

INSPECTION REPORT

DELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lowestoft

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124638

Headteacher: Beryl Hinds

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 15th - 18th March 2004

Inspection number: 255963

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	242
School address:	Dell Road Oulton Broad Lowestoft Suffolk
Postcode:	NR33 9NU
Telephone number:	01502 565956
Fax number:	01502 566279
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Keith Howard
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dell Primary is a community school with 242 pupils on roll, which is similar to the average size of other primary schools nationally, and 26 of whom are in the nursery, part-time mornings or afternoons. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and very few are from a minority ethnic background. The level of mobility among the pupils is low. Overall, the socio-economic circumstances of the families with children at the school are less favourable than usual and the percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is average. There is a wide range of attainment among the children on entry to the nursery with a minority who have well-developed skills. Overall, attainment is well below average. Around 14 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly average. The 14 pupils in the special unit, the Small Class, have Statements of Special Educational Needs related to moderate learning difficulties, which is well above average. The school gained the Activemark in 2001, the Investors in People Award in 2002 and a Schools Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English English as an additional language Physical education Personal, social and health education
9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector	
2756	Mike Barron	Team Inspector	Science Geography History Music Religious education
18638	Chris Shaw	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology
27243	Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a successful school and provides a good quality of education. It meets its aim of creating a happy and stimulating environment so that pupils have many good learning experiences. They achieve well because teaching and provision are generally good. Standards by Years 2 and 4 are broadly average. Pupils' good interest in their work and good behaviour promote learning. The headteacher and deputy work together well to provide good direction for school improvements. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is highly inclusive and has a very good ethos for learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their work and behave well in lessons.
- Teaching and learning are good although pupils' enquiry skills are less developed.
- The school offers a good curriculum with interesting and worthwhile activities although opportunities to encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed.
- The arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are good.
- The partnership with parents and with the community is good, but authorised absence is too high.
- The headteacher gives very good leadership. The leadership and management of the school are good, supported well by the governing body.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, as a result of the very clear direction from the headteacher. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education have improved. Children's achievement is now good in the Foundation Stage. There has been good progress in strengthening leadership and management, and this continues. Teaching is now good throughout the school. The most significant factor in the school's improvement is the very clear direction by the headteacher, coupled with the hard work and commitment of all staff. This has led to several awards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	D	D	B	A
Writing	C	C	B	A
Mathematics	D	E	D	C

*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*

Pupils of all attainments **achieve well** throughout the school, including those children with special educational needs in the Small Class unit. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because teaching and provision are good, and standards improve to below average by the end of reception. Further good teaching leads to good achievement in Years 1 – 4. Standards in the work seen were broadly average in Year 2 and Year 4 in reading, writing, mathematics and science and all other subjects except ICT, where they are above average in Year 2.

The school has a unit providing for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. When the results for these pupils are removed from the school's results for the Year 2 national tests in 2003, it shows that standards in reading and writing are above the national average and below in mathematics. The Year 2 cohort for 2003 had an exceptionally high level of pupils entitled to free school meals. When this is also taken into account in relation to otherwise similar schools, results were well above average in

reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Whilst this interpretation gives a fair picture of the work of the school, staffing difficulties in the past had an adverse effect on standards and, although these have been resolved, there is a continuing legacy of underdeveloped skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. The level of attendance is satisfactory and pupils are very punctual, although there is too much authorised absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good overall. As a result pupils have good learning experiences, with many interesting and challenging tasks. Teachers' good subject knowledge is shown by their clear explanations and good questioning and classroom assistants usually provide good support. The school provides a good, carefully structured curriculum, so there is good progression in pupils' understanding and skills. There is also very good enrichment through clubs and visits, which enhance pupils' learning. The school provides a good level of care and welfare and the good partnerships with parents and the community bring valuable support for school activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. She sets high expectations of the staff, makes her views known and makes difficult decisions based on what is best for the pupils. As a result there is a strong sense of working as a team amongst all staff. Firm management ensures that members of staff follow school procedures for the benefit of the pupils. The governing body provides good oversight and direction, challenges the headteacher to ensure the best decisions are made, and ensures that the school complies with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents feel that the school makes very good efforts to involve them and to inform them about their child's standards and progress. Pupils feel that the school is a happy and secure place for them to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Develop pupils' enquiry skills, for example in mathematics, science and history, and use the potential of ICT for this.
- Extend the range of strategies for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.
- Take further action to reduce the level of authorised absence.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average but standards improve to below average in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils also achieve well in Years 1 - 4 and current standards in their work are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good through the school, as pupils make good gains in skills.
- The trend in standards in the national tests at Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is above that found nationally.
- In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading and writing were well above average in the national tests for Year 2 in 2003.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Small Class unit, achieve as well as their peers.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.5 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.5 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills, indicating a significant lowering of attainment since the last inspection. Their well below average skills in communication, language and literacy act as a significant barrier to their learning in all subjects. The children achieve well because teaching and provision are good, offering a wide range of well-chosen activities. The children's attainment is below average in all of the six areas of learning by the end of reception. However, this indicates a good improvement in standards from a low start in the nursery.
2. The school places a high priority on including all pupils equally and has a very good climate for learning. This is shown in the very good relationships pupils have with their teachers and each other, which motivate them to learn so that they usually try hard at their work. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve well in Years 1 - 4, including those with special educational needs and those in the Small Class unit. Good teaching builds on and extends pupils' skills and understanding. Staffing difficulties in the past, which have since been resolved, had an adverse effect on standards. There is a continuing legacy of underdeveloped skills in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics.
3. In relation to the national tests at Year 2 in 2003, when the results for pupils in the unit are removed from the school's results, standards in reading and writing are above the national average. In mathematics, where fewer pupils than nationally gained the higher level 3, standards are below average. This interpretation gives a more accurate picture of the school's performance, since pupils from across the town with moderate learning difficulties are placed in the unit and take the tests. In addition, the Year 2 in 2003 contained an exceptionally high

proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. When this is also taken into account, standards are well above average in reading and writing in relation to similar schools, and average in mathematics. The rising trend in standards has been faster than the national trend over the past five years, notably in writing. The trend in mathematics has declined over the past two years, partly as a result of staffing difficulties. Signs of improvement are evident in the present Year 2, since the appointment of the new headteacher, because mathematics is now a focus for the school.

4. Standards in the work seen are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and meet the expectations by the end of Year 4. Pupils are achieving well because much lively and effective teaching is having a significant impact on their learning. The higher attaining pupils are usually, but not always, challenged well. This is because teachers use assessment information to plan interesting tasks that are matched closely to pupils' prior attainments but they are sometimes less successful in this in mathematics. Many pupils enter Year 1 with weak understanding and skills. Teachers therefore place a high priority on developing and reinforcing basic learning as well as pupils' self-esteem. Teachers apply the national guidance for literacy and numeracy sensibly. For example, they build up pupils' strategies for reading new words, so that they gain in confidence. The timing of sessions could be approached more flexibly, however.
5. In English, the school has rightly placed an increased emphasis recently on strategies to improve pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. The good developing emphasis on encouraging pupils' thinking skills is successful in helping pupils to talk about their ideas. The writing in pupils' 'thinking books' often shows imagination and good expression, with indications of good improvement and achievement over time. Opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills in other subjects are sometimes missed, for example because the teacher controls the discussion through her. In mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have satisfactory number calculation skills. In Years 3 and 4 the main weakness is the inability of many pupils to perform mental calculations rapidly and accurately. There are few examples of extending pupils' enquiry skills in problem-solving although such tasks are sometimes included in the introductory sessions. In science, pupils make good progress in building up their knowledge because teaching is focused well. They are, however, given only limited opportunities to develop their investigational skills. As a result, pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are less developed, which affects their overall understanding of science.
6. Standards in the other subjects by Years 2 and 4 are broadly average. In ICT standards by Year 2 are above average because teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of the facilities. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs who receive support in lessons, or who have individual or group lessons, make good progress. They reach levels of attainment which are below those expected for their age, but which still relate well to their ability level.
7. It is not appropriate to judge the standards reached by the pupils in the special needs unit against national expectations, particularly in English. Nevertheless, by the time they are ready to return or transfer to other local schools, most pupils have made good progress. Most of the individual targets set are achieved with the support of teachers, support staff and parents. This represents good achievement. Inspectors were impressed by the successful integration of these pupils into whole-school activities and the way teachers and support staff ensured that they received the support needed to succeed. They work either as a class, in small groups or as individuals, as appropriate. These pupils are very much a part of school life and are included in all its aspects, joining whole school assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and clubs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to the school and their learning are good. Behaviour is good in and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils' punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest in school life and in the activities on offer helps them make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy very good relationships with each other and staff, leading to a racially harmonious community that is free from bullying and other oppressive conduct.
- The great majority of pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day.
- The effort of a few parents to ensure the regular attendance of their children is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

8. There is a happy, purposeful atmosphere in the school. Pupils respond with real enthusiasm in their work and play across all areas of the curriculum. Good examples include the rehearsal for a musical production pupils were shortly to give at the local theatre. All the children concerned were eager to show their skills and their singing to the visitors present. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.
9. The school's promotion of good relationships, including racial harmony, is very effective. Pupils and staff work together really well, creating a strong sense of community. The school sets high expectations of children's conduct and works successfully to maintain these standards. The school's handling of those few pupils who sometimes present challenging behaviour is usually prompt and effective. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare indeed and pupils themselves say that other children are well behaved and friendly most of the time. There were no exclusions in the previous academic year and one pupil has been excluded in the current year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	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.

10. The school has tried, unsuccessfully, to deter a minority of parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. This authorised absence is having a negative effect on attendance rates which, although broadly average for similar schools, are in decline. The results of the questionnaires issued to children and parents show that, almost without exception, children like coming to school. Punctuality is very good. The youngest children are settled and leave their parents or carers happily. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds show the same positive attitudes to school as other classmates.
11. A very good programme for personal, social and health education is now in place and a number of visits made by pupils enriches the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It is also having a positive effect on raising the self-esteem and confidence of a good number of pupils. In assemblies and in lessons, pupils refine their understanding of right and wrong. They learn to appreciate the feelings and values of others and to respect individual differences. Spiritual development is fostered when pupils are helped to appreciate the world around them. They become totally engrossed in some lessons such as music and art. The pupils also give time and care to tending the gardens surrounding the school. The flowers there were just coming into bloom, which they appreciated.
12. Social skills are developed effectively as children learn to work collaboratively and to take responsibility for daily tasks. Residential trips for older children give valuable experiences of community life away from home. The school's good support for charities leads to an

appreciation of social responsibilities in a wider world. A good programme of cultural activity, including visitors from other ethnic groups, enriches children's cultural experience.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education which includes all pupils very well. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and is supported by a very good, caring ethos. The school provides a well-balanced, interesting curriculum. Both aspects show good improvement since the last inspection. In addition the level of care provided for pupils and the partnerships with parents and the community are all good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher has established good assessment procedures which help inform school developments as well as teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which helps their explanations and pupils' learning.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good.
- Some opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum are missed.
- The teaching of enquiry skills needs strengthening.
- There is good quality teaching and support for pupils' learning in the unit.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (23 %)	25 (58 %)	7 (16 %)	1 (2 %)	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.

13. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good so that pupils are challenged to learn and achieve well in these subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and has a strong impact on pupils' learning. This is because teachers explain the ideas using good illustrations and methods. In English the quality of teaching is good because teachers combine good attention to basic skills, such as speaking and listening, with a focus on helping pupils to gain a feel for literature. They plan well, using assessment information effectively and matching tasks carefully to pupils of different attainment. Teachers put a good emphasis on pupils learning good language structure from stories, using effective strategies and questioning to challenge them. As a result, pupils achieve well. In mathematics, teachers use relevant strategies, but miss some opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils. Pupils are often encouraged to explain their strategies to the class but approaching problems in an investigational way and writing them up is too infrequent. In science, teachers' introductions were used effectively to explain tasks, introduce scientific terms and recapitulate previous learning. Tasks in lessons observed were matched well to pupils' previous learning and as a result, pupils achieved well. The teaching assistants supported pupils experiencing learning difficulties efficiently.
14. The standard of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils usually achieve well, because support is effective and work is related to their prior attainment. The teachers and the support staff build up a good relationship with them and by continuous, gentle

encouragement take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. However in some classes observed, the work expected of pupils did not match their prior attainment well. The role of classroom assistants in a few lessons was insufficient to make them actively involved enough in pupils' learning or responses. There are no children at an early stage of learning English.

15. The quality of teachers' planning is good, so tasks mostly challenge pupils and reinforce their learning. They reflect the high expectations set by the headteacher and her good management of procedures. Many tasks are firmly directed by the teachers however, so insufficient emphasis is given to setting pupils tasks that develop their enquiry skills. These overlooked elements include mathematical or scientific investigations and the use of ICT. Most teachers have a skilful questioning style that includes all pupils and has a positive impact on their achievement. They often encourage pupils to explain their ideas and to give their reasons. However, strategies that promote pupils' speaking and listening skills are not fully exploited across the curriculum. For example, pupils do not often prepare to contribute by talking with partners first or are given tasks that require collaboration. Teachers usually insist on good standards of behaviour and set high expectations of the pupils, although on a few occasions teachers' strategies are not effective and pupils lose attention. In general, teachers have good, responsive relationships with pupils that encourage them to work hard and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
16. The headteacher has established good assessment procedures which enable pupils' progress to be tracked over time. In English, mathematics and science regular, ongoing assessments provide good background information enabling teachers to set individual targets for pupils. The school also administers several tests, which provide good information about pupils and help in tracking their progress. In the other subjects, a manageable system of assessment is focused on pupils' attainment by the end of subject units. The information is used well for further planning and in writing good annual reports. Pupils prepare a diagram of their existing knowledge at the start of a new unit of work, which is good practice. Some early diagnostic information about pupils' difficulties to help in planning the teaching of that unit is prepared. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed regularly and the information is used well in maintaining up-to-date targets.
17. The quality of teaching and learning support is good for pupils in the special needs unit. This is the most important factor in the good progress made by these pupils. A key strength of the teaching is their commitment to ensuring that all the pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are helped to reach their full potential. Together with support staff, teachers successfully create a learning environment that is warm and caring. They offer pupils a good quality curriculum with a full range of activities matched to their needs. Procedures for the assessment of the pupils in the unit are good. The school maintains extensive records of the achievement of all pupils in this class. Teachers use these well to review their progress and set or modify targets for attainment. Speech and language therapists contribute helpfully to the identification and assessment of pupils' communication and social needs.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is good. There are very good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. The accommodation and resources support the needs of the curriculum very well.

Main strength and weaknesses

- A well-balanced curriculum helps to ensure good achievement in all curriculum areas.
- The school provides many very good activities and links between subjects which enrich the curriculum.
- The curriculum includes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The 'Small Class' provides an effective education for pupils with special educational needs.

- The approach to the curriculum does not offer enough opportunities for pupils to develop research and inquiry skills, for example in science.
- The accommodation offers very good specialist facilities and the quality of resources is good.

Commentary

18. The school provides a good, well-balanced curriculum which helps pupils achieve well in all subjects and other areas of learning. The school meets statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well founded upon the National Curriculum and recent national initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These methods, consistently applied, helped last year's Year 2 pupils to do particularly well in the reading and writing tests. ICT is also particularly strong, with pupils in Years 1 and 2 making very good progress because of the carefully co-ordinated approach. The school reviews and updates its curriculum regularly through a good planning structure and a development policy which is consistently applied by all the subject leaders. For example, the school has a particular need to improve the pupils' skills in thinking, speaking and listening. Clearly defined strategies are applied by each teacher in many lessons and this is beginning to have a markedly positive effect on pupils' performance. In a good Year 4 design and technology lesson, pupils first discussed the type of questions they would need to ask to evaluate packaging. They then used this information to plan party food containers of their own, thinking carefully how the need for protecting the food could be met whilst making the package attractive. However, the range of strategies employed is not sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils and the school has some way to go in this area. Another area for development is the need to provide more opportunities for investigation and research. Pupils have limited opportunities to carry out their own investigations to their own design or to get information from books regularly.
19. Pupils enjoy learning, one reason being that the teachers ensure that the lessons are fun, lively and interesting. In a Year 2 music lesson, a local lady from Ghana performed a traditional dance in full national costume whilst the pupils watched and learned in amazement. This brought further to life their studies of an African village, during which they had already exchanged e-mail and photographs. On the walls were story pictures about the village that the pupils had made using a computer simulation. This is typical of the first-hand experience that the school aims to provide. Other beneficial activities include visits to museums and study centres, field trips and a residential activity centre. Adding to the curriculum there are very good opportunities in sport and the arts, with a football club, netball, athletics, a xylophone club, a choir, a dance club, computer club and many more activities. Participation is very good. At the after-school dance club, 30 pupils performed the chimney sweep's song from Mary Poppins, including synchronised dance steps!
20. The curricular needs of pupils identified by teachers and the special needs co-ordinator become part of the pupils' Individual Educational Plans. These are discussed and agreed with pupils and parents to comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils are fully integrated and those who receive additional support generally make good progress. This works particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours and is a very efficient use of the learning support assistants. Pupils' Individual Education Plans match their needs well and their targets are usually sufficiently specific and easy to measure. The national Code of Practice is met fully in the identification and assessment of pupils' special educational needs. Their continuous assessment is good.
21. The provision of personal, social and health education is good. It is achieved not only through regular, day-to-day interactions, stories, assemblies and class discussions, but also through a planned programme of lessons each week involving all pupils. The school fulfils its commitment to teach about drugs, sex and relationships through this programme. The school has been successful in running many pilot schemes for such provision and shares its findings with other schools across the whole County. This has a very positive effect on pupils' knowledge and attitudes and is an important part of their preparation for the next and later stages of education. To this end, there are also good opportunities for meeting the teachers

and visiting the middle school to which they will transfer. The school ensures that good data are collected and transferred together with the pupils, to ensure that the middle school has the fullest possible information on each child.

22. There is a satisfactory number of suitably qualified teachers to meet all the school's commitments. There is a good number of support staff who are well trained and briefed effectively in most respects, so they provide good support both in and out of the classroom. On a few occasions they are not involved actively enough in pupils' learning, nor do they make observational notes on pupils' contributions to discussion, for example.
23. The accommodation is very good. Pupils enjoy working in the separate music room, the art room with its pottery, the hall/gymnasium and the ICT suite as well as in the large well-appointed classrooms and work areas. Good storage areas allow the classrooms to be fully utilised. The whole school is very well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff and decoration is kept in good condition. Outside, the school enjoys a large field and play areas. The dining hall is large and can seat nearly the whole school at once. There is a problem, however, related to the noise, so that happy chatting quickly turns into a deafening din. This has a negative effect on the otherwise good behaviour, and normal social interaction is very difficult.
24. The provision of resources is good. These are regularly and imaginatively used to enhance learning in all subjects. The number and range of books is good, particularly those that get pupils thinking and discussing. All the subjects of the curriculum are enhanced by the ICT facilities. The number of computers is satisfactory for a school of this size. The ICT suite provides a good way of teaching up to 15 pupils at a time, which has helped to raise pupils' achievement. The computers are networked round the school and this good provision will shortly be improved further with wireless links.
25. The school has made good improvements to its curriculum since the previous inspection. As well as keeping well up with local and national initiatives, the school has improved its provision for the Foundation Stage and for personal and social education. The school's planning and coverage of ICT and design and technology are now better, as are its curriculum development processes. The number of classroom and special needs assistants now meets the school's needs well.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures the good care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides them with good support and guidance and involves them well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety provision shows a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils work in a healthy, safe environment.
- Pupils enjoy very good and trusting relationships with staff.
- Induction arrangements for children entering the nursery are very good.
- The support and guidance pupils receive is good and is an improvement since the last inspection.
- The school council is a new initiative, overseen by a member of staff.

Commentary

26. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety have recently been reviewed, are well considered and are properly carried out. Procedures for child protection are secure and staff and governors are kept updated. The school, parents and other agencies work together effectively. Good maintenance ensures that the building and equipment are kept in clean and safe condition. Hazards are minimised or eliminated and the school promotes healthy living. Accident records are analysed to identify and remedy the cause and frequency of accidents

occurring in the playground areas. Pupils spoke positively about the “buddies” system and the way it helps those who might feel lonely, particularly at play and lunchtimes.

27. Pupils feel they are able to go to most members of staff and discuss any concerns or worries that they might have. Teachers and other staff know the children very well and recognise their needs. They act quickly if a child is unhappy or under pressure. The pupils with special educational needs are supported well by individual teaching assistants and enjoy very trusting relationships. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored and specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.
28. Members of staff have a good understanding of pupils’ achievements so their development is based upon teachers’ effective ongoing assessment procedures. Children in the nursery and reception classes are supported well by the very good induction programme. This includes visits to the homes of prospective parents by staff, in order to get to know children before they start school.
29. The recently formed school council is beginning to make an impact on school improvement. Changes to playground games and the refurbishment of the first-aid room are just two examples. The great majority of pupils consider that members of staff listen to their ideas and most believe that their views matter. This aspect could be further improved if pupils were more involved in setting and reviewing personal targets.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is good. There are good links with the community and neighbouring schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership enjoyed by the school with its parents has improved since the last inspection.
- Very good links exist with the pre-school group that shares the school site.
- Parents are provided with very good information about the school and pupils’ progress.
- The procedures for ensuring parental satisfaction and dealing with complaints are very good.
- There are very effective arrangements in place for the transfer of pupils.
- Consultation with parents is recognised by the school as an area for development.
- A significant minority of parents does not contribute effectively to their child’s education at home.

Commentary

30. The very good links between the pre-school group and the nursery help new children settle in very well. The transfer of information on children is efficiently carried out. There are good transition arrangements with the local middle school. Members of staff meet regularly to exchange information about pupils and there are good curricular links, particularly in dance, music and drama. These links enhance the range of learning opportunities for pupils and enable staff to share and extend their expertise with others. The school joins in and benefits from organised sporting events with neighbouring schools. The school makes an effective contribution to the initial training of teachers from the University of East Anglia.
31. A minority of parents does not consider that they are kept well informed about their child’s progress but inspection findings do not support this view. The school makes very good efforts to involve parents and to inform them about their child’s standards and progress. There is comprehensive curriculum information accompanied by school newsletters. The end-of-year academic reports that parents receive about their child’s progress are of high quality. Attainment levels, what a child can and cannot do, and targets to aim for are clearly outlined. Each year, three meetings take place with parents, to set, review and evaluate targets for their

children. This is helping to raise standards. The school prospectus is well produced and meets statutory requirements.

32. The school recognises the need to consult with parents on a more regular and formal basis, on matters of school improvement. However, any suggestions parents make are taken seriously and acted upon. The school is very effective in dealing with any concerns or complaints that parents may have. Parents are warmly received in the school and feel that any concerns are dealt with fairly. They show strong support and most of them participate in its life and work. However, a small number do not effectively support their child's learning at home and this adversely affects the progress these children make. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of assessment and review. Contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have good, easy access to class teachers and the headteacher, who is the special educational needs co-ordinator. This maintains a steady flow of information.
33. There are good procedures for welcoming pupils into the special needs unit and helping their parents and carers to feel confident about their children's placements. Good procedures also exist for helping pupils and their parents to prepare for the next stage of their education. These include useful visits to the school to which they will transfer. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, and they have access to the school at any time. They are fully involved in the annual review of their children's Individual Education Plans and Statements of Special Educational Needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and that of other key staff is good overall. The management of the school is good and governors provide good oversight and direction. The children's poor communication, language and literacy skills act as a significant barrier to their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has very clear expectations.
- Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Governors are supportive of the school and provide good governance.
- The school has made good improvement since the last inspection through the drive of the headteacher and the hard work of all staff.

Commentary

34. The senior members of staff are beginning to act as a strong team under the effective leadership of the headteacher, bringing a common sense of purpose and direction to school improvement. As a result, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and this continues through Years 1 - 4. Senior members of staff take careful account of the low level of children's communication, language and literacy skills in their decisions, because these act as significant barriers to learning in all subjects and require determined support. The headteacher has established good monitoring and evaluation procedures. These include opportunities for subject leaders to check curriculum and lesson planning and to carry out a scrutiny of pupils' work. This is effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses and is followed through into the good subject action plans prepared by all co-ordinators. Whole-school issues are identified clearly through these procedures, which form part of the school's development plan. This plan provides a suitable basis for acting upon priorities, although the structure and layout do not cover all the areas of the school's work in the most helpful way. Performance management is fully established and is linked well to continuous staff professional development. The headteacher has also established suitable procedures for lesson observations, which are effective in promoting consistency of approach and operate in most subjects.

35. The headteacher shares with other staff and the governors a clear vision for the school. This is highly inclusive of all pupils and reflects the strong commitment by the governing body to the continuation of the unit. This vision clearly reflects the school's aim to provide the best possible opportunities for pupils' learning, and is evident in the school's very good ethos. The school has successfully addressed all the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Standards in ICT have improved and pupils' spiritual and moral understanding are now good. Provision and teaching in the nursery are good. Leadership and management issues have been tackled and there is good direction. In addition, the school has made other improvements related to identified issues, for example to the library and the outside facilities.
36. Senior members of staff provide good leadership for the direction of the school. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator gives good leadership, the effect of which is a strong team teaching a stimulating, well-structured curriculum. Throughout the school, there are generally good procedures for supporting staff in curriculum and lesson planning, in assessment and record keeping and in their continuing professional development. These are effective in ensuring that pupils receive a good quality education and that their progress is tracked carefully.
37. The provision for special educational needs is well managed. The school has introduced the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Any pupil who is giving cause for concern is assessed and prompt action is taken if necessary. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and administers the day-to-day organisation of pupils, with the involvement of the class teachers. They check that targets set in pupils' Individual Education Plans are clearly linked to pupils' needs and addressed by class teachers and learning support assistants. Parents are involved at all stages and receive regular reports on their child's progress. The governing body takes a high level of interest in the unit and supports and monitors the entire provision for pupils with special educational needs closely. Governors report on the school's provision for these pupils in the annual report to parents. The teacher in charge of the unit works closely with the headteacher and other staff to provide good leadership. She gives the department a positive identity and purpose. Since the last inspection the school governors have accepted responsibility for what was a Local Education Authority area special class for pupils with special educational needs, and they hope to maintain and develop further this good provision.
38. Members of the governing body share the vision and aspirations of the headteacher for the pupils. They challenge the headteacher well in their role as critical friend, considering decisions for school improvement carefully. There are good arrangements for visiting the school, although there is less emphasis on arranging focused visits in their link role with subjects or related to current issues. Governors ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and they contribute well to the process of agreeing priorities. They evaluate the effects of spending decisions carefully for the impact on pupils' learning. They set a balanced budget, taking suitable account of the principles of obtaining best value. The carry forward balance in the table below is well above that recommended because funds are appropriately held for planned improvements and salaries.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	672975
Total expenditure	658759
Expenditure per pupil	2505

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42300
Balance carried forward to the next	56516

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and is a strength of the school. The weaknesses in the nursery identified at the time of the last inspection have been corrected. The quality of teaching and children's learning is good, showing good improvement since the last inspection. Children are admitted each term to the nursery after they have had their third birthday. Children transfer to the reception class in the September, January or April, when they are about to be five years old. There is a very wide range of attainment among the children when they first enter school, with a few high attaining children showing good development and skills. Overall, their attainment is well below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. This acts as a significant barrier to their learning in all subjects. A little over half the children are on course to meet the early learning goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, indicating that their attainment is below average. This reflects a significant drop in attainment on entry since the last inspection.
40. Teachers plan carefully, so all areas of learning get a good, equal share of attention. This provides a good foundation for the progression of children's skills. As a result of this and the imaginative teaching they receive, children achieve well. Planning and practice include all children well. Teachers have established good assessment procedures that are responsive to pupils' developments. They are currently working to pull the information together in a more helpful way.
41. The teachers in the nursery and reception classes manage their classrooms well, providing purposeful, stimulating opportunities for learning. Relationships between children and adults are very good. The nursery nurse provides very good support so that children are encouraged and enabled to do their best. As a result, children are actively engaged in their learning. They take part in a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, and achieve well across all areas of learning. The teachers give particularly good attention to children's communication, language and literacy skills. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and the teachers and other adults work together as a strong team.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults have very warm, positive relationships with the children that encourage them to learn confidently.
- A few children are on course to exceed the expectation for this area but overall attainment is below it.
- Good management places a high priority on children's personal development.

Commentary

42. The teachers and other adults establish very good, responsive relationships with the children so that they feel secure and are keen to learn. There are good classroom routines which give a good shape to the day, such as the use of job pictures in reception, so children know what is expected of them. They know, and usually respond to the teachers' expectations of their sitting quietly during registration, and are learning to answer clearly when the teacher greets them. Children enjoy class discussion times, when they may contribute to assigning the jobs for the day. Snack times form an important time of the day and most children have learnt the social behaviour expected. The teachers and assistants use their time well to engage children in

thoughtfully-chosen activities. These help children to extend their level of concentration, so that they learn to listen to and work alongside others. Children usually take part well in activities and demonstrate good interest and attitudes. Their behaviour is good.

43. There are many good opportunities for free choice, such as those in imaginative play. These enable children to take on the roles they see adults performing, for example, acting out how a veterinary surgeon examines and heals animals. In this way, children learn to co-operate constructively together, valuing the part others take. All children are fully included in the activities and have good free choices, which promote good interest and behaviour. Teachers facilitate good relationships among the children in a variety of ways, matching work partners, for example, or pairing them with a friend to help their social development. Behaviour is usually good, so that most children keep paying good attention, although a few children are self-centred in their behaviour and relationships. There is a significant change in children's personal development from nursery to reception, as they settle to the routines and begin to take initiative within the teachers' supportive learning framework. The quality of teaching is good in this area. Children make good progress in their personal development, due to the positive effect of good management, teaching and provision, so they achieve well. Most children are on course to reach the expected goal, and a few to exceed it. However, several children have less well developed understanding and attainment is below the expectation overall.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults help children to gain a love of books through reading them stories with good expression.
- There is a good emphasis on extending children's vocabulary and spoken English.
- The children are introduced to early language and literacy skills in a natural way that has meaning for them.
- The reception teacher has good ways of encouraging early writing skills.
- Children have below average skills, particularly in speaking and listening, by the end of reception.

Commentary

44. A few children have well-developed communication, language and literacy skills on entering the nursery. For the majority of children these skills are well below average, particularly in speaking and listening, and many children only give one- or two-word answers. Teachers and other adults place a high priority on developing language skills, and as a result achievement is good. The good choice of activities in the well-managed classrooms is a significant factor in promoting children's language development because these provide interesting experiences which the children want to talk about. The routines and adult-directed activities extend children's speaking skills well, for example in talking about what is wrong with their sick animal.
45. By the time children are in reception, most listen sensibly to the instructions for the day. The reception teacher builds well on the work on early letter sounds in the nursery, where most children recognise the sound at the beginning of their own name and begin to associate print with meaning. Children in the nursery and reception enjoy books, becoming familiar with story lines and characters and helped by the expressive story-telling of the teachers and other adults. By reception, children know how to handle books. Their good attitude towards this area of learning is shown by the frequency with which they choose to look at books as an activity. The reception teacher gives the children good motivation to write, making their own books using emergent writing, for example. She helps them to become familiar with the characters and phrases in stories. Children's early writing skills are promoted very well by the teacher reading their story alongside them, so valuing their early writing. The quality of teaching is good. The

strong emphasis teachers put on worthwhile experience and discussion has a good impact on children's learning and achievement. Standards are, however, below expectations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers put good emphasis on early number, shape and relationships in their planning and discussions with children.
- Children achieve well in their mathematical development although their attainment is below average.
- On a few occasions teachers miss opportunities to discuss mathematical ideas.

Commentary

46. Teachers plan well for a good selection of activities that include early mathematical ideas. Teaching and learning are good in this area. As a result, children make good gains and achieve well in simple skills such as counting, making comparisons and measuring quantity. Sand and water play, where children experience how to fill containers, and painting, where a brush-full will cover a certain area, give children early ideas of measure, although discussion about these experiences is too often missed. The children in both the nursery and reception have access to a good range of construction and building materials. Most children fit these together quite confidently, recognising where shapes will match because they are the same. They build track layouts and towers that show they are using mental images of what they want to build.
47. By reception, most children count quite confidently to ten and several count beyond, to twenty. They are beginning to understand relationships such as one more, next and one less. They also recognise and know most numerals up to ten and are beginning to record them. Teachers use stories to help children to build ideas about number and usually bring out the meaning well. Some physical activities, such as those in the excellent activity area outside, offer a range of linked mathematics awareness, some of which is exploited as children play. Several pupils are on course to exceed the expectation but overall standards are below average.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan for a wide, relevant range of activities that are designed to build children's understanding.
- Good classroom routines promote good learning and children achieve well.
- Children's attainment is below average by the end of reception.

Commentary

48. Teachers plan carefully to provide a good range of activities that help compensate for any child's limited experiences before entry to the nursery. Children played with playdough, for example, exploring how the soft material would shape and mould. This contrasted well with their experiences with sand, which, being composed of small grains, does not hold its shape well. The contrast was even greater with water, which they showed would pour easily. Children in both the nursery and reception have good access to computers. This enables them to learn the skills of mouse control and of entering simple commands in response to prompts from the program. Teachers introduce weather patterns and the days of the week so that children learn

about external sequences of time. Good daily routines help them to form an idea of morning and also of the sequence of their day.

49. Teaching and learning are good in this area, so children achieve well. Creative activities have a strong connection with building children's understanding about the world around them. For example, painting allows children to explore the effects of colour; and the imaginative play area encourages children to understand how adults deal with problems such as buying food or helping a sick animal. The teachers' good emphasis on imaginative play brings many worthwhile experiences and talking points. A few children are on course to exceed the expectation, but overall standards are below average by the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers provide a good range of indoor activities but outdoor provision is largely limited to agreed times.
- The children benefit from experiences in the school's outdoor adventure area and the school hall.
- Children achieve well but standards are below the expectation by the end of reception.

Commentary

50. The teachers plan for a good selection of indoor activities that provide good experiences for the children. These range from fitting together construction materials in a variety of ways, through painting and drawing activities requiring careful finger and hand control, to taking off and putting on shoes and socks before and after physical education lessons. Children's cutting skills with scissors are not well developed, although their interest and determination help them to overcome this. Teachers and other adults encourage the children to become independent by helping them to shape, cut or position materials rather than doing it for them.
51. Children have very good experiences at least once a week on the school's adventure playground. Here, they climb up and over large apparatus, developing their large body skills and learning to hold their weight. A few higher attaining children reach the point where they feel safe to slide down the fireman's pole. Teachers and other adults keep a close watch over the children to ensure safety, and those braving the fireman's pole are known to be ready to take the challenge. Children also develop their physical skills in the school hall, where they are given good opportunities to run, jump and use space, following the teacher's suitably chosen themes and instructions. While these outside experiences and those in the school hall are good, the pattern of the school day and arrangements for access limit children's free choice to go outside. When arrangements are made, children have a good selection of large toys to use. Adults provide good support and supervision that help children to play constructively and ensure a good level of safety. Standards overall are close to the expectation, but there are several children who do not have either the co-ordination or the dexterity to perform confidently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for creative activities and imaginative play.
- Teachers give good priority to creative experience, in their planning.
- The organisation of the day enables pupils to experience good creative activities.

Commentary

52. Teachers' weekly planning places a good emphasis on children's creative development and skills. The nursery and reception classes have good imaginative play areas, which are usually changed every two or three weeks to match the current theme. In this way children are continually introduced to new centres of experience, which extend their role play and their imaginative ideas. In reception, children made face masks so that they could act out characters in their story, which also contributed to their speaking and listening skills. There are many examples of artwork around both classrooms - children's own work, often showing bold use of colour. Opportunities for children to paint or use other creative materials are usually available and children concentrate well and use paints imaginatively. The higher attaining children show good developing skill towards the end of reception. Standards overall are likely to be below average, because there are several children who rely too much on adult support and who are not yet confident in this area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well in English through careful discussion and questioning related to interesting texts, but do not provide enough opportunities in other subjects.
- Teaching, learning and consequently pupils' achievement are good.
- The subject leader provides good leadership and management.
- Teachers develop a good range of forms of writing, with a good emphasis in English on extended writing.
- The library and ICT facilities are not fully exploited to promote pupils' enquiry skills.
- Subject planning and the use of personal targets are good.

Commentary

53. Children enter school with well-below average attainment, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills. This acts as a significant barrier to their learning in all subjects. No children are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
54. Standards in the work seen were broadly average by Years 2 and 4, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Standards show encouraging signs of improvement because the school has a sharp focus on identifying pupils' individual needs and this information is used well to contribute to planning and teaching. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 - 4 because teachers place a strong emphasis on basic language, speaking and listening and learning skills. This involves phonic work and making whole sentences to build pupils' confidence in reading and writing. Teachers generally use a good range of teaching styles, drawing well upon national guidance and using information gained from their observations. There is a good and developing emphasis in English on encouraging pupils' thinking skills to help them to talk about their ideas. This is achieved by providing thinking time and opportunities to talk with a partner. The classroom assistants are usually deployed well during lessons, making observations of pupils and working with groups. As a result of the specialist support and the class teachers' skilled management, pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
55. Pupils mostly show good attitudes and behaviour, which make a positive impact on their learning, although a few demonstrate challenging behaviour. Their usually very good relationships facilitate a good working atmosphere where pupils want to do well. There are good arrangements to support specific groups of pupils to help raise standards of reading and

writing. In these, good planning, texts and questioning all help to develop pupils' reading strategies and to build up their writing skills.

56. Standards of speaking and listening are below average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Many pupils lack confidence and find it hard to explain their ideas in whole-class discussion. This is also the case in subjects other than English. A few pupils have good speaking and listening skills, although several tend to remain quiet during discussion. Pupils tend to be more confident in group discussions where they are not expected to use standard English. Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well through specific strategies such as using talking partners. However, the use of other strategies is more limited, in English and in other subjects. Opportunities for sharing views in larger groups or making simple presentations about their findings, for example, are missed. Standards in spelling are also below average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Several pupils are at an early stage, using phonetic patterns rather than building the letter strings of the more common words. Overall, however, standards show good improvement from when pupils first enter school.
57. Standards in reading are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 4, indicating good achievement. The teachers' good emphasis on phonics helps pupils to learn the letter sounds and blends, but only the higher attaining pupils apply their knowledge confidently to build and read unfamiliar words. By Year 4, the higher attaining pupils read with good fluency and expression, and are mostly accurate. Pupils show a developing understanding of story line and character in the books they read, although many find it difficult to discuss these or to give a reasoned opinion. There are good procedures for encouraging pupils to read at home daily, and several helpers in school promote pupils' progress in reading.
58. Teachers encourage children to write for a good range of purposes during their time in reception. They provide increasing time for extended writing as pupils move through the school. As a result, standards in the work seen in writing are broadly average by Years 2 and 4, and pupils are achieving well in writing as more reach the expected standard for the age. The introduction of 'thinking books' where pupils write freely about their ideas is a highly significant development. The range and variety of topics and ideas for the pupils to write about is excellent, giving scope for their imagination as well as their basic knowledge. For example, pupils have written down what they would say if they had to ring for an ambulance and asked themselves 'why do we read?' Teachers mark this work sensitively. They correct some spellings, but their emphasis is on engaging with the pupils about their ideas, sometimes by asking an additional question to which pupils respond. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate good writing skills with well-constructed sentences, good connectives and a sense of occasion: 'Sometimes when I have my coat on...', or giving good reasons: 'I like to read because I like to learn different things in non-fiction books about the past especially medieval times'. In Years 1 - 2 pupils show a developing sense of language structure. In Years 3 - 4 pupils show developing maturity.
59. The quality of teaching is good, since teachers give good attention to basic skills as well as enabling pupils to enjoy stories and develop a feeling for literature. Teachers plan lessons well, using their personal knowledge of pupils' learning needs and their records effectively. There is good adaptation of tasks to match them with pupils' levels of attainment, using assessment information well. There is a strong emphasis on learning good language structure from stories that teachers read with good expression, so as to bring out their meaning. In this way, pupils acquire a good sense of character and learn to interpret the texts. Teachers mostly demonstrate good subject knowledge, using effective strategies and questioning to challenge pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well. On a few occasions, classroom assistants are too passive or do not ensure that pupils talk sufficiently about their ideas. During the inspection the library was not seen to be used as a resource for promoting pupils' independent learning and enquiry skills.
60. The subject leader gives good direction for the development of the subject. She has helped to identify appropriate targets for improvement. These include the purchase of new reading books with boys' interests and multi-cultural contexts in mind, and an emphasis on a consistent

approach to teaching phonics. The introduction of 'thinking books' is intended to stimulate pupils' writing and is very successful.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The school promotes language and literacy well overall through other subjects, such as history and religious education. Pupils are expected to write out their work in science, giving explanations for their findings, although this is seldom extended to mathematics to produce a piece of work setting out and explaining pupils' findings. Teachers usually give a good emphasis to the specific language and vocabulary needed for the various subjects although there are missed opportunities for promoting discussion between pupils, by working together on a task or presenting their findings, for example.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, particularly teachers' explanations, and this has a good impact on learning.
- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2 is good.
- Pupils in Years 3 - 4 are not good enough at rapid mental calculation.
- The subject action planning to raise standards is good.

Commentary

62. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is below average. Standards in the work seen by Years 2 and 4 are broadly average. This maintains the position noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a secure understanding of number and have satisfactory skills for mental calculation, indicating good achievement in Years 1 - 2. Their knowledge of shape and of simple properties is satisfactory. They have the skills to set out the results of a survey in a graph and to interpret their findings. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have satisfactory numeracy skills, although several pupils are not confident in carrying out mental calculations quickly, and achievement is satisfactory. This weakness relates to previous staffing difficulties, and teachers now give a good emphasis to building calculation strategies, which are effective in building pupils' skills. Pupils' knowledge in other aspects of mathematics is also satisfactory. There is a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs who are achieving well through the impact of good, continual reinforcement of their numeracy skills.
63. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good across the school, reflecting the positive impact of staff changes and initiatives for improvement. Teachers deliver the subject well from a basis of good subject knowledge. The National Numeracy Strategy is integrated well into their teaching methods. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work to suit them. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and use effective strategies to help them learn. Although work is generally planned to match the pupils' ability, some opportunities to challenge the higher attaining pupils are missed. Teachers often set a good pace in lessons, with high expectations and interesting tasks. Pupils have good opportunities to explain and demonstrate their mathematical strategies to the rest of the class. In a minority of lessons, the pace is slower. More time is spent on maintaining discipline, so pupils' interest levels drop. Where classroom assistants or other helpers are used they are usually well briefed. Activities requiring pupils to apply mathematics to real life situations and undertake investigations are less well developed. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use ICT in mathematics lessons.
64. Pupils were learning well in most of the lessons seen because the quality of teaching was good. Their attitudes to mathematics are good across the school. They enjoy lessons and sustain concentration well. Good behaviour is generally maintained throughout lessons. A

minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties find listening and sitting still difficult in some lessons. These pupils were, however, generally well managed by their teachers.

65. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. An improved level of resources and more use of ICT in mathematics lessons support and extend pupils' learning.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and, with the support of governors and the headteacher, has the vision to take the subject forward. She has had some time allocated to monitor lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work which is proving useful in identifying and tackling areas for improvement. The use of target setting and the tracking of pupils' performance have been introduced successfully. They are at an early stage of development and have rightly been identified as priorities for further improvement in the drive to raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well in mathematics lessons, the use of mathematics in other lessons has not been systematically planned. Mathematical skills are used effectively in science when data is presented in the form of graphs and bar charts and pupils' concepts of time are reinforced in history lessons. Pupils use their measuring skills well in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in building up factual knowledge as a result of good teaching, but are not given enough opportunities to develop skills of scientific enquiry through experimentation.
- Teaching assistants are used well to include all pupils in lessons.
- Good links between science and other subjects enhance learning.
- The use of ICT to enhance pupils' understanding of science is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

68. Pupils enter Year 1 with limited understanding of the world about them and their attainment is below average. They make good progress in building up their knowledge of materials and properties, physical processes and life and living things because teaching is focused well on broadening their experience. As a result, the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good with no noticeable differences evident in the achievement of boys and girls, and standards are average in Year 2 and Year 4. However, pupils' knowledge about science is stronger than their enquiry skills. This is because teachers tend to carry out experiments and to discuss them with pupils watching rather than ensuring that pupils do a variety of simple experiments for themselves. As a result, pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are less developed, which affects their overall understanding of science. Many Year 4 pupils, for example, had little or no idea of the basic concept of a fair test when conducting investigations and this adversely affected the quality of their work. The school arranges challenging science days on occasions throughout the year, which compensates in part for limited experiences at other times.
69. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers displayed good subject knowledge during the lessons observed. Their planning showed a clear focus and catered for the needs of all groups of pupils. Lesson introductions were used effectively to explain tasks, introduce scientific terms and review previous learning. In addition, teaching assistants efficiently supported pupils experiencing learning difficulties. Tasks were matched well to pupils' prior attainment and previous learning; resources were used well to enhance their learning experiences. As a result

pupils achieved well in building up their knowledge of science in all observed lessons and displayed good attitudes towards their work. This was equally evident during discussions and in pupils' written work. When Year 1 pupils, for example, learned about forces, higher attaining pupils correctly suggested that pushing and pulling were the only ways to move objects. Year 4 pupils evaluated the insulating properties of materials effectively. They applied their previous learning well, when predicting which material would be best at keeping water warm, even though their understanding of scientific enquiry was limited.

70. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and has secured several improvements in science provision since the last inspection. These include an improvement in pupils' achievement through better teaching. They also include better learning materials, since resources now cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study and are used well to enhance learning. The introduction of systematic assessments of pupils' attainment is a further improvement which is having a positive impact. There is also an improvement in pupils' attitudes to the subject. These are now good.
71. Teachers generally find good ways to support pupils' learning of science through work in numeracy and language development. However, the use of ICT to enhance pupils' understanding of the subject is not an integral part of science teaching and has yet to be fully developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement overall.
- ICT is used to enhance learning well in most areas of the curriculum.
- The subject is led well and managed very well, with a clear vision for improvement.
- Teachers and pupils are not yet efficient at saving and storing work effectively on the computer network.

Commentary

72. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Nearly all pupils create documents with text and pictures, make graphs or pictograms and solve problems using simulation software. Pupils begin Year 1 with below average skills and knowledge in ICT as well as limited language skills. Good teaching and a high level of exposure to ICT help ensure that pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils' standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4. Their achievement is good, since pupils began Year 3 with below average skills and knowledge. Whilst teaching is also good at this stage, these pupils previously had fewer opportunities in Years 1 and 2 than the current Years 1 and 2 pupils enjoy. Boys and girls do equally well throughout the school and pupils with special educational needs also achieve well.
73. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and manage lessons well so that they can be integrated with other areas of the curriculum, for example with geography or design and technology. In the ICT room, pupils are taught in groups of ten or so by expert teachers or a specially trained teaching assistant. All pupils are very well included; the school has good software appropriate for pupils at all levels of attainment. This enables pupils to learn effectively at their own rate as well as being challenged to do their best. Pupils are clear about what they have to do and learn well because they are interested and enthusiastic. Teachers and their assistant monitor and assess pupils' progress well, so they are continually asked to evaluate their work and improve it. There are also good opportunities for pupils to reflect on and discuss what they are learning.

74. Leadership is good and has proved very effective in promoting the use of ICT across most areas of the curriculum. As a result, the teachers are confident and give the pupils the experience of a wide range of applications. ICT is very well managed, so the provision of resources and timetabling of their use ensure that all pupils have equal access to computers and other equipment. The leadership has ensured that teachers are trained well so that, for example, they can use the overhead projector technology and make multimedia presentations. However, teachers are less sure about using the network filing system to save pupils' work regularly and systematically, to create a clear record of progress as well as allowing easy retrieval by pupils. It is hoped that this problem will be alleviated when the recently appointed technician is able to set up a proper file structure and advise on its use. Further improvements to the network and other provision are planned.
75. The ICT curriculum is very good, with nearly all teachers using ICT regularly to support learning. The use of ICT to support pupils with special educational needs pupils is very good. Talented pupils are also given good opportunities to take their work further. The school uses ICT to develop mathematics skills, to explore themes in history and to create pictures in art and design. A particularly exciting innovation enables pupils to make and edit digital video. This is very effective in improving their language and communication skills. There was less use of ICT in science than in some other areas. The school provides good extra-curricular opportunities. During the inspection Year 4 pupils used the computers in the lunchtime to create posters for a music and dance performance. The school has forged good links with the local authority and also with the middle school designed to help develop the curriculum and resources.
76. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning, planning, staff training and expertise and resources have all increased in quality.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Teachers demonstrate a growing understanding and use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, such as geography, although the potential is not yet fully exploited, for example in religious education and science. Facilities are used well for specific lessons to illustrate ideas. Pupils have had the opportunity to make searches on the Internet. Other forms of ICT are used at times, such as videos and the overhead projector, and these make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. History and geography were sampled.

78. Inspectors observed only one lesson in **history** and two in **geography**. However both subjects were sampled through an examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning. This confirmed that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught in sufficient depth. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were judged to be broadly in line with expectations in both Year 2 and Year 4.
79. The quality of resources in both subjects is good. It is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making work interesting and relevant. In geography, walks around the local neighbourhood and visits to places such as the local boat-building college enable pupils to increase their knowledge of the physical and human features of the locality. Similarly, in history, pupils' understanding of the past is enhanced through visits to places such as local museums and through visitors to the school including, for example, local fishermen.
80. Pupils' attitudes to both subjects are good and this was evident in observed lessons. In the history session, Year 4 pupils developed their understanding of life and beliefs in Ancient Greece. Although the tasks they were given were not well matched to their different abilities and

experiences, most pupils made satisfactory progress in building up their knowledge and understanding of people and places from long ago and their achievement matched this.

81. Pupils achieved well in the two observed geography lessons. Year 1 pupils used ICT effectively to enhance their proficiency in reading simple maps whilst a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class improved their understanding of life for a family living in Ghana. Both lessons were successful because teaching was good and learning was linked well to previous work. In addition, tasks were challenging and matched well to pupils' abilities. Teaching assistants were used effectively to support learning.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory in both subjects. Co-ordinators have started to monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work, although this is not yet sufficiently detailed to check the quality of teaching and provision effectively.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership and management have been effective in ensuring the weaknesses noted during the last inspection have been fully addressed.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, though variable.
- Pupils' attitudes towards religious education are good.
- ICT is not fully used to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

83. Although only three lessons were observed during the inspection, evidence from these and from an analysis of pupils' written work indicates that achievement in religious education is good. Pupils attain standards which are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in both Year 2 and Year 4. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection, which found the quality of written work to be below expectations by most pupils and the progress pupils made in reflecting on moral and spiritual questions unsatisfactory.
84. Pupils have developed good attitudes to learning. They are given regular opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as relevant facts. Younger pupils are taught about Christianity and compare this to the Jewish faith. They learn of the importance of special times to different people and the significance of family occasions. Pupils in Years 3 - 4 study the life of Jesus and the importance of the Bible to Judaism. Learning about Christianity is enhanced through the good use of links to the local parish church, although visits by pupils to places of interest to other faiths are very limited.
85. The quality of teaching of religious education is good overall, with one observed lesson being judged very good. This good teaching has a strong impact on pupils' learning, so that their achievement is good. During a lesson which was taught effectively to a Year 1 class the teacher used a good range of interesting strategies that involved pupils fully in developing their understanding of the story of Easter. As a result, all pupils achieved well. However teaching in another lesson was judged unsatisfactory because the session was ineffectively structured and lacked pace. This led to poor behaviour by the pupils. The teacher found difficulty in dealing with this without effective support from teaching assistants. Learning was affected and achievement was unsatisfactory.
86. The co-ordinator, who leads and manages the subject well, keeps a watchful eye on teachers' planning and occasionally observes teaching. This has given her a clear picture of the subjects'

strengths and weaknesses, including the need to develop the use of ICT further to enhance pupils' learning.

87. Resources for teaching religious education, criticised in the previous inspection, are now good and are used well to augment teaching. The school has also improved the use of assessment to check pupils' progress by developing and using simple, yet effective, assessment procedures to evaluate pupils' attainment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology were inspected in detail and are reported in full below. Music and physical education were sampled.

88. In **music** pupils were only observed for a short period of time in a Year 4 lesson, although the whole school was heard singing in assemblies. Discussions with teachers and analysis of planning confirm that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught in sufficient depth. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were judged to be broadly average in both Year 2 and Year 4. Music has a high profile among pupils, who display good attitudes to the subject. The quality of singing in assemblies is good. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 talk enthusiastically about their membership of the school choir and the performances they give. Resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to enhance learning. The subject also contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links between music and other curriculum areas, such as ICT, are satisfactory and continuing to develop.
89. Standards in **physical education** are average in Years 2 and 4. Pupils regularly participate in a variety of sports through the year, so they develop their skills progressively. In a lively lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils produced many interesting sequences of dance moves and positions to demonstrate '2 + 3 = 5'. Several pairs of pupils produced imaginative positions, using their arms and bodies to curve into shapes. The pupils achieved well because good teaching gave them clear direction but set high expectations for collaborative working to produce a pleasing result. In another good lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge had a positive impact on pupils' learning through her direct teaching and good use of demonstration. The pupils responded to the music well, performing a variety of basic movements related to a story about a snake and an elephant. Pupils with special educational needs were fully integrated with others. By Year 3 pupils have progressed in their co-ordination and skill. In a good lesson in Year 3 pupils responded well with good attitudes to developing early gymnastics skills. They demonstrated average standards in their co-ordination and control. The lower attaining pupils were supported appropriately by the classroom assistant, so that all pupils were included well. The subject leader provides good leadership.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement.
- The curriculum is good, especially the range of different times and cultures that pupils explore.
- Facilities are good and pupils benefit from using clay, cameras, computers, and printing.
- There are insufficient instances of pupils drawing from direct observation.

Commentary

90. Standards are average at the end of Year 2. The pupils' skills in the use of paint and colour are good. Achievement is good, as pupils begin school with below average knowledge and skills in art. Standards at the end of Year 4 are average. Again, achievement is good, as pupils continue to develop and expand the range of work they produce. The pupils' use of texture, for instance in drawing or printing, is well developed. Pupils also make a range of models and designs from clay, demonstrating growing skill in producing effective textures.
91. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and organised so that they run smoothly. Pupils are clear about what they have to do and learn well, because they are interested and enthusiastic. Classroom assistants provide good support so that all pupils are encouraged to do their best. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to talk about and evaluate what they are learning. Their achievements are celebrated both within the classroom and around the school in displays. Assessment is good and the teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum enables them to set challenging tasks and themes.
92. Leadership and management are good. The leader for art provides clear examples of what pupils could achieve. The curriculum is effectively planned and teamwork is good. The timetable is flexible and allows projects to be completed, so that continuity in learning is good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to experiment with computer painting programs and the results enhance the pupils' learning well, for example in the development of patterns. Pupils' well-kept sketchbooks showed interesting formal development of visual vocabulary but not as much drawing from observation as expected. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well developed through the art curriculum. The school has exciting links with Ghana which provide stimulating images, sounds and movement. In addition pupils study modern abstract art, Indian fabric printing and Aboriginal painting.
93. The improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teaching and achievement have improved and good development planning ensures that the range of pupils' experiences continues to expand.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, leading to good achievement.
- The curriculum is well planned and covered thoroughly.

Commentary

94. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 4. Achievement is good, as pupils enter the school with below average knowledge and skills and then make good progress. By the time they leave they can design, make, test and evaluate a range of products in wood, card, fabric, yarn and food. They incorporate simple electrical circuits, wheels and a range of joints and mechanisms. They know that their designs have to meet certain requirements and they choose appropriate materials. They make realistic plans with labels to show how they intend to construct their designs.
95. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and organised so that they run smoothly. Pupils are clear about what they have to do and learn well, because they are interested and enthusiastic. Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and use classroom assistants well to help and support pupils. They ensure that all pupils participate and do their best. Because of their good knowledge of the curriculum, teachers assess the pupils' work and progress effectively, using the information gained to plan future lessons.

Teachers share these findings regularly with other teachers, which helps to develop and improve the scheme of work. The use of evaluation is particularly good - it is an aspect of the curriculum which is carefully planned. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils first discussed the type of questions they would need to ask in evaluating packaging. They then used this information to plan party food containers of their own. The best designs incorporated practical features to protect the food as well as imaginative images.

96. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that all teachers work to a common framework. The planning and development of the curriculum are regular and consistent with the school's policies. This ensures that relevant aspects of mathematics and English are developed in lessons. Pupils are also given opportunities to use computers for designing, although this aspect is less well developed.
97. Since the previous inspection, the improvement has been very good. Standards, achievement and the range of projects and materials have all improved. The school has paid particular attention to the development of pupils' problem-solving skills and this has also been successful.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good so that pupils learn to consider others' opinions.
- The curriculum has good links with other subjects and reflects the good level of care for the pupils.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection, for example in encouraging pupils' self-esteem.

Commentary

98. Standards are average by Year 4; it was not possible to form a judgement on standards at Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher led a discussion on drugs which are good for our bodies and those which are bad. The lesson built well on previous discussion. Many pupils explained that the correct dosage is important and knew that several popular drinks have high levels of caffeine. The lesson lacked the visual stimulus required to help pupils' learning, although useful books had been provided for pupils to carry out some research in the previous lesson. In Year 4, the teacher led a lesson with the same learning objective, although the intended outcomes were pitched at a higher level. The pupils demonstrated good interest and positive attitudes, recognising the links between the proper use of drugs and a healthier lifestyle. Good teaching led to good achievement because the teaching methods encouraged a high level of interest and pupils wanted to contribute. Other lessons, for example one seen in religious education on trust and obedience, contribute well to pupils' understanding.
99. The subject co-ordinator gives a very good lead. She ensures that the programme of study is followed and that all members of staff are confident to teach it. She has good arrangements for class release time to monitor provision and standards in the subject. She has led a drugs workshop for parents and children to encourage support from the home for children's learning. She has helped with several initiatives, so provision in personal, social and health education shows good improvement since the last inspection, largely due to her effective leadership and management.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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