

INSPECTION REPORT

**ELVEDEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Thetford

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124765

Headteacher: Mrs K Rees

Lead inspector: Mrs J Richardson

Dates of inspection: 1-3 March 2004

Inspection number: 256062

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Elveden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4-9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 51 |
| School address: | London Road Elveden Thetford Norfolk |
| Postcode: | IP24 3TN |
| Telephone number: | 01842 890258 |
| Fax number: | 01842 890258 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Rev Robert Leach |
| Date of previous inspection: | 27-29 April 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided Church of England first school. It has 51 children in five year groups, from Reception to Year 4. Children start in Reception in September when they are four, attending full time from the term of their fifth birthday. The school has three classes in the mornings. This reduces to two in the afternoons, in the autumn and spring term; the full-time children from the Reception class join the Year 1/2 class. The school draws around a fifth of its pupils from the surrounding Elveden Estate but most come from further afield. About a fifth are from US airforce families. The pupils are white, of British, American or South African heritage, and none speaks English as an additional language. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average but several pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. One child has a statement of special educational need. Pupils come from a diversity of backgrounds, and mobility amongst pupils is slightly higher than the national average. Children start school with widely varying attainment, but attainment on entry is below average overall. In 2002, the school won a School Achievement Award for its results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| 6676 | Joy Richardson | Lead inspector | Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation stage |
| 32670 | Graham Saltmarsh | Lay inspector | |
| 27698 | Gordon Phillips | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Citizenship Geography History Religious education English as an additional language Special educational needs |

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections

6 East Point
High Street
Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN15 0EG

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|---------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 6 - 8 |
| PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS | |
| STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS | 8 - 10 |
| Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | |
| QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL | 10 - 14 |
| Teaching and learning | |
| The curriculum | |
| Care, guidance and support | |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community | |
| LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT | 14 - 16 |
| PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS | 16 - 23 |
| AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE | |
| SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2 | |
| PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS | 23 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where pupils are well taught and thrive as members of the school community. The school is well led and the partnership with parents is excellent. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in literacy, becoming confident and enthusiastic readers and writers.
- Teaching is thorough and interesting, encouraging depth and breadth in learning.
- The headteacher is setting the school's direction well and cultivating effective teamwork.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school, to their work and to each other.
- The school has extremely supportive links with parents and the community.
- Teaching arrangements do not consistently foster continuity in learning across the school.

Since the last inspection, in April 1998, the school has continued to improve. It has raised standards in writing, and has sought to improve the presentation of pupils' work. It has become better at planning work across all subjects, at matching work to individual needs, and at providing challenge for able, older pupils. After an unsettling period of temporary leadership, the school is now looking confidently to the future and building on its strengths.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well across the school. In Reception, most children reach and some exceed the goals set for the end of Reception in each of the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and standards are above average in English, including reading and writing. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory and standards are average.

Over recent years, improvement in the school's results, in tests taken by pupils in Year 2, has been above the national trend. Variations from year to year are magnified by the small number in each cohort and the incidence of pupils with special educational needs. However, the school has identified factors leading to a dip in results in 2003 and is taking action, particularly to raise standards further in mathematics.

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

*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*

Achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 and pupils reach good standards for their age in English, mathematics and science. The school is tracking pupils' progress with care to ensure that they make sufficient progress each year, and this is helping to raise sights.

In information and communication technology, pupils throughout the school reach standards in line with those expected for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are given good support which helps them to reach the targets set for them.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave very well, and difficult behaviour by a few boys is generally well managed, so that it rarely disturbs others. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall, with particular strengths in Reception and in Years 3 and 4, and in the teaching of literacy. Teaching is purposeful and systematic, securing good learning, and often imaginative and exciting. Teaching arrangements in the afternoons do not always promote continuity in pupils' learning.

The curriculum is well rounded. It is enriched by visits and special events. Pupils are very well known and the staff care for them very effectively. Very good relationships amongst staff and pupils, and with parents, underpin the sense of community. The partnership with parents is exceptionally strong and this supports pupils' learning and achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides effective leadership, setting the tone of the school, reinforcing the sense that it is a good place to be and harnessing the efforts of the whole team in making it so. The governing body supports the school effectively. It ensures compliance with all statutory requirements. Management is good; the school runs smoothly and all the members of the school community know what is expected of them. Systems are being developed for monitoring teaching and learning across the school, and for tracking pupils' progress from year to year. These are helping the school to take stock of how well it is doing and to plan for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high opinion of the school and are very active in their support for it. Pupils enjoy school and the variety of activities and opportunities it provides. They appreciate their teachers and say that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils have their say and are listened to seriously. They know that each individual has a part to play in the life of the school, and they take pride in contributing within the school community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that the deployment of teachers provides continuity and maximises learning across the day and the week;
- develop the schoolwide monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, and the tracking of pupils' progress, to identify what could be better;
- ensure that difficult behaviour by a minority does not slow the pace of learning for others.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school and standards overall are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils read widely and well.
- The standard of writing is good.
- Achievement is rising in mathematics in the oldest class.

Commentary

1. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, during their time in the Reception class. Although many children start school knowing little about words or numbers, the foundations are laid well in literacy and numeracy, as in all the required areas of learning. As a result, most children achieve, and some exceed, the goals for the end of Reception in each of the six areas of learning.
2. Building on these good foundations, pupils achieve well overall in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4, reaching good standards. They do particularly well in literacy. Careful attention is paid to reading, at school and at home, building pupils' knowledge of sounds and common words. Pupils extend their skills in reading a wide variety of books, with evident enjoyment.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.0 (17.9) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 15.7 (15.4) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 16.0 (19.2) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In 2003, although the reading results shown in the table above were just above average, they were lower than in previous years. This was because several pupils in Year 2 fell short of the level expected for their age. The school has plans to extend its support for individual readers who are falling behind. The school has focused successfully on improving standards in writing, and standards are above average throughout the school. Competence in spelling is systematically developed, and pupils are encouraged to write creatively and to take pleasure in words.
4. The school has recognised the need to raise standards in mathematics, following results in national tests in 2003 which were below the national average. A new scheme is being introduced, starting in Years 3 and 4. It is being used to reinforce learning more thoroughly, and to provide more challenge in the application of skills. Standards in the work seen are average in Years 1 and 2, and above average in Years 3 and 4.
5. Standards are above average throughout the school in science, because pupils are encouraged to be curious about the natural world and how things work, to explore and to investigate. In information and communication technology, standards across the school are in line with national expectations. Provision has been recently reviewed to give more systematic

teaching and pupils are now achieving well. Pupils make use of technology to support their learning across the curriculum.

6. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, with the help of teaching assistants, and they achieve well in reaching the targets set in individual education plans. There are more boys than girls in the school, and gender differences in achievement broadly reflect the national pattern.
7. The school is beginning to use assessment data well to set targets, to track the progress of pupils over time, and to measure the 'value added' at each stage. As a result, strengths and weaknesses in learning are being pinpointed, and action planned for improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Behaviour is good overall, in classes and around the school, and most pupils adhere to the high standards expected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ethos of care, trust and respect underpins positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are confident and acquire very good social skills.
- Pupils have a strong sense of ownership and belonging to the school.
- Difficult behaviour is generally well managed to encourage self control and maintain the focus on learning.

Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes regarding every aspect of their school life are very good. They show thoughtfulness and care towards each other. The school's family atmosphere is reflected in the pleasure pupils take in knowing everyone, and the ease with which they mix across the age groups. Pupils are independent and outgoing, and proud of their school. Pupils readily take on responsibilities which they carry out diligently. Visitors receive a warm welcome.
9. Pupils respond well to the expectations of staff as to how they should behave. They obey simple yet clear rules based on courtesy and respect. Occasional lapses or challenges are well managed by the staff with a minimum of fuss, and pupils clearly respect this. Pupils are helped to regulate their own behaviour and to understand how their actions affect others.
10. A highly effective and valued reward system is in place, in which the headteacher and all staff are fully involved. Children and staff can also put notes anonymously into the 'Purple Box', recognizing acts of kindness and other examples of positive actions; these are subsequently praised and rewarded. The school's values are appreciated and fully supported by parents.
11. Pupils grow in confidence and maturity because of the attention paid to their personal development. Spiritual awareness is nurtured in ways which are relevant and absorbing for pupils. Assemblies involve pupils in thinking about issues such as friendship and standing up for beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in the wider world, and to appreciate the richness and diversity of cultural traditions. Appreciation of art and music is strongly cultivated. Multicultural understanding is promoted throughout the school in many ways, including art, music, dance and religious education. The school sponsors a child in India, and this promotes active enquiry and communication about life in another land.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.7 |
| National data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National data | 0.4 |

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

12. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are very punctual to school and they settle quickly to work on arrival. There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well. Teaching is particularly strong in Reception and in Years 3 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills in literacy are well taught throughout the school.
- Teaching is often lively and imaginative, keeping pupils interested and eager to learn.
- There is some discontinuity in the teaching of pupils in the afternoons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons

13. Teaching was good or better in three quarters of the lessons observed during the inspection, including all the literacy lessons. The teaching of basic skills in literacy is thorough and systematic in all classes, and pupils' learning is reinforced by good arrangements to encourage practice at home. Numeracy skills are generally well taught so that pupils become confident in working with numbers in their head.
14. Across the full range of subjects, teachers are knowledgeable about what they teach, and often imaginative in the way they present it. They use resources well to illustrate their teaching, making links with pupils' own experience to aid understanding. The teachers' enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils, creating a good climate for learning, stimulating curiosity about the wider world, and fostering a sense of shared endeavour.
15. Teaching in the Reception class is very well tuned to the needs of young children, holding their interest and steadily extending their learning. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is lively and challenging, giving reinforcement where needed and spurring pupils to explore further.
16. Because most of the teachers are part time, pupils are often taught by a different teacher in the morning and afternoon. Although the curriculum is well covered, work does not fully ensure that skills learned in the morning are built on in the afternoon. When the full-time Reception children join the Year 1/2 class in the afternoon, this increases the challenge of matching work to different needs, and difficulties in managing behaviour sometimes slow the pace of learning.

17. The contribution of the teaching assistants adds significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. The teaching assistants work very effectively with individuals and groups, including teaching groups for information and communication technology, and often working with Reception children in the afternoons. They provide well-targeted support for pupils with special educational needs.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, which enables the pupils to achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum, promoting active learning.
- Visits, clubs and special events enrich learning and widen horizons.
- The school's accommodation and resources are used well, despite their limitations.

Commentary

18. The curriculum provides a broad and relevant range of activities and experiences, which are planned to engage pupils' interest and extend their learning. Work is often linked thematically across subjects, encouraging breadth and depth of enquiry. For example, work about the Romans in Years 3 and 4 included history, geography, drama, a range of language skills, including learning a little Latin, and mathematical work using Roman numerals.
19. The school places a strong emphasis on literacy, while maintaining balance within the curriculum. It ensures that the foundation subjects, as well as the core subjects, and all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, are properly covered. The arts are strongly pursued within the curriculum and the school has applied for an 'Artsmark' in recognition of this. 'Focus Weeks' and 'Art Days' foster creativity, and involve the whole school. Pupils have good opportunities to learn a musical instrument, to listen to music and to take part in school productions.
20. Good use is made of the local environment to deepen pupils' first-hand knowledge and understanding. Pupils learn about the uniqueness of the Estate on which the school is built, studying its history and geography and natural environment. Pupils visit some of the major environmental sites of East Anglia, for example the Wildfowl Trust reserve at Welney, and show a keen interest in the natural world. The school has begun to work towards the 'Eco Schools' award, and this is raising awareness of environmental issues across the school community.
21. Visits extend learning, as when pupils visited the Sainsbury art gallery and the 'Inspire' science centre in Norwich. Visitors also enrich school life. There are clubs for chess, in which the school excels. Around 20 pupils play, and the school takes part in regular tournaments with other schools. The computer club is also popular. It gives pupils the opportunity to work on the computers at lunchtimes. There are plans to include more extra-curricular opportunities for sport in the near future.
22. The age and layout of the building present some constraints, but the school works hard to overcome these. Classrooms are small, although adequate for small classes. There is limited access for Reception pupils to the outdoor play area, or to the role-play area set up in the hall. Recently, a small extension has improved staffroom and office space. Good improvements since the previous inspection include the development of a computer suite and the provision of additional equipment in classrooms.

23. The school playground is modest in size and in need of resurfacing. Pupils play constructively and imaginatively, enjoying a wide range of games, and playing well together across all ages. However, limitations of space make it difficult to segregate the playground effectively, for example to separate football from other activities. In the summer months, pupils have access to the village green and this provides the space for athletics and a good variety of team games. Pupils learn to swim, going weekly to the Mildenhall swimming pool for two terms of each year, from Year 2.
24. The school is secure and well cared for. Interesting and attractive displays stimulate curiosity, celebrate achievement, and demonstrate the range of pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a high quality of care for pupils, and guides and supports pupils well. It is good at involving pupils and taking their views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All the adults know pupils very well and work well as a team in caring for them.
- The early years induction programme is reassuring for pupils and parents.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

25. A strong community ethos of trust and respect contributes to the quality of care for pupils. All the members of the school community, including pupils, staff, parents and governors, are well known to each other. Pupils know that they matter as individuals, and staff and parents work closely together to give pupils the support they need.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage, using a range of assessments, and supported so that they make good progress in their learning and personal development. Targets are drawn up and included in individual and group education plans. These are implemented well, with help from teaching assistants, and regularly reviewed. There is close consultation with parents about the progress being made. The school is strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils have access to a high quality education, and that differences are accepted and respected.
27. Older pupils are encouraged to care for and take responsibility for younger ones. This concern for others was demonstrated during the inspection when a girl pupil tripped in the playground and was helped to her feet by two older boys who checked that she was unhurt.
28. Pupils say that there is always an adult they can turn to if they are worried at school. They know that bullying will not be tolerated and there was little evidence of pupils considering it to be a problem. Although there is no formal school council, pupils are confident in expressing their views about the school and ideas for making it even better. Small numbers mean that individuals have little difficulty in making their voice heard.
29. Induction procedures are comprehensive and reassuring for both parents and children. The process starts in June with a new parents' induction day, which allows parents and staff to get to know each other. This is followed by weekly afternoon visits to the school by children before they start the Reception class in September. Pupils entering the school at other times are equally well cared for. The school welcomes the opportunity to discuss and resolve any problems, considering this to be a continuing process.
30. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are carefully supervised and safe at all times. Attention is paid to the health needs of individual pupils and to the promotion of healthy living

and personal safety. Accidents are rare, and any problems relating to health and safety are promptly addressed so that steps can be taken to resolve them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the local community are excellent and there are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership with parents makes an extremely strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Parental support and involvement through the Parent Teacher Association are excellent.
- The school plays an important part in the life of the wider local community.

Commentary

31. Parents and children love this school and have a very strong sense of ownership and responsibility towards it. This was reflected in high attendance at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and at a subsequent meeting during the inspection itself. Responses to the parents' questionnaire were generally very positive.
32. The school places great importance upon its relationship and partnership with parents and it positively welcomes contributions and participation in all aspects of school life. Parents are routinely consulted about the school's development and there are daily opportunities for them to meet the headteacher and staff. Parental support is very strong because parents know that their views are actively sought and they value their genuine partnership with the school, recognising that it benefits their children.
33. Parents and other volunteers provide regular help to the school in a variety of ways, including technical support and assistance in the new computer suite. The school has drawn together parents for the 'Reading Together' scheme, which is to be implemented shortly. This involves parents coming into school to hear pupils read. Parents help their children with regular homework, which focuses strongly on literacy, and this contributes significantly to pupils' achievement. Parents are given clear guidance about expectations for homework, and readily give their assistance as a result.
34. All parents belong to the Parent Teacher Association, which is deeply embedded into the life of the school community. The drive and initiative shown in fundraising are exceptional for such a small school. Over the past year, £2000 has been raised for resources, including new schemes for mathematics and music, by tapping into both community and business sponsorship. The parents have published a cookery book, with diverse contributions drawn from the whole community. They also organise a large and successful Summer Fete and a Christmas Fair.
35. Information to parents is very good and parents speak positively of the way they are kept informed about the school in general and their children in particular. They acquire a wide range of information from the comprehensive school brochure. The monthly newsletters are interesting and full of information, keeping parents up to date with life in the school. Parents are delighted by the sense of community generated by the school. Service families especially appreciate the 'extended family' which the school provides for them.
36. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through detailed school reports which reflect the school's personal knowledge of every pupil.
37. Community links are excellent. The school accepts that it has an important part to play within local life. It has a close affiliation with the local church, and the vicar visits regularly to take

assembly. Support from local people for their village school is very high. Governors, parents and staff actively reach out to work with others within the wider community. For example, the school actively supports the 'FIND' charity in Ipswich for families in need, and works with Forest Rangers in Thetford Forest to extend pupils' appreciation of environmental science. Local residents are invited to school productions and events.

38. There are very strong links with the Elveden Estate, which owns the school building and has a representative on the governing body. The estate management assists with some repairs and maintenance to the school over and above that provided by the local education authority.
39. Links with other local schools are good. Pupils visit receiving middle schools during the summer term and helpful transition arrangements are in place. There are good links with other first schools, which include pupils coming together each year in a joint production at Breckland Middle School.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The school's leadership is good and management is effective. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is leading the school with vision and a strong sense of direction.
- The efforts of the staff team, and the whole school community, are being harnessed effectively.
- Systems are developing for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring learning across the school.

Commentary

40. The headteacher, now in her second term at the school, provides purposeful leadership which is shaping the school's ethos and setting its direction for the future. The headteacher leads by example in the classroom, enriching the curriculum and sharing enthusiasm for learning. She has taken the lead effectively in managing difficult behaviour, and increasing the challenge for older pupils. She knows all the pupils well, recognising and valuing their individuality, while reinforcing schoolwide expectations and routines which help all the pupils to feel secure.
41. The headteacher fosters good relationships and a sense of common purpose amongst all members of the staff team. Responsibilities are increasingly being shared. The senior teacher contributes strongly to leadership in key areas of the school's work, including special educational needs.
42. The school's self-evaluation is developing well. Work is in hand to establish an overview of how well pupils are doing, using information from assessment to track progress from term to term and from year to year. Performance management is in place, and the school is planning to extend the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work, in order to share what works and to plan together for improvement.
43. Governors support the school well, and help to reinforce the strong links with parents and the community. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. The headteacher has taken stock of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is working, with staff and governors, to develop the school's improvement planning and the ordering of priorities over a longer timescale.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 178,126 | Balance from previous year | 36,385 |

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Total expenditure | 191,056 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 4,065 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance carried forward to the next | 23,455 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|

44. Expenditure per pupil is relatively high, as expected in a small school, but the school makes good use of its resources. Spending decisions are carefully considered in terms of the school's educational aims. Financial constraints this year have affected the provision of teaching assistance and of full-time teaching for the Reception class from the spring term, while further reducing the balance to be carried forward. However, finances are well managed, and financial planning is now being extended to a three year period to gain a longer term view, in line with the school improvement plan.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expert and enthusiastic teaching gives children a very good start.
- Foundations are very well laid in reading.
- Children enjoy activities, and become absorbed in their work.
- Liaison with parents is very good, creating an effective partnership.
- Constraints on space and teaching time limit the curriculum.

Commentary

45. Children in Reception (ten boys and four girls) are taught in their own class in the mornings. The quality of teaching is very good across all the areas of learning. The teacher understands and engages extremely well with the children, teaching with great skill and making learning fun. The teaching assistant works closely with the teacher, effectively furthering children's learning and attending to their personal development. Children who attend full time join the Year 1/2 class in the afternoons, until the summer term. Work is often well planned for them, as when in a geography lesson the teaching assistant led them around the school to find places where teddy bears were located. At other times, however, work does not build steadily on what they can do, and difficulties in class management are evident.
46. Children achieve well in all the areas of learning. They make steady progress towards the early learning goals, which most children reach, and some children exceed, by the end of the Reception year. Their progress is carefully assessed, though this information is not yet being used to set targets or to pinpoint where action is needed to ensure that individuals keep up with expectations for their age.
47. Children make good progress in **personal, social and emotional development**. They settle in well and quickly get to know other children across the school, and all the staff. They have a strong sense of belonging, confidently having their say with older children at the lunch table, and readily explaining the school's routines to visitors. They co-operate well and enjoy working with other children. They learn to regulate their voices to keep noise down, and, when the teacher insists on their not calling out, to contain themselves while others are speaking. They share and take turns and tidy up, taking pride in knowing what to do.
48. Skills in **communication, language and literacy** develop well. Children participate eagerly in discussion, benefiting from the small size of the class, which allows them to explain their ideas at length. A few children start with some knowledge of reading and writing, but many have little understanding of words and letters, or of how to control a pencil. Energetic and imaginative teaching helps them to hear, recognise and form letters and to learn simple common words. They practise reading at home and begin to read simple books independently. They learn to form letters correctly, though some need more practice to establish good habits. The teacher, a gifted story teller, holds children entranced by stories, including traditional tales such as Rumpelstiltskin. These stories feed their imagination and their pleasure in books.
49. Good foundations are laid in children's **mathematical development**. Working mainly with small numbers, children count on and back, using terms such as 'more' and 'less' and adding and subtracting in the course of games and practical activities. Skilful teaching helps children

to understand mathematical ideas, by presenting them in a variety of ways. The teacher helps children to discuss what they are doing and to use strategies such as counting with their fingers, or along a number line. Some children are able to add two or three to a number in their head. Children learn to write numbers, but do not often record their work.

50. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development** are promoted well through a variety of activities within morning and afternoon sessions. Children use the computer confidently and enjoy making models. They take delight in 'mini-worlds', as offered by a box with logs and leaves and a silver paper pond, where snakes and 'speckled frogs' could be found. A pair of boys became completely absorbed in exploring and comparing their ideas: 'Snakes live under logs, don't they?' Children are knowledgeable and interested in the natural world of plants and animals. They draw and paint and print, though the small size of the classroom restricts the regular availability of such activities. Problems of access and supervision limit opportunities for outdoor play and for role play using the 'Elveden Travel Centre' in the hall. However, children learn to handle a range of tools and materials and have some access to large toys and equipment in the playground. They enjoy dance, responding with fascination to the challenge of moving like animals, in response to music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests have been consistently above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well, especially in creative writing.
- Skills in literacy are taught well throughout the school.

Commentary

51. The results of national tests for pupils at the age of seven have been above the national average over recent years. Although results in reading dipped in 2003, to only just above the national average, writing improved, reflecting the school's work in this area. The work seen on inspection shows that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4.
52. Pupils are systematically taught basic reading, spelling and writing skills. At the end of their time in the Reception class they are put into groups to learn words that are appropriate for their development. They practise reading and spelling, both at home and in lessons, so that by the time they reach the age of seven they are achieving at levels above the national average. This achievement is maintained in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils of this age display a great enthusiasm for writing and their poetry, in particular, is of high quality.
53. Teaching overall is good. The teaching is very thorough across the year groups. Resources are used well to support learning. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning of all pupils, and especially to those with special educational needs. Excellent teaching, as seen in a lesson in the Year 3/4 class, leads to high quality creative writing by older pupils. During the inspection this class was working on poetry and developing the use of simile. The teacher's expertise and enthusiasm generated delight in experimenting with words. Pupils produced examples such as: 'as loud as a little child, screaming for a toy'; 'as gentle as a bug, about to get squashed'; 'as dull as a doll, sitting on a shelf'. At the end of the session, pupils read out their own and others' work with great expression and verve, the teacher constantly challenging them to improve their performance and extend their ideas. The success

of the approach was summed up by a boy with special needs commenting at the end of the session, 'I *really* enjoyed that'.

54. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the capabilities of all the pupils in the school, which she uses to good effect to advise others. The headteacher is working effectively to extend the range of pupils' reading in Years 3 and 4. Plans are in hand to increase adult support in hearing pupils read individually, to accelerate the progress of targeted pupils.
55. At the time of the last inspection it was noted that pupils had few opportunities to write at length and in other subjects. This is not the case now and the good improvement in the subject is especially reflected in the number of pupils reaching higher levels in their writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils use their literacy skills in most curriculum areas. For example, in geography, religious education and history pupils write extended descriptions. They develop a range of skills through word-processing in information and communication technology, writing e-mails and practising writing for a range of purposes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the older class is lively and makes pupils think.
- Pupils are confident in working with numbers in their head.
- Assessment and target-setting are not yet being used to full effect, to raise expectations.

Commentary

57. Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. Standards in the work seen are average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, because they are given good support, often by teaching assistants, and work is structured well to help them reach the specific targets in their individual education plans. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
58. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 were very high in 2002 but below average in 2003. Although this fluctuation is exaggerated by the small number in the cohort, teachers recognise the need to review and develop the curriculum in mathematics. In particular, the school is concerned to broaden the scope of work, to provide more reinforcement for lower-attaining pupils and more extension for higher-attaining pupils, and to extend assessment. A new mathematics scheme, purchased with the help of the Parent Teacher Association, is now being introduced, starting in Reception and in Years 3 and 4, and is helping to achieve these ends. At present, there is little regular assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and to guide teaching. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen to do well, but they do not have clear targets to work towards, for example in learning multiplication tables.
59. The teaching seen was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 with some good teaching, and very good in Years 3 and 4. Basic skills in numeracy are well taught and pupils make steady progress. They develop strategies for mental calculation and become confident in mental arithmetic. They use mathematical vocabulary well, for example in talking about shape and symmetry in Years 1 and 2.

60. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is vigorous and well-paced, underpinning ideas by demonstrating them in different ways. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged to explore further with work 'to make your brain hurt', such as testing different ways of checking whether large numbers are divisible by three or four.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Skills in mathematics are applied within other work, for example in history, geography and science. Pupils use measurements, learning the importance of accuracy when conducting scientific investigations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn to question, investigate and test out ideas.
- They are interested in and knowledgeable about the natural world.
- Teaching is well organised, promoting practical learning.
- The recording of findings is not given enough attention.

Commentary

62. Achievement is good and standards are above average in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4. This is similar to the time of the last inspection.
63. In 2003, teacher assessment judged standards at the end of Year 2 to be very high in the 'life and living processes' aspect of the curriculum. This is reflected in pupils' curiosity and interest in the natural world around them. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were fascinated by the characteristics of different swans which they had learned about on a recent visit to Welney. Learning in science is extended by use of the local environment, including farm visits, and the garden area in the playground.
64. Teaching ensures good coverage of the curriculum on a well-organised rolling programme, covering two years' work in each class. Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils gain a good foundation of knowledge, as when learning about the skeleton, bones and joints in Years 3 and 4. Learning is practical; pupils are encouraged to be curious and to learn through first-hand experience, observation and investigation. Pupils In Years 1 and 2 were able vividly to recall what they had learned about the effect of heat or cold on foods such as egg or chocolate. Pupils learn to carry out a fair test, for example, in Years 3 and 4, investigating whether longer legs produce a longer jump. They recognise the importance of making conditions the same in order to achieve reliable results, describing clearly how they did this in the jumping experiment.
65. The recording of work in science is not planned systematically to extend pupils' skills, and it is not always completed well. Assessment and marking do not probe understanding or provide further challenge. The science co-ordinator teaches science in both classes. This gives her a clear overview of what pupils have covered, though not always of how it relates to the development of skills in other subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources, staff expertise and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching is good, and well organised to extend the skills of all pupils.
- ICT is used in all curriculum areas, contributing to the quality of work produced.

Commentary

66. Throughout the school standards in ICT are average, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. There has been significant improvement in the recent past. This has come about as a result of an improvement in resources, well-planned use of the small ICT suite, and an increase in staff expertise and confidence. The knowledge and expertise of the headteacher underpin the school's progress in this area. The achievement of pupils is now good and basic skills are well established. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are already proficient with basic procedures, logging on independently and opening programmes.
67. In Years 3 and 4, pupils further develop their word-processing skills. They create charts to illustrate work in a range of subjects and produce very attractive pictures using a range of 'draw' and 'paint' programmes. Older pupils access the Internet and CD-ROMs for research, and they e-mail pupils in a school in France. Pupils of all ages are adept at using control programmes such as 'super logo'.
68. The teaching seen in the subject was good. Most of it was carried out with groups by the very competent teaching assistant, on the basis of work planned by the headteacher. Very good assessment procedures ensure that all members of staff are aware of pupils' progress and future needs.
69. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, is leading the subject very well, and there is evidence of rapid improvement. She has a clear view of the resources needed to extend opportunities further for pupils. The ICT suite is put to good use, although it is large enough only for group use and this restricts the opportunity for teachers to teach basic skills to a whole class. Nonetheless, ICT features prominently within school life. A well-attended computer club allows pupils access to the computers at lunchtimes, and they practise skills and enjoy interactive research, for example when finding out about life in a medieval castle. Support from a governor extends provision for pupils during the computer club and in group teaching sessions, and helps to keep the governing body informed about the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Skills in ICT are practised and applied in many different contexts, as seen in the rich variety of work on display. The digital camera is widely used to record activities and to illustrate work. Pupils have produced work using the computer in a range of subjects. This work includes word-processed writing from pupils' study of the Romans in history, charts and graphs to illustrate findings in maths and science, and a range of computer-generated art.

HUMANITIES

71. Although only two lessons were seen, one in history in the Year 3/4 class and one in geography in the Year 1/2 class, judgements are also based on scrutiny of large amounts of work in these subjects, and discussions with teachers and pupils.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- First-hand experiences make work stimulating and relevant.
- Pupils' language and literacy skills are developed well through work in history.

Commentary

72. The school is successful in bringing history to life for pupils and relating it to their own lives. For example, in their study of famous people, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about Duleep Singh, the last ruler of the Punjab, who used to live at Elveden Hall. During the period of the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were studying the Romans. Their work shows the depth and breadth of study which the school encourages, and the way in which teachers work to make history interesting and relevant to pupils. Pupils have studied pottery and coins from the local museum; had a visit from an actor posing as a Roman legionnaire; designed recipes using the type of food eaten by Romans; and studied aspects of the Roman road outside the school. They have learnt some basic Latin and the use of Roman numerals, and have written poems based upon aspects of their study.
73. The one lesson seen encouraged active learning as pupils studied a collection of Roman artefacts. Speaking and listening skills were developed well as pupils speculated about the use of different objects. Experiences such as the visit of the Roman soldier provide focus and purpose for pupils' writing. At the time of the last inspection, the overuse of worksheets limited opportunities to develop writing through work in history. This is no longer the case: literacy skills are now applied well, reinforcing pupils' learning in the process.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The local environment is used very well to develop geographical concepts.
- Provision is greatly improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

74. The school makes very good use of the local environment in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding in geography. In Years 1 and 2, for example, mapping skills are learned through plotting features on plans of the classroom, and making maps of the green outside the school. Pupils take digital photos to enliven their recording. Visits are made around the estate and to local places of geographical interest such as the Ouse Washes at Welney. This work links well with pupils' learning in science. Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in the wider world. The 'Elveden Travel Centre' is set up in the hall, and pupils track the travels of the school's teddybears to distant places. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about life elsewhere, for

example by e-mailing pupils in a school in France, and they undertake a series of geographical study visits.

75. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum in geography was unsatisfactory. It is now much improved.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

76. One lesson was observed in art and one in dance. Music was sampled in assemblies and a lunchtime recorder lesson. Further evidence about these subjects was drawn from teachers' planning, work on display, and discussions with pupils and staff.
77. The school provides a rounded and well-balanced curriculum, giving due emphasis to the arts, and to creative and practical learning. Work in lessons is enriched and extended by special events and visits and pupils enjoy the range of opportunities on offer.
78. Teaching in **art and design** is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The work of artists such as Van Gogh and Sean Scully stimulate and inspire pupils' own work. Special 'Art Days' allow large-scale collaborative projects, such as the large panels using rolled paper straws in the style of Michael Brennan-Wood. Visits, for example to the Sainsbury Gallery in Norwich, extend pupils' knowledge and appreciation. Work in art is linked to other areas of the curriculum, as in the construction of Roman mosaics, drawing on pupils' learning in history. Pupils gain knowledge, for example, about the use of primary and complementary colours, and they apply this in their own work.
79. **Design and technology** alternates with art. Pupils enjoy practical challenges, for example in making torches and vehicles, or in constructing skeletons in science. Pupils develop skills in making, but the stages of designing and evaluating their products are less well developed.
80. **Music** features strongly in school life. Pupils listen well to music played at assemblies and join in the singing with enthusiasm. Twelve children learn the violin in school, and seven pupils are taught the recorder by teachers during lunchtimes. Teachers and children share their enthusiasm for music, for example playing recorders together. Pupils participate in music festivals and performances, sometimes working with pupils from other schools.
81. Pupils enjoy **physical education**. Pupils from Year 2 swim weekly for half the year. They work towards a sequence of certificates and, by Year 4, most are confident swimmers. Dance features regularly for all classes, though the quality of work varies. Pupils have the opportunity to play football and basketball in the playground and make good use of the village green for athletics and games in summer. Sports Day is a major feature of the school year, and the pupils speak with pride of their prowess in running, and of the medals won on previous occasions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

82. The school's provision for personal, social and health education contributes strongly to pupils' personal development. Pupils explore concerns related to their own lives. In Years 1 and 2, for example, they discussed and worked in pairs to draw each other's favourite playground game. This helped them to take account of each other's perspective, and to reflect on the importance of sharing in their play. Issues related to healthy living and care for the environment are frequently explored. Assemblies help pupils to understand themselves and others better. For example, one theme was 'Difficult times in our lives', and this was skilfully presented in a way which helped pupils to reflect on dilemmas and challenges in their own lives.

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 | 3 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 1 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 1 |
| 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 | 3 |
| 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).