leaders manage their responsibilities very well. The governing body is effective in its work and fulfils its statutory duties well. There is a very good ethos. The school has a very clear educational philosophy, which is successful in practice enabling the pupils to make good progress.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

A very high percentage of the parents show a very good level of support for the education provided, including the quality of teaching and the good progress made by their children. The children think highly of their school and enjoy their lessons and the wide range of additional opportunities.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Promote even further boys' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics
- Improve the quality of handwriting
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn a structured approach to mathematical investigations
- Give greater prominence to work in geography
- Ensure that marking is more consistent across the school and is used to give pupils good guidance in how to improve their work
- Improve the organisation of work when it is completed on loose-leaf sheets so that it is dated more regularly and ordered sequentially

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The children's attainment on entry is above average. Standards are **above average** at the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning and **above average** in several subjects by ages seven and nine. Pupils achieve **well**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in many areas of their work
- Pupils' attainment is well above average in English and above average in mathematics, science, ICT, history and art and design
- Pupils do not make as much progress in geography as they do in history because planned opportunities are more limited

#### Commentary

1. Pupils start school with a wider knowledge and better skills than usual. The children settle quickly to the routines in the nursery and achieve well because of the imaginative activities that they undertake and their keenness to engage in learning new things. The children move on to the reception class, where they remain hungry for new experiences. Their good achievements continue and most exceed the expectations for the goals in all areas of learning<sup>1</sup> by the end of the reception year.

2. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 4 in most aspects of their work, including the pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils. They make good progress because of the good and often very good teaching, a very rich curriculum and well planned work that matches their needs. Pupils' interest and enjoyment in all activities make a significant contribution to their achievement. Pupils who are more capable progress well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils remain interested in their work throughout the school and enjoy all their activities.

3. Results in national tests at age seven have mostly been well above average in the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with all schools, and mostly above average when compared to schools with similar percentages of free school meals. In 2003, results were lower than usual because there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Despite this, results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to similar schools. They were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing when compared to all schools nationally. In science, teacher assessment results were above average. On average girls have been doing better than the boys in national tests over recent years in reading, writing and mathematics by more than national differences.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.8 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.5 (17.9)	16.3 ( 16.5)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

<sup>1</sup> The six areas of learning comprise communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal, social and emotional development.



4. Since the last inspection standards have improved in all aspects of English, except handwriting by the end of Year 4. Pupils' competence in speaking and listening and their skills in reading are well above average and are particular strengths throughout the school. They achieve well. Pupils talk with ease and use a wide range of vocabulary. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They have well developed reading tastes and a good awareness of how books work. Their wide repertoire of books includes biography and the classics. They show good recall of the events and character in story and of details they have acquired from factual books. Comparatively, pupils' writing skills are not so highly developed, though many write with sensitivity and a good grammatical awareness. Standards are above average in writing overall. Spelling techniques are well developed but handwriting is of an average standard with some letters not well formed. Pupils' mathematical skills in Years 2 and 4 are above average and they achieve well. They calculate with a good level of accuracy and show good skills in dealing with data. A few pupils are working at levels well above expectations for their age. However, older pupils do not always show a thorough approach when tackling extended mathematical investigations. Pupils' skills in science have improved since the last inspection in Year 4 and are above average throughout the school. All pupils achieve well. They are alert to ensuring that their investigations are fair and they work with a good level of independence. Nevertheless, more could raise their own questions to investigate, particularly higher attaining pupils.

5. Pupils show above average skills in ICT throughout the school. They use computers to support learning in other subjects well. For example, Year 4 pupils show good skill when they make slide presentations. Pupils' attainment in religious education meets local expectations throughout and they achieve satisfactorily. History and geography were sampled but evidence from pupils' work and discussions indicate standards and achievement are better in history than geography. This is because history permeates many other subjects and pupils gain much knowledge through these studies. Their attainment is above average and they achieve well. However, geography is much less strong by comparison and less work is accomplished, though pupils' attainment meets National Curriculum expectations for their age. Insufficient evidence was obtained to judge attainment in music and design and technology, though these subjects are well represented in the planned curriculum. They meet national expectations in physical education and local expectations in religious education. Whilst little observation was made of art lessons, displayed work is of an above average quality for the pupils' ages and demonstrates that the pupils are exposed to a good range of techniques and range of media.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils enjoy school, have **very good** attitudes to their learning and behave **very well**. The provision for their personal development is **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

### **Main strengths**

- The very good relationships between the pupils and the adults and amongst the pupils encourage responsibility and build up pupils' self-esteem
- Pupils have very mature attitudes to their work and enjoy all that the school has to offer
- Pupils' very good punctuality enables lessons to begin promptly

### **Commentary**

6. From the nursery onwards, the pupils show a ready enthusiasm for school. They are eager to take part in the activities on offer and get involved in a wide variety of after-school clubs. They enjoy learning because they find all areas of the curriculum equally interesting. They put their enthusiasm down to the teachers. They say, "*When the teacher is explaining, she is very encouraging.*" The pupils describe their school as "*a friendly school*" and identify the fact that "*the teachers are really nice. There's always someone you can talk to*" as amongst the main reasons why they like it so much. Throughout the school they are treated with courtesy and fairness, which encourages them to treat each other in the same way. Even the very youngest pupils are able to listen with good attention when others are talking. They look after each other very well both when learning and at playtimes. They reflect on playtime arrangements in this way and state: "*The*

children try to make each other happy. The 'buddy guards' will always find a friend for someone on the buddy bench." The school listens to the pupils' views well through the school council and this promotes a mature attitude and concern for their school. The behaviour policy is based on a code of behaviour agreed between the school council and senior staff so the pupils feel involved in their own conduct.

7. The school encourages very good attendance and punctuality and maintains good records so that it can easily track individual pupils' attendance. Parents realise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, so they respond, make sure that their children usually arrive on time. This allows the school day to start promptly. Indeed, many pupils arrive before the beginning of school, eager to get on with their work before lessons start. Pupils are trusted to come in sensibly after break so no time is wasted.

**Attendance**

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%).

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.3	School data :	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions.

8. Behaviour and pupils' attitudes are very good. They have improved since the last inspection, because the pupils respond to the high expectations that are quietly made of them. They are trusted to use the computer room and the library at lunch-time. The pupils' very good work attitudes allow them to learn well. At all ages the pupils are helpful to each other and to visitors and have a number of responsibilities, which they accomplish effectively. New pupils are easily absorbed into the school by being given a friend on arrival. Pupils with special needs are readily accepted by the other pupils, who do their best to include them in all activities.

9. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and it is very good for their social and moral development. The school promotes good spiritual values through collective worship and through involvement in local events and particularly in the local church. Assemblies draw on many faiths for their inspiration, as well as covering basic moral principles. There are good opportunities for spiritual development in the curriculum through investigations in science and history. The pupils have a very well developed sense of what is right and wrong because they are listened to and treated fairly. They go on many visits and on a residential trip, which make them feel confident in situations outside their own school and able to work readily with visiting adults from other places. They have a good understanding of their own culture because they are involved in local activities, such as maypole dancing and through visits to historical sites. The influence of other cultures is introduced through art, music and books and the school has made a determined effort to increase the pupils' awareness in these areas.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** with many strengths. Teaching and learning are good. Eighty-two per cent of lessons observed were good and better. Teachers have high expectations and challenge the pupils effectively with an imaginative curriculum, which is well planned and supported well by extra-curricular activities. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The staff take very good care of all the pupils, make very good arrangements for their welfare. There is a very strong partnership with the parents and the community.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **good**.

### Main strengths

- Teachers form very good relationships with pupils, which enhance learning
- The teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to teaching and learning
- Individual targets in English help pupils to know what they need to do to improve
- Lessons are presented well, made interesting and pupils are hungry to find out new knowledge

### Commentary

10. Teaching is good overall. Significant amounts are very good. There has been a slight improvement in the overall quality since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good with some very good features. Staff visit children at home before they start nursery. This forges relationships quickly and helps them settle as soon as they start school. Well established routines in the Foundation Stage give the children security and provide a ready climate for learning. The children eagerly set about the activities when they arrive for school.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	12 (35%)	15 (44%)	6 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

11. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and the very good atmosphere of trust helps the pupils to feel confident to contribute in lessons, knowing that their efforts will be valued and that they will be praised for trying. Relationships are excellent in the Foundation Stage. Teachers' explanations and questioning are very good. There is a good dialogue about the subject matter and this contributes to the pupils' very good speaking and listening skills as they give their views and explain their answers. In this way, pupils are challenged to think. Teachers make good use of praise and pupils' self-esteem is enhanced. The pupils work hard as a result and they are keen to please.

12. Teachers quickly capture the children's imaginations in many lessons so pupils begin their activities quickly and with a ready eagerness. Time is used well in lessons because teachers are very well prepared with resources set out in advance for pupils to use. Furthermore the good use of time targets to accomplish specific pieces of work in lessons gives the pupils a sense of urgency, reflected in their good levels of concentration when engaged on tasks. Work is well matched to pupils' capabilities and pupils are mostly effectively challenged.

13. Very good use is made of ICT to present lessons. This visual form succeeds in securing the pupils' attention. It is most successful when explaining work and making lessons come alive. It is used particularly well in the teaching of literacy and mathematics. Lessons are well structured affording appropriate amounts of time to discussion, activity and a conclusion. Conclusions are well focused and offer pupils the opportunity to be self-evaluative. In the Year1/ 2 class, the pupils were

asked to select two sentences that they were most pleased with to read out to the rest of the class. This approach gave the opportunity for several pupils to contribute. In all lessons, the learning objectives are shared in language that pupils understand, but they are not always referred to at other stages of the lesson to see if they have been accomplished successfully. Homework is used well to support learning and to practise key skills.

14. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants who are an essential part of the school's success. Their work with groups and in particular their encouraging and well directed support of pupils with special educational needs help these pupils to make good progress.

15. Learning is good. Good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and to discuss and work things out help the pupils to take turns, to listen to other's points of view and to get themselves organised. This contributes successfully to their well developed social skills. For example, they work well on the computers, taking turns, discussing and making decisions.

16. The teaching of ICT is good and is supportive of both mathematics and English. Teachers have good skills in ICT and pupils make good progress. ICT is well planned to be supportive of work across the curriculum. There is not a marked weakness in the teaching of any subject, but the emphasis given to geography is less marked than in history.

17. Assessment is good overall and helps the teachers to match work well to pupils' individual needs. Their progress is tracked well as they move through the school so teachers are aware of pupils who may not be doing as well as they could and this helps them to take remedial action. Pupils are set individual targets to help them improve their work in English and they refer to these as they do their work. This helps the pupils to focus and improve. In mathematics, pupils are aware of their group targets, which help to progress them to the next National Curriculum level. ICT is used well in mathematics to improve their work and they undertake competency tests on the computers, which give them helpful pointers for improvement. Local Education Authority tests in reading and mathematics and other nationally recognised tests give additional indicators of progress. Results from national tests are analysed and this process helps the school to know in which aspects of work the pupils do well and where there might be the need for improvement. Comparisons are made between the respective performance of boys and girls. Marking is satisfactory. Some gives helpful pointers for improvement but there is an inconsistency in the quality of marking. The best marking is very effective and enables the pupils to improve because it is developmental.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is imaginatively planned, of **very good** quality and covers all National Curriculum requirements. A **very good** range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planning of the curriculum is very good
- The school is alert to curriculum innovation
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- A very wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum
- There is insufficient coverage of using and applying mathematics
- Accommodation for outdoor play in the nursery and reception is limited

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given a curriculum that meets their needs and covers the National Curriculum requirements. Better arrangements are made for the teaching of religious education than at the previous inspection and significant improvements have been made in the use of ICT, with all teachers and teaching staff confident in its use. This has had a good impact on teaching and learning and pupils' confidence with computers. More opportunities for scientific enquiry have been identified. There are more opportunities for the children's independence in the Foundation Stage.

19. Provision for literacy is very good and it is good for mathematics. A slight weakness in mathematics is that pupils are not being given enough opportunities to carry out and record extended investigations. Their ability to organise results and generalise is not as strong as their above average attainment on statutory tests would suggest it should be.

20. The curriculum has many strengths. Strong links are made between and within subjects. Pupils are exposed to a good range of arts and scientific subjects, including the practical. Use of ICT is very effectively interwoven in the curriculum. Provision and the curriculum arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Their individual education plans are of a good quality and clearly indicate the way forward.

21. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. The school council has developed a code of conduct, supported the introduction of a "buddy bench" in the playground and campaigned for the use of play equipment at playtimes. Pupils are encouraged to be independent, trustworthy and take responsibility. As a result, they change library books, move between teaching areas, use the computer suite at lunch times with maturity. There is very good equality of access to the curriculum, and opportunities for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs.

22. There is very good support for learning outside lessons. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities to cater for all tastes. These are popular with both boys and girls, ensuring that the breadth of activities found within lessons is mirrored and extended in the extra activities. Theatre visits are arranged and a residential visit is organised for older pupils and these contribute to the pupils' personal development and help to broaden their knowledge. The wide variety of visitors, including community personnel, storytellers and theatre groups play a valuable part in enriching the curriculum and preparing pupils for adult life.

23. Accommodation is satisfactory in the foundation stage. However, the outside play provision is not ideal as visitors have to walk through the area to gain access to the school. Accommodation is good in the remainder of the school. Provision for outside play, for infant and junior pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school is well resourced with learning equipment and books. It is very good in ICT.

24. The staff is well qualified for this sphere of education. All staff are provided with good opportunities for professional development that enable them to keep updated and to fulfil their duties effectively.

### Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **very good** level of care for pupils' welfare and health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring pupils' performance is **good**. The school seeks pupils' views and acts on them to **good** effect.

### Main strengths

- Very good relationships between pupils and staff support pupils very well, ensure that they feel valued and secure, and help establish a positive environment for learning
- Excellent induction arrangements for pupils entering the nursery and moving from nursery to reception help them to make a confident start to their education
- The very caring attitudes of staff provide good role models for the pupils and help them to feel happy and secure at school

### Commentary

25. The quality of care, guidance and arrangements for the pupils' welfare have improved since the last inspection. All pupils are very well cared for and good guidance and support help them to achieve well. In the nursery, the children are given scope to make independent decisions about their actions whilst also being nurtured kindly. They enjoy a very good range of indoor and outdoor play activities within a safe and protected environment. They take the initiative in being responsible for their possessions. The same balance between independence and care exists within the rest of

the school. The safety of the pupils within the school is good. The site has been made secure where necessary according to a recent risk assessment without stopping the pupils' ready use of the outdoors. The school has recently carried out a health and safety audit and, as a result, a new policy based on its recommendations is being put in place. Very good child protection policies follow locally agreed guidelines and all members of staff are aware of them. The school has good links with the education welfare officer and local police liaison officer, which also contribute to the pupils' general welfare and safety beyond school.

26. The pupils are very well supported by the adults around them and they know that there is always someone they can turn to. The parents see the stability of the staff as playing an important role in providing this secure background. The co-operation between the staff also ensures that the pupils move easily from one class to another with nursery pupils spending visiting time in reception in the term before they move up. Through their reports, the parents have good access to information about their children's development, whilst in the nursery. The diary, which passes between parents and teacher, plays an important role in reinforcing pupils' confidence and skills and in the sharing on understanding about the individual pupil.

27. The induction for pupils is very good. It is excellent in the nursery because of the home visiting arrangements, enabling the youngest children to settle immediately after entry. The school has a caring attitude to the inclusion of all new pupils, which ensures that settling in is made as easy as possible. Pupils expect to look after each other and are therefore confident that, by the time they leave the school, they can move into new school situations without difficulty.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school works **very well** with the parents, involving them effectively as partners in learning. Partnerships with the local community are **very good**, maintained through the sharing of facilities and active support for local charities. The school works **very well** with both the local playgroup and the local middle school, which smoothes the way for the pupils' arrival at nursery and their moving on to their next school.

### **Main strengths**

- Parents' views of the school are very positive and they appreciate the openness of the opportunities for discussion
- Home and playgroup visits for the new intake of nursery pupils smooth the transition to school
- Active dialogue with the middle school supports curriculum continuity

### **Commentary**

28. The quality of links with parents and the community have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Parents are welcomed into school and can discuss any concerns with staff as they arise. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to share the targets in the individual education plans. Parents are confident that the school will listen to their views. From the nursery onwards, they are encouraged to help in school and they respond well in this. They are kept well informed about their children's progress, through both regular meetings and extra discussions whenever needed. The regular newsletters keep parents informed of current school news. The home/school agreement and homework policy encourage the parents to play an active part in their children's learning. Individual reports are detailed and clearly written giving parents good information about their children's academic progress compared to other children of their age and of their personal development. The active Friends of Boxford School association raises substantial funds for the school, as well as providing social opportunities.

29. There are very good links with the community. The headteacher writes a regular article for the village magazine and the village community uses the school's facilities extensively. The pupils are introduced to the local shop, fire station and police station in their early years and the invitations to elderly residents, particularly at Christmas, and involvement in charitable work, help the pupils to understand community life and its needs. Nursery staff carry out regular visits to the local playgroups and visit the homes of each child before entry, so smoothing the children's arrival at

nursery. The school is active within the local pyramid of schools, sharing curriculum planning for the next stage of the pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils visit the local middle school and the middle school teachers visit Boxford, thus ensuring an easy transfer between the two schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Governance of the school is **good**. The leadership and management of other key staff are **very good**.

### **Main strengths**

- The headteacher has a clear vision and is committed to continual improvement of the school
- The deputy headteacher is a key player in the school's very imaginative curriculum
- The Foundation Stage is very well led
- Subject leaders manage their responsibilities very well
- Governors play a strong role in the development of the school and share their expertise effectively

### **Commentary**

30. The headteacher continues to provide very strong and very caring leadership in a caring way as at the last inspection. He has a very good working partnership with the deputy head, who is a key player in the success of the school and in the imaginative curriculum provided. They have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the work of the school. Their vision, to ensure that all pupils follow an exciting and challenging curriculum and achieve well, is very effectively put into practice. The ethos that pupils should enjoy their learning is apparent throughout the school. The pupils love school and, combined with the very good relationships, are the main reasons why the school is such a happy place. The headteacher has been successful in involving the governing body more fully in school development and, since the last inspection, has ensured that the school development plan has a more rigorous focus upon the raising of standards and a longer term strategic view.

31. The headteacher is very well supported by all staff. The strong sense of teamwork, where teachers, teaching assistants and support staff work together means that the school has few areas of weakness. The commitment all staff show to the inclusion of pupils contributes strongly to the very good ethos. Subject co-ordinators monitor performance in their subjects very well and deal with any areas for development. For example, the school had identified a slowing down in progress in reading after pupils had taken the national tests at the end of Year 2. As a result they worked with parents, who then ensured pupils read regularly at home, as well as at school, and standards improved.

32. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the management of the youngest children. Excellent induction procedures for children entering the nursery and then into the reception class mean that children start school in a confident manner and fit in easily to the school's routines. The co-ordinator works in a seamless partnership with the nursery teacher and the nursery nurse. Opportunities are provided for them to meet playgroup leaders, parents and the previous teacher. As a result, everyone works effectively together.

33. The governors play a strong role in the development of the school, share their expertise effectively and fulfil their statutory duties well. Through their curriculum responsibilities and visits to the school when they talk to teachers and pupils about their work, they develop a good awareness of the school's strengths and its areas for development. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The chair of governors has a good understanding of this role and provides a firm steer to the work of the governing body. A positive feature is the way the governing body acts as a critical friend by asking the headteacher to explain reasons behind the actions he takes. Its positive teamwork and support of the school contribute to the happy working environment, which in its turn helps the pupils to achieve well.

34. Management is very good. Subject leaders are very effective in their responsibilities, promoting development and monitoring standards. Effective analysis is made of statistical data and national test results. Governors and the senior management team constantly review the progress of initiatives in the school development plan. Staff also seek to ensure curriculum provision is of the highest calibre and adjustments are made to refine and improve it. All staff are given good opportunities for training and these are linked effectively to performance management arrangements. Their workload is managed with appropriate consideration. Finances are managed well. The headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value to good effect. The school compares its performance with similar schools, and this helps them to set challenging targets. Fund-raising provides a good source of extra income, and is directed well into areas of need, for example increasing the number of computers and resources. All stakeholders are consulted, including pupils and parents, when considering the forward direction of the school.

35. The curriculum is constantly evaluated and refined. Issues raised by monitoring are fed into the school development plan and also linked with performance management targets for individual teachers. This ensures innovation is very well supported and curriculum development is very good.

36. The quality of teaching, pupils' interest in their learning, an imaginative curriculum, well developed and up to date use of ICT across the curriculum in both teaching and learning are key factors in the school's success. These help in the creation of a very good ethos of care and hard work. Staff manage well the disproportionate percentage of boys in each class compared to the number of girls, although this is a constant challenge to the teachers in the organisation of some lessons.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	449,118
Total expenditure	428,388
Expenditure per pupil	2,232

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,000
Balance carried forward to the next	20,730



## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is one of the strengths of the school. Children attend the nursery part-time for two or three terms before they transfer to the reception class. The children make a very good start to their education in the nursery, building well on their overall above average level of attainment in most areas of their learning on entry. The very good liaison with the playgroups, from which the children transfer, means they are very well prepared for nursery. They make good progress in consolidating and developing their skills. They achieve well in the areas of learning in the nursery because the quality of teaching is very good and the very good focus on the development of the pupil's social and independent skills. The children's progress is monitored carefully and activities are very well matched to the children's needs. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. As a result, children are very well prepared for the reception class. The quality of provision is better in the nursery than at the time of the previous inspection.

38. Provision for children in the reception class is very good. Children get a good start to their statutory education at school because of the very good planning arrangements between the nursery and reception class. Adults create a very positive learning environment based on pupils' needs. Learning is well planned and interesting, and progress is monitored closely so that teaching provides the right challenges. Exciting practical activity helps the children achieve well in all aspects of their learning. By the end of the reception year, almost all children reach, and many exceed, the expected standards. Standards have risen by the end of the Foundation Stage since the time of the last inspection.

39. Procedures for introducing children and their parents to the school are excellent and ensure a smooth start for their children. The quality of teaching is good and frequently very good. Adults have a very good understanding of how young children learn best, which is reflected in the wide range of teaching styles and very good choice of learning activities. Once the children's interest is captured, adults support and extend learning well by discussing what the children are doing, bringing their attention to what they can find out, and challenging their thinking. More able children struggled on one occasion to create a symmetrical design when using the computer but the discussion with the teacher extended their understanding and, as a result, they were able to create the picture using more than one colour. Relationships between children and adults are excellent and support learning exceptionally well. Adults set very clear expectations of good work and behaviour to which the children respond positively. Teaching assistants and volunteer parents make a very good contribution to the children's learning.

40. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The staff work very well as a team to plan the curriculum so that activities provide appropriate challenge. The teaching staff are alert to providing opportunities that match need when both the reception class and the nursery share planned activities. Adults assess children's developing skills carefully, which helps them to know what each child needs to do to improve. They make the best use of the rather limited outdoor area.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths**

- Discussion times in the reception class help the children to become aware of the feelings of others
- Interesting activities encourage children to develop their curiosity, concentration and confidence

## Commentary

41. The teaching of this aspect is very good throughout the Foundation Stage. Most children join the reception class with good personal and social skills. During all activities, there is a strong emphasis on developing these further. During registration, children are expected to answer politely when their names are called and, as a result, they answer the teacher clearly and with respect. They are enabled to discuss emotions and the effect on others because teachers make sure learning is relevant. During one lesson, pupils made sad faces and looked in a mirror. One pupil replied that he would be unhappy if he made that face. The teacher encouraged the pupils to think of ways of helping others when they saw them with unhappy faces. The large range of imaginative and exciting activities provided for children in the nursery at the start of the day helps the children's social development and helps to sustain their levels of concentration. They share well with others in their groups and behave very well. They develop a good level of independence and confidence in working alone and alongside others and in doing things for themselves.

## Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths

- Children listen attentively and express their ideas with confidence
- Basic skills in reading and writing are taught well

## Commentary

42. Most children are already exceeding the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception year. They achieve very well because of the very good teaching. The school builds well the children's above average speaking skills when they start school by providing good opportunities to talk about what they see and do. The curriculum is enriched very well through practical experiences, which bring learning into the classroom. For example, nursery children discussed the planting of pansies in the outdoor area whilst others listened attentively before asking questions, such as which tools they used to dig the holes. In whole-class sessions, teachers place a good emphasis on obtaining contributions from the children. Children in the reception class were reading 'Dora's Eggs'. The teacher invited them to talk about the characters and plot, which brought the response from one child, *"I think the cow thought the chickens were nicer than the baby calf"*. The children know that their ideas are valued, and so they are confident to contribute. The early skills of reading are taught well, partly through sharing books, and partly through a well-structured programme of reading at home and at school. The children thoroughly enjoy reading. The extra very good support provided by parents has a significant impact on children's progress, so that by the end of the reception year, almost all of the children read simple, repetitive text confidently. Many have moved beyond this stage and are using good skills to tackle books with a range of unknown words. The higher attaining pupils understand what authors are and know that the title of a book will explain what the story is about. Special areas for writing in both the nursery and reception classes contain a large range of pens, crayons and paper, which encourage the development of writing skills well. The strong emphasis placed on using the correct vocabulary to teach letter names and sound them, whilst forming the letters in print, contributes strongly to the pupils' good progress in this aspect.

## Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths

- Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills, and as a result, children achieve well and exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well in this area of learning

## Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are good overall with some very good aspects. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills. For example, the nursery teacher used an attendance chart very effectively to help the children to count the number present. Most count from one to 20 with confidence. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well supported effectively and perceptively by teaching assistants. As a result, one child who was having difficulty sorting farm animals into groups was able to separate the sheep from the other model animals because he was shown how to compare their features. A strong emphasis on mathematical language, such as 'more than' and 'right angle' helps to deepen the children's understanding in this area of learning. The activities set are both challenging and fun. The reception class teacher used markings on the outdoor play area very well to teach, and also to assess the children's understanding of number and the properties of shapes. The children ran and stood on a number more than 10 or next to a right angle shape. The children were excited by this activity and had great fun. Very good use was made of fallen cones, leaves and pieces of stick from the school grounds to lay out patterns that repeated themselves and they accomplished this task well. Such activities result in the children having an above average grasp of number for their age. Mathematics is also a part of a wider range of activities that children study, such as when pupils are making symmetrical patterns on the computer. Most children are already meeting the standards expected at the end of the reception year, and a significant number are exceeding them.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

## Main strengths

- Very good use is made of the outdoors and natural objects to gain new knowledge
- The children learn a very good range of subject matter

## Commentary

44. Teaching and learning in lessons seen were good. A very good science lesson extended children's understanding of symmetry in mathematics and the use of the computer to draw symmetrical patterns. A wide variety of activities helps children to learn about the natural world, as when they compare similarities between leaves and twigs when making symmetrical pictures in the school grounds. There was great excitement in the reception class when the two ducklings that had hatched earlier from eggs took their first swim. From observation in the aquarium, children in the nursery know how tadpoles develop and know they change into frogs. They know that they can find minibeasts under logs, stones and on plants. They take care of plants in the school gardens. They develop a good knowledge of the properties of different materials through their play with sand, water and play dough. They develop their understanding of the world through exchanging ideas when using construction materials for which they have ample opportunities. Children work confidently on the computer and use the mouse well to control the features from a range of programmes. Almost all reception children log on individually to the school system, open files and save and print their work. In religious education, children develop an understanding of their own and other's cultures and beliefs by thinking about celebrations and festivals, and learning about the traditions of Judaism. In all these activities, adults encourage children's ability to discuss what they find out. By the end of the reception year, almost all children reach, and many exceed the expected standard in this area of learning.

45. Provision in **creative and physical development** has not been judged as not all aspects of these areas of learning were seen during the inspection.

46. Teaching is good in **creative development** and achievement is good. Most children reach at least the standards expected for their ages and many exceed them. Work on display shows the good quality and range of children's art in reception. This includes their own free painting, very attractive paint and glitter reindeer related to the stories they have been reading. They have made impressive patterns and designs, which the children have drawn when listening to 'The Dance of the Firebird' in their music lessons and use clay as printing blocks to make patterns. No music lessons

were seen, but children join in enthusiastically with a range of well known number songs in mathematics lessons. Role-play areas, such as 'the garden centre', enable the children to play creatively, sociably and imaginatively.

47. Teaching is good and children make good progress in their **physical development**. Standards are better than expected. In one physical education lesson, challenging activities enabled all children to move confidently, use the space in the hall well and dribble a ball with a good degree of accuracy for their age. The girls skip well. This is because they play with the older pupils at playtimes and have learnt to improve their skills. Although the indoor area is spacious, the outdoor area is rather small and limits the children's physical activity, for example for wheeled toys. There are no opportunities for children to climb and swing in the infant area. Although they use the adventure playground once a week, this is not sufficient to develop these skills regularly. The children have very good control of writing tools, paint brushes and crayons enabling them to form letters and numbers well.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is well above average in English and they achieve well
- Excellent use is made of ICT to present English lessons
- Handwriting and techniques to deal with the work pupils have completed could be improved

#### Commentary

48. Pupils' attainment is well above average by the end of Years 2 and 4 and pupils achieve well. Their attainment in speaking and listening and in reading is well above average. Pupils' writing skills, whilst in comparison to their reading are not as well developed, are nevertheless above average at ages seven and nine. Whilst both boys and girls have been doing much better than boys and girls nationally in end of Year 2 tests, on average the school's girls have been excelling by comparison, particularly in reading. As a result of the good attention to teaching spelling awareness, regular practice and the good attention to teaching phonics from an early stage, spelling is above average. Handwriting is average but with room for improvement in style and attention to the comparative size of the letters. Presentation is satisfactory but loose-leaf sheets could be dated more regularly to help track pupils' progress over time and could be assembled more attractively.

49. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading and show good interest in a range of books, including poetry. They comprehend the text well and are often fluent when reading aloud. More able Year 2 pupils read with good expression. Year 4 pupils display a mature choice of texts for their age, including biography and children's classics. They read aloud with good intonation showing a good awareness of what they read. Pupils read regularly at school and at home where they receive very good parental support. By age nine, many pupils have a good understanding of how reference books can be used and they use an index to good purpose. They know and understand terms, such as 'glossary', 'blurb' and 'contents' and use them effectively. Pupils throughout the school listen well to stories. They listen carefully to each other's views in class discussions and many speak with confidence, making use of a good range of vocabulary.

50. In Years 1 and 2, pupils write for a variety of purposes. They write poems using vocabulary sensitively. '*Spring is a crocus purple and yellow popping eyes*' and '*Spring is the world of leafbuds*' were included in poetry they wrote about spring. They plan their stories with a good attention to structure. They write precisely in giving instructions about how to make biscuits. A good feature of English work in Year 2 is the application of literacy across other subjects, as in science and history when they describe their visit to the fire station. They write up their research into 'Early People' to good effect. By the time they are in Year 4, pupils show a good awareness of story structure. Their written stories show good progress from Year 2. They make good use of vocabulary to evoke a particular scene. '*She trudged onwards and suddenly she saw a flicker of light*'. Pupils write for a good range of purposes, including making slide presentations in ICT and writing simple playscripts with instructions.

51. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. At times it is very good. Lessons are very well planned and structured. Assessment is used well to create individual targets for pupils, which assists their progress as they refer to them as they work, and also to match work to pupils' needs. The activities for pupils with special educational needs help them to make good progress and the support of the teaching assistants is very good. Excellent use is made of ICT to present lessons on an electronic whiteboard. This imaginative and visual approach keeps the pupils focused, moves learning on at a brisk pace, maintains the lesson flow, and contributes to the good progress pupils make. Texts are used very effectively in this way to develop pupils' knowledge of language and understanding of grammar. Pupils acquire a good appreciation of literary conventions as a result. Teachers usually read excerpts of text out aloud with good expression and this provides a good model for pupils to copy. There is a high level of challenge in literacy work. Year 1 and 2

pupils were already being taught to research and to understand terminology such as 'subheadings' and making good progress in this. It is this high level of challenge that leads to the pupils' all-round well above average skills in reading activities. Activities are well planned to promote pupils' progress. Careful attention is given to moving pupils on and developing their skills in note-taking and punctuation. Lessons contain a good balance of introduction, activity and explanation and a range of thought provoking strategies, which help retain pupils' keen sense of interest in lessons. They behave well as a result. High quality relationships and teachers' encouraging use of praise, such as '*that was a very impressive word*', facilitate pupils' confidence and keenness to contribute answers. They also listen courteously to the views of others. The selective use of learning partners to discuss specific questions and ideas enhances the pupils' speaking and listening skills very well.

52. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The library is well organised with a good selection of books and kept in an orderly condition. Lessons have been observed and improvements made. There is a good attention to analysing results and knowing where pupils are at in their learning. There has been good progress in English since the last inspection in teaching and in reading standards by the end of Year 4. Marking is satisfactory overall. The best gives good guidance so pupils know how to improve their work.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

53. Very good use is made of literacy in other subjects. Pupils write for various purposes across the curriculum. Residential visits in Year 4 promote a wide range of writing, including work about geography and history and much is word-processed. They describe their investigations in science, as when evaluating the best cloth for mopping up spilt liquid. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills very well through the wide range of opportunities provided. They research well in books and the Internet to digest more information for their studies.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and reach standards above those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 4
- Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs, so they achieve well
- Teachers use ICT very well to interest pupils and to keep them attentive in lessons
- Leadership and management of mathematics are very good
- Pupils do not always adopt a structured approach to tackling investigations
- Some marking is inaccurate and teachers' written comments do not indicate enough how work could be improved

### **Commentary**

54. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Both boys and girls perform well; although the girls have been performing better than the boys on average in national tests. Over forty per cent of pupils attained the higher level in national tests in 2003 despite this being a poorer group of pupils than usual. Pupils with special educational needs show very good attainment in relation to their ability. Standards are similar to those at the previous inspection.

55. Attainment is above average. At the end of Year 4, more pupils than usual are working at levels expected nationally for pupils who are up to two years older. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs build very well on previous attainment. When supported by teaching assistants, they work in line with national expectations.

56. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good overall. The quality of teaching in lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Pupils' written work shows good coverage of mathematical work in number, calculation, problem-solving, shape, space and measures, and data handling. Work is not presented as well as it might be. It is mainly on loose sheets that are often

undated, glued into exercise books or stored, not always sequentially, in folders. This system makes it very difficult for pupils to look back over work, see progression in learning, and improve their presentation skills. Marking does not give pupils enough information that will help them improve their work. The few wall displays in mathematics are limited to mathematical vocabulary. There was little evidence of extended investigations in mathematics, so pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop these skills and help them solve problems independently. Higher attaining older pupils found difficulty in organising lists when tackling a problem to ensure all possibilities had been found and in drawing generalisations from results.

57. The most effective lessons seen were characterised by thorough preparation of learning and teaching resources with accurate match of activity to pupils' differing prior attainment. Lessons started promptly with oral and mental work. The most effective beginnings to lessons were made when teachers targeted their questions at particular pupils, using assessment information well to know how best to support those learners. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good because of very good use of ICT, and the use of electronic computerised whiteboards in particular, interest, excitement and engage the pupils. In one very good lesson, worksheets prepared from whiteboard screens enabled the teacher to move rapidly between families of fractions. As a result, the pupils were able to understand some fractions were the same and linked this to their knowledge of multiples. Good questioning helped them spot the patterns in results much quicker.

58. Teaching assistants are deployed well. They provide very good support, enabling all pupils to progress well. In one class, management of teaching assistants' time was particularly effective, with timed withdrawal periods for particular groups of pupils at different points in the lesson. This ensured that all pupils remained on task and achieved well. Relationships among teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are very good.

59. Leadership and management of mathematics are very good. Pupils' answers to tests programmed into the computer are monitored effectively and detailed information such as this on each pupil's progress is used well to plan their learning needs and to correct misconceptions. Results from national, county and school tests are analysed to identify weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Test data is used to group pupils and set targets for future performance. Marking is up to date but occasionally inaccurate and with insufficient comment for improvement.

60. Mathematics has improved since the last inspection. Very good use of Primary National Strategy numeracy materials for mathematics has enabled teachers to set good challenge and expectation during lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Good opportunities are planned for pupils to develop and use their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils successfully constructed a bar chart to show the different distances a toy car travelled down an increasingly steeper ramp. Year 3 pupils made bar charts of the time taken by different characters from a novel to travel a set distance. In science, Year 4 pupils use line graphs in science to track how quickly liquids cool in containers insulated by different materials. History timelines displayed in classrooms give pupils a good understanding of how large numbers are ordered.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Years 2 and 4, standards are above average
- Teaching focuses well on investigational work, which motivates the pupils
- Good links are made with other subjects to develop pupils' scientific skills
- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to write about their investigations in depth and to develop their own lines of enquiry

## Commentary

62. Standards in science are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4 and pupils achieve well. When compared to similar schools, standards are well above average. Standards have been maintained by the age of 7 since the last inspection and have improved by the end of Year 4.

63. Through first hand experiences, Year 1 pupils have a good understanding of the characteristics of living things and identify clearly the main stages in the life cycle of a frog and identify the differences between the adult frog and the developing froglet. By Year 2, pupils have developed their understanding further and can label correctly the main organs of the human body and identify their function. Pupils' very good speaking and listening skills, and their good general knowledge, help them to explain what they observe and so a significant proportion of the current Year 2 are on course to reach the higher level.

64. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of the human body. Almost all pupils can describe the different parts of the human eye, like the 'iris', and explain their function. They have a good understanding of the properties of light and know the difference between the speed of sound and light because of the well chosen experiments and their ready interest to research such knowledge.

65. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' good levels of understanding are enhanced by the good emphasis placed on learning through first-hand experiences. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils designed and made seat belts on a car 'buggy' to restrain a 'play person' before testing the device outside. The teacher used questions skillfully to help pupils explain how the seat belts worked to protect the play person from the force created by the collision of their vehicle. An emphasis on creating an exciting and investigative curriculum, with good questions designed to appeal to the pupils' interests has been the main reason why standards have improved by Year 4 since the last inspection. The use of a science booklet, although containing exciting questions for pupils to investigate, limits older pupils' opportunities to explain their investigations in depth because the format of the booklet limits the amount they can write about each experiment carried out. In the work seen and lessons observed not enough opportunities are given for pupils to develop their own lines of enquiry.

66. The subject is led and managed very well. Good links are made with other subjects to develop pupils' scientific skills further. For example, pupils in Year 3 have designed and made musical instruments in an African style to play in a musical drama portraying African life. Work on materials is further enhanced through art where Years 3 and 4 pupils have made objects for a 'metal man challenge'. The monitoring of teaching and learning identifies areas for development and these are tracked through the school development plan. There is a strong focus on using educational visits to enrich the curriculum. Older pupils were involved in an inter-school science fayre for a renewable energy challenge, which stimulated their interest in science.

67. Good assessment procedures enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress closely, to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. As a result, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. Although there are some good examples in marking, where teachers help pupils' improve their work, this is not consistent. Pupils do not have their own small targets to work towards to give them a better understanding of their own learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### Main strengths

- Resources for ICT are very good and enable pupils to achieve well
- The curriculum is very well organised and provides a good structure for skill development
- Leadership and management of the subject are very effective
- Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve



## **Commentary**

68. Standards in ICT are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils have good skills and work confidently. They access file material quickly and retrieve items from their stored work and from other sources to good effect to produce well illustrated and attractive work. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils import pictures created earlier into a newspaper report linked to work in literacy. Higher attaining older pupils, both boys and girls, confidently produce presentations with animations, sound effects and transitions between slides, matching the presentation material carefully to their audience.

69. In all lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. Sometimes it was very good. Teaching staff and assistants have received training and this has given them much confidence in the use of information and communication technology. Teachers use the class interactive whiteboard well to demonstrate exactly what is required and prepare the pupils well for their activities in the ICT suite. This results in a prompt, confident start to pupils' independent work and to their success with the activities. It is this good teaching, the very good level of challenge in the activities set, combined with the pupils' ready interest, which leads to the above average levels of attainment.

70. Information and communication technology is well resourced. There is a suite of computers and interactive whiteboards in classrooms, with Internet access. Additional computers are found in activity areas around the school. This good provision supports the learning of all pupils as pressure to accommodate large numbers of pupils in the suite is eased. Those pupils whose special educational needs render them unable to cope for long in confined areas can work in more open places. There is a good range of software for teachers to draw upon when planning lessons specifically for information and communication technology as well as when supporting learning in other subjects.

71. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator provides a good role model in teaching the subject and organising the learning. Training ensures that all teaching staff are confident with new software and hardware. Technical hitches are rectified quickly. Arrangements for pupils to build up a portfolio of work are in place.

72. Since the last inspection provision for information and communication technology has improved. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in classrooms and all staff trained in their use. They enhance learning in many areas of the curriculum, facilitating a good pace in lessons, and increasing pupils' motivation. The air-conditioned computer suite has been installed since the last inspection, allowing whole class lessons and more frequent access to computers for pupils.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

73. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Pupils use computers to present their work in different ways. For example, pupils in Year 2 wrote about the different 'people who help us' in personal, social and health education, while pupils in Year 4 presented their science work as a slide show. Good links are made with mathematics, including the presentation of information in graphs. Year 4 pupils make presentations about the knowledge gained from their practical investigations in science. Pupils use the computers well in their free time for various study purposes and this extra practice develops their skills further. They make good links to mathematics and their data-handling knowledge and skills are good. Programs are used effectively to compose music.

## HUMANITIES

### History, Geography and RE

74. **History** was not a major focus for the inspection but evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is above expectations for their age throughout the school and pupils achieve well. The subject is given much emphasis and forms a major part of study themes, enabling pupils to gain a good understanding. Teachers bring history alive by a range of well chosen practical experiences, such as good use of visits to museums, making and tasting Roman bread and attractive displays of historical artefacts. Particularly good use is made of a range of sources of evidence to interpret the past. Personal first-hand accounts bring to life times before the children's own experiences. The in-depth study of Boxford in Key Stage 2, through the analysis of records, such as log books, comparing maps of the area over time and the recounts of people, who have lived in the village all their life, brings home to the pupils an awareness of history in a meaningful way. The pupils gain a good understanding of family trees by studying a famous, local Suffolk family and then apply this principle to their own family. Much good use of the Internet to support work in history enhances their thirst for further knowledge. Year 2 pupils' studies of early people, the work of archaeologists, comparison of firefighters now and then and reference to time lines enhance their early understanding of time passing.

75. **Geography** is not given the same level of importance in pupils' studies as history, but nevertheless meets requirements. Year 2 pupils' studies of an imaginary island help them to understand how places differ and help them to make comparisons between life in their own village with life elsewhere. Year 2 pupils draw a simple route to the village post office and show a satisfactory awareness of the position of local village features in doing so. This is furthered in Years 3 and 4 with studies comparing their own village with life in a village in India. There are some good geographical links in the planning of the work for the residential visit in Year 4, such as first-hand observation of coastal erosion. There are also some good links in their historical work as they compare place names from Suffolk and beyond and identify similarly named places of the eastern seaboard of the United States as they pursue the work and life of the famous local Suffolk family. There are missed opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of co-ordinates, world knowledge of place and position and an understanding of Ordnance Survey maps and keys.

### Religious education

Insufficient teaching was observed to make a reliable judgement about provision in religious education. Timetable arrangements did not permit any observation of lessons in Years 3 and 4.

### Commentary

76. Two lessons were observed in the infants. One was good and one was excellent. Both lessons gripped the pupils' attentions because of the imaginative way learning was presented. Pupils developed a respect for their own and other's beliefs. Pupils' attainment in religious education in the lessons seen met the requirements in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieved well.

77. In the good lesson, the teacher built on pupils' knowledge of the life of Christ well. Their understanding of selfishness and generosity was developed well by asking them to compare these values in the story of 'the five loaves and two fishes to eating a large bar of chocolate by themselves. Good use of ICT to project images of the story at appropriate points helped to hold the pupils' interest. The boy's actions were brought home, as they were compared to the pupils' sharing their own packed lunch. The use of role-play in the follow-up activity helped to re-inforce sharing in a range of ways and involved all pupils. The excellent lesson is set out as an example of outstanding practice and is detailed below.

## Example of outstanding practice

### A Year 2 religious education lesson showed outstanding practice in conveying a story from the Hindu faith.

The teacher made excellent use of models and spread out material on the floor to represent scenery to recount the story of Ganesh. The sacredness of the story for adherents of the Hindu faith was made clear from the outset. The use of models, dressed in appropriate Indian costume, and brought out from a golden box as the story unfolded held the pupils in rapt attention. At one part of the story, the teacher used clay to form the body of Pavarti's friend and held the pupils spell-bound as 'the clay body became alive' and was dripped with water from the Ganges. Pupils' reactions were sought as Pavarti's husband returned from his seven years away, and immediately chopped off the boy's head. This discussion led to pupils searching their own consciences about justice and morality. In conclusion pupils were asked to write down and put their problems anonymously in a box with a model of Ganesh. Two examples were withdrawn and pupils asked to suggest solutions. One indicated a worry because his friend was cleverer than he was. Pupils showed much maturity in resolving the problems and the teacher's own intervention that all have abilities in different ways was additionally reassuring.

78. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Resources and background information for teachers have been built up well since the last inspection. The teaching example of the subject leader is a model for others to follow. There has been much sharing of ideas to help staff present religious education lessons in interesting ways that switch pupils on. The leader has a very good level of interest in the subject and promotes it well. As a result the provision is much improved since the last inspection.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

79. One lesson was observed in each of **art and design** and **music**, two in **design and technology**, and four in **physical education**. No judgement has been made on provision in art and design, music and design and technology.

80. Artwork is displayed well around the school and demonstrates the good breadth to the **art and design** curriculum. It is also linked very well to other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils had painted wax resist pictures when investigating textiles in science. Elsewhere in the school, pupils had designed mono-prints well using a clay block to print patterns and shapes. Years 3 and 4 pupils with the help of their parents have produced some high quality sculptures in a project entitled 'The metal man challenge'. In music, pupils' paintings in response to classical music show good appreciation of the mood. Older pupils' paintings in the style of L.S.Lowry show good awareness of the style. A great deal of thought goes into making sketchbooks out of different textures of paper. This gives pupils the opportunities to evaluate the visual and tactile elements for differing purposes. As a result pupils were able to describe their favourite page. One pupil said "*I like the pink tissue page best but it is no good if you write on it in pencil as it tears the page*". Teachers are alert to exploring a variety of starting points for practical work. In the one very good lesson seen in a Year 2 class, pupils were using a wide range of resources to copy patterns in animals like the giraffe and jaguar. Their observational drawings were of a good standard. Overall the quality of work seen was above national expectations.

81. **Design and technology** was not a major focus in the inspection. Older pupils were seen to work enthusiastically with gear mechanisms on vehicles of their own design, made using a commercially produced kit. The task was linked to their literacy work on the "Iron Man". All pupils were able to design and make a vehicle containing one or two gear mechanisms that enabled an iron man model to rotate when placed on top of the moving vehicle. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress with appropriate support from a teaching assistant. In another lesson, teaching and learning were good. The design and technology was linked to science, as pupils made a buggy out of objects, such as a ruler, axles and wheels, in order to observe the effect of a crash at different speeds using a play person. Work on display was of a high standard.

82. Further opportunities are available to pupils to cook and make models in clubs. Under the instruction of a local potter, pupils learnt to work with tools, equipment and malleable materials and made good quality pots.

83. **Music** was not a main focus during this inspection. In the one very good lesson seen in Year 4, resources were used very well to develop the pupils' compositional skills. The teacher successfully built upon what the pupils had learnt in the previous lesson on tempo, and challenged them further to make their compositions louder and softer. The aim of the lesson was to develop the compositions inspired by the pupils' interpretations of pictures painted by famous artists. Pupils had a very good knowledge of musical terminology and were able to explain their compositions in detail. One pupil explained that she was planning to make the music louder to show the power of the waves in her picture. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their interests in music in extra-curricular activities through the choir, recorder and guitar clubs run during the school lunch hour.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

#### **Main strengths**

- Good accommodation supports pupils' achievements
- Pupils are keen to take part in physical education activities
- The school's own swimming pool facilitates above average standards in swimming

84. Pupils attain the expected standard in most aspects of physical education and achieve satisfactorily over time. They exceed expectations in swimming in which they achieve well. Most pupils swim at least 25 metres by age nine because of the opportunities to learn in the school's own pool and further opportunities at a nearby pool. The scheme of work for physical education covers a good range of physical education and provides helpful advice to teachers in planning lessons. This contributes to the good teaching. Of the four lessons observed in Years 1 to 4, one lesson was very good, two good and one satisfactory.

85. Teaching is successful because lessons are well prepared. Lessons are purposeful and enjoyable and succeed in including all pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and their learning is good. Pupils adopt an enthusiastic approach to their activities. They change quickly because they are eager to start their lessons. They learn physical education skills well because they practise in small groups and evaluate what they have done through observing each other and seeking improvements in style and technique. Teachers point out specific techniques, such as looking straight ahead when undertaking a balance and extending opposite limbs, and this facilitates pupils' confidence in performance and contributes to the pupils' good progress. The well maintained and good hall floor surface facilitates a bare-footed approach when working indoors, which increases the pupils' sensitivity in movement. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and this good co-operation enables them to make best use of time. They find space quickly, listen attentively to their teachers and carry out instructions speedily. In gymnastics, younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 leap and land with a good technique. They combine sequences of movements, such as a variety of jumps with balances. In a very good and well organised Year 3 games lesson, which made good use of the imaginatively designed outside facilities, pupils were busily involved all the time and the lesson made good demands on their physical fitness. They made very good progress as they developed skills for playing a passing game with their hands. Very good teaching showed the pupils exactly how to use space to prevent interception. They took part enthusiastically. They played well in teams and all pupils improved in their use of space, to prevent interception and in the accuracy of their passing and catching skills.

86. The leadership and management of physical education are very good. The curriculum is well planned and contains a good range of activities. The subject leader provides a very good model for others in the quality of teaching and in an enthusiastic approach.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### **Main strengths**

- There are good links with religious education
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced through the daily life of the school

### **Commentary**

87. Personal, social and health education is a regular feature on timetables and is taken very seriously, although no lessons could be observed during the inspection. Teachers raise pupils' awareness about values in the daily life of the classroom and in their individual interactions with pupils. They make very good use of materials to provide a structured approach. They are keen to incorporate new ideas and develop the subject further from its already good status. Initiatives to involve parents and police together, in discussions about drugs awareness, is well advanced. The current good work taking place in sex and relationships education will be similarly enhanced. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on important matters in their social development and when working together. Reception and Years 1 and 2 pupils follow a programme that helps them to consider the feelings of others and this work brings the teachers closer to the pupils. The organisation of the school council is an important aspect of developing citizenship and helps the pupils to become aware of the principles of democracy and responsibility.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
11	
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*