

# INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT FINBOROUGH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Stowmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124732

Acting Headteacher: Ms T C Day

Lead inspector: Bob Cross

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 256257

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	55
School address:	Great Finborough Stowmarket Suffolk
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body, Great Finborough CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend N Hartley
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Great Finborough CE Primary School is much smaller than most other schools of the same type. There are 36 fewer pupils compared with when the school was last inspected. The school has nine pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is broadly the level of the national average. One of the pupils has a statement of special educational need which is also broadly the national average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also broadly the national average. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls on roll although one year has a significant imbalance in the numbers of boys and girls. Very few of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. Both of these features are lower than in most schools. During the last school year, six pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 14 left it at a time which was not the normal leaving or transfer time for most pupils. This rate of mobility is high. In the last two years, one teacher left the school and two were appointed. This is also a high rate of turnover. There have been a significant number of changes in headteacher in the last few years. Pupils enter the school at average levels of attainment.

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9446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Geography, Music, Foundation Stage.
11769	Jim Bishop	Team inspector	Mathematics, Personal, social, health education and citizenship, Religious education, Special educational needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school which has some very good features which are vital to its work.** Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. As a result, standards, overall, are above average. The acting headteacher gives the school very good leadership which has largely overcome the effects of frequent changes of headteacher. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall, pupils of all abilities do well and reach good standards.
- Standards in science and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good and the very high expectations which the teachers have of the pupils are major factors in their learning.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to their work and very good behaviour help them to progress.
- Disruption caused by the frequent changes of headteacher has been largely overcome because of the quality of the school's current leadership and the team spirit of all involved with the school.
- The school has a very good ethos and all pupils are very well included in its work.
- Standards in religious education (RE) are not high enough.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop fully their skills in information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy and writing in other subjects.
- Long term planning is not good enough.
- Procedures for the recruitment and retention of headteachers have not proved effective.

The school has made a good improvement since it was inspected in 1998. In spite of the difficulties created by the frequent changes of leadership, the high standards found in most areas of the school have been largely maintained. This is particularly so in standards in English and science although those in RE have fallen. Leadership and teaching have also improved. The key issues for action identified by the 1998 inspection have been addressed well. For example, curricular planning and assessment procedures show a marked improvement. However, there are weaknesses in aspects of curricular provision and planning for long term improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 throughout the school.** In the Foundation Stage, children are on course to reach standards that exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning. In Year 2, standards are well above average in mathematics and science and they are above average in reading and writing. In Year 4, standards are well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics. Standards in RE are below average in Years 1 to 4.

**Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** The pupils are courteous, responsible and eager to learn. Their

ability to work independently is particularly strong. The pupils' attendance is well above the national average and their punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good** with some important very good features. **The quality of teaching and learning is good** and leads to good achievement and above average standards. The teachers expect the pupils to do well and, as result, they have very good attitudes to work and behave very well. The very good leadership of the acting headteacher has generated a very strong team spirit. There are weaknesses in some aspects of curricular provision, for example, RE and writing which mean that the pupils are not making maximum progress in these areas. Relationships with parents are good and the pupils are well cared for. The school has a very good ethos.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The acting headteacher provides very clear leadership and is very well supported by other staff. These factors have enabled the school to thrive and largely overcome the difficult situation it has faced because of constant changes in leadership and management. There is a clear focus on high standards and improvement. Equality of opportunity and fairness to the pupils are very evident. The school's self evaluation is realistic. Long term planning and the co-ordination of some subjects are comparative weaknesses. Financial management is rigorous but aspects of seeking value for money are under developed. The school's governance is good. All statutory requirements are met.

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

**Parents** are supportive of the school. They particularly like the expectations that staff have of their children, the quality of behaviour and teaching and the way their children are encouraged to become mature. Some felt that the range of extracurricular activities could be better and were worried about the frequent changes in management. Inspectors also felt that the range of extracurricular activities is limited.

**Pupils**, particularly the older ones, are positive about their school. They especially liked the way teachers show them how to improve their work and that adults help them if they are worried. Quite a few of the younger pupils felt that other pupils did not always behave well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in RE.
- Give pupils more opportunities to develop fully their skills in ICT, numeracy and writing.
- Improve long term planning for improvement.
- Enhance procedures for the recruitment and retention of headteachers.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is good and standards are, overall, above average in Years R to 4. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 and in science in Years 1 to 4 are well above average because achievement in these aspects of the pupils' learning is very good. Standards in RE are below average in Years 1 to 4 as achievement is unsatisfactory.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- Progress is particularly good in science and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and in science in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in RE.
- Although they do well in swimming, limitations in the school's accommodation restrict the pupils' progress in some aspects of physical education (PE).
- Opportunities to extend and apply the pupils' ICT, writing and numeracy skills are missed.

#### **Commentary**

1. All pupils of all abilities do well in this school. Those with SEN frequently reach similar standards to their peers. More able pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, also do well. This is because of the high expectations that the teachers have of the pupils and because the pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils felt that they did well because they had to work hard and they enjoyed this success. Parents were equally positive about the standards reached by their children. Overall, the pupils reach above average standards. This shows that the school has largely overcome the significant barriers to improvement, notably frequent changes of headteacher, that it has faced. However, the fall in standards in RE is, to some extent, due to these factors because of the additional demands staff have faced in managing the school.

2. Children enter Year R at average standards. They achieve well in Year R because of the good quality of teaching and learning. Most children are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning. Shortcomings in the school's accommodation place some restrictions on the children's physical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (17.8)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	16.6 (15.6)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	18 (17.6)	16.4 (16.5)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards were average in reading compared with all schools and with similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Compared with all schools and similar schools, standards were well above average in writing and mathematics. There has been an improving trend in standards over time.

4. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are well above average in mathematics and science, above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing, average in ICT and below average in RE. This represents very good achievement in mathematics and science,

good achievement in all aspects of English and unsatisfactory achievement in RE. Compared with the findings of the school's 1998 inspection, standards have improved in English, mathematics and science. They are unaltered in ICT but have fallen in RE.

5. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 4, standards are well above average in science, above average in English, mathematics and ICT and below average in RE. This represents very good achievement in science, good achievement in English, mathematics and ICT and unsatisfactory achievement in RE. In PE, the pupils do well in swimming and reach above average standards because of the provision made for the teaching of this aspect of the subject. In dance, they reach average standards and their progress is restricted by the small size of the school hall and the fact that it has to be used for storage. These factors restrict the pupils' abilities to move freely and thus prevent them from developing and improving their performance fully.

6. Throughout the school, improvements in standards are due to better curricular planning and assessment and continuing good quality teaching and learning. Standards have fallen in RE because the quality of teaching and learning in the subject is not as good as it was in 1998 and because of pressures upon its management.

7. Although the pupils have good skills in mathematics and writing, these skills are not fully developed in other subjects of the curriculum. Although literacy skills support teaching and learning in most subjects, in many instances, the pupils produce only small amounts of work of varied quality. Few examples of the application of numeracy in other subjects were seen during the inspection. The analysis of pupils' work showed some application of mathematics in science but there was little evidence apart from this. On the other hand, there was evidence of the use of ICT in most subjects. However, the work seen represented sporadic rather than planned application of ICT and it was generally superficial.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their attendance is very good. Punctuality is good. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show good interest in learning, concentrate well and are enthusiastic.
- Because teachers have high expectations, pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, assemblies and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils and among pupils and adults are very good.
- Pupils are confident and very willing to take responsibility.
- Pupils show good respect for one another's feelings and beliefs and are supportive of one another.
- The attendance rate is well above the national average.

### **Commentary**

8. At all stages, pupils enjoy school and all it has to offer. Children in the Reception class settle quickly into school routines and interact very well with older pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are highly articulate and keen to enter into discussion. They listen very well to the views of others and co-operate well: for example, in a Year R session, children were encouraged to discuss how they would make models from recycled materials and co-operated very well in making them. Pupils respond very well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour. They are courteous, friendly and helpful to visitors.

9. Children in Year R show very positive attitudes to learning. They are confident and out-going. They concentrate for lengthy periods of time, contribute well to discussions and apply themselves well to the practical activities. Children make good progress in learning due to good behaviour, clear routines and recognised expectations from all adults.



10. Behaviour is very good throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and playtimes. This reflects the views of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. Classroom rules are agreed with pupils at the beginning of each year. In discussion, pupils showed that they were very well aware of how they should behave and fully understood the difference between right and wrong. The school has very good systems to promote good behaviour through team points and through achievement awards and these are appreciated by pupils. At playtimes, because of good and proactive supervision, older and younger pupils and boys and girls play well together. No bullying or harassment was observed during the inspection. The school has very good strategies for handling it and pupils knew what to do if it should occur.

11. Pupils are enterprising and respond well to the good opportunities for taking responsibility. They are also keen to take part in extracurricular activities. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are very good: for example, in a Year 3 and 4 English lesson on humorous verse, the teacher's good relationship with her class encouraged their imagination and initiative.

12. Attendance is well above national figures and punctuality is good. Staff monitor attendance effectively and are well supported by the educational welfare service. There is no unauthorised absence. There was one exclusion last year. Appropriate procedures were followed.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.3
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.1
National data:	0.5

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
52
1
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	1
0	0
0	0
0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

13. The social and moral development of the pupils is very good. Pupils behave with consideration for others and have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect others. Their sense of community is very well developed through the good opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility. Although there is no school council, pupils feel free to express their opinions in assembly and 'circle time'. In discussions, pupils felt confident that teachers would listen and act on their views: for example, the "Buddy bench" in the playground was installed at their request. They felt that they could ask for help at any time from any adult in the school and could think of very little that they would like to change. Staff act as good role models, presenting a calm and thoughtful approach to life and the school and discussing issues with pupils during the school day. Older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones and this provides very good support among pupils. The personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme makes a good contribution to pupils'

moral and social development throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and support several charities.

14. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others through RE and during collective worship. They show good self-knowledge in discussions. There are good links with the local church. Pupils have some opportunities to study their own community through visits and activities. They also have some opportunities to learn about other cultures through links with a school in Australia. They are encouraged to think about children in other parts of the world through assemblies and there are displays of Aboriginal art. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of life in modern multicultural Britain.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good with some important very good features. The most significant strength is the very good leadership of the acting headteacher. This has generated a very strong team spirit which has enabled the school to be successful in spite of the difficulties it has faced. Consistently good teaching and learning lead to good achievement and above average standards. The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are very good. They have a strong understanding of how to make their work better and are keen to succeed. Relationships with parents are good and the pupils are well cared for. The school has a very good ethos. There are weaknesses in some aspects of curricular provision, for example, RE and writing which mean that the pupils are not making maximum progress in these areas.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good throughout the school.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils in terms of both academic standards and behaviour.
- Lessons and teachers' attitudes encourage the pupils and engage their attention.
- Pupils respond very well to the teachers' expectations.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to improve their work especially in English and mathematics.
- The marking of pupils' work is variable.
- The pupils' ICT and numeracy skills are not used well enough to support their work in other subjects.
- The pupils receive too few opportunities to write at length.
- RE is not taught in sufficient depth.

**Commentary**

***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	8	1	0	0	0

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

15. The consistently good, and often very good, quality of the teaching and learning in the school is the major factor promoting the good achievement for pupils of all abilities. This has been maintained since the school was last inspected. The school's last inspection noted high

expectations as one of the strengths of the teaching. This inspection also judges the teachers' expectations of the pupils to be one of the most important strengths of the teaching. In addition, the insistence that the teachers place on good behaviour is very important as is the level of challenge that they give the pupils in their work. The teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting. The pupils respond very well to the teaching. They work hard both independently and in cooperation with others and show initiative in organising their work. Their behaviour is also very good. This means that lesson time is used productively and none is wasted so that pupils progress well.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in Reception is good. In all aspects of the required programme, the planning is good, understanding of the needs of the individual child are precise and well informed, the classroom is organised to provide the right kind of stimulus to encourage learning and high expectations prevail. The teacher and teaching assistant work well as a team, although this process is still at a formative stage. Children work at a good pace in lessons and those with SEN are well integrated and supported in lessons.

17. Good teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 were exemplified in a PSHCE lesson in which pupils considered the theme of a story and linked it to their own experiences. Every pupil was encouraged to discuss his or her feelings and experiences and, as a result, all of them participated in the lesson effectively. In response to the teacher's careful questioning, the pupils gave clear answers and responded positively. The teacher managed the pupils very well and this resulted in very good behaviour and relationships. They were required to think for themselves and to reflect on what they heard from others. As a result, they made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of social skills.

18. A literacy lesson about different types of poetry illustrated the high quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4. A calm atmosphere was created by the playing of classical music as a background. Pupils were encouraged to use their initiative by selecting and reading poems to the class. These readings were recorded and the class gave their opinion about their quality, for example, "too rushed!" The main activity in the lesson was a challenging one. A poem by Spike Milligan was examined to see how he had used words and rhythm and what patterns emerged. As a result of the teacher's high expectations and challenging but attainable work, the pupils maintained their concentration throughout the lesson and made good progress.

19. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is good, and this matches the findings of the previous inspection. They are consistently given work that is appropriate for their individual needs and levels of achievement. They receive good support from teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), who operate well together as a team to plan, teach and assess progress achieved. LSAs have a very clear understanding of their role and of what pupils are expected to learn in each teaching session. They have good expertise and contribute considerably to the quality of provision throughout the school. The school consistently ensures that its pupils are included, integrated and taught in class lessons whenever possible. As a result, pupils are encouraged to work with other pupils and most sustain their attention and concentration on tasks in lessons. Pupils are routinely placed and grouped in their classes so that they can best learn. They are also provided with resources that have been selected, adapted or modified to enhance their learning. SEN pupils in Years 1 to 4 can recognise their own achievements and ways of improving. This consistently leads to good progress, which raises their esteem.

20. The most important weaknesses in teaching and learning have been detailed in the standards section of this report. Essentially, they are the failure to use the pupils' ICT, literacy and numeracy skills enough in other subjects, not providing enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and teaching RE at too superficial a level.

21. The quality of assessment has improved since the school was last inspected. In 1998 it was judged to be satisfactory, the present inspection finds assessment to be good. This is particularly the case in English, although assessment in mathematics and science is also strong. A particular strength in English and mathematics is the understanding that pupils have of how to make their work better. They are well aware of the targets for improvement that they are given in these subjects and

say that they are very helpful in assisting them to learn. The assessment system used in science, history and geography encourages pupils to assess for themselves what they have learnt in a topic. In some subjects, for example, religious education and physical education, assessment procedures are under developed.

22. Pupils feel that teachers give them good support in lessons in order to help them learn. This was confirmed by the findings of the inspection. However, the marking of pupils work is variable in this respect. Most work is marked and there are examples of pupils being told how to make their work better. However, comments of this nature are too rare.

## **The curriculum**

Curricular provision is unsatisfactory although it is good in the Foundation Stage. The enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are good although there are some weaknesses in its accommodation.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision is broad but lacks balance which restricts progress in some subjects.
- All pupils are valued and respected equally and receive good equality of opportunity. In Years 1 to 4, they are well prepared for the later stages of their education.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN is good.
- The school provides a limited range of extra curricular clubs.

## **Commentary**

23. The curriculum provided by the school meets all statutory requirements and gives the pupils access to a wide range of learning experiences. There are strengths, for example, in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science. In these areas, pupils make good progress and reach above average standards. However, in Years 1 to 4, the pupils' ICT, writing and numeracy skills are not promoted sufficiently in other subjects. In addition, pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length in English and RE is not taught in sufficient depth. The school's hall is too small to allow pupils to develop the skills in PE fully. These factors result in a lack of balance in the curriculum and mean that pupils do not make as much progress as they could in the areas concerned. The key issues for action from the school's last inspection relating to curricular planning and resources have been addressed well.

24. The quality of relationships in this school is very good. Pupils are confident and the teachers are keen for them to do well. As a result, the school's ethos, the pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are all very good. All pupils take a full part in all aspects of its work and receive good equality of opportunity. Consistently good quality teaching and learning means that pupils do well and reach above average standards. The attitudes which the pupils learn in this school and the standards that they reach give them a good preparation for moving on to their next school.

25. The school places considerable emphasis on including pupils with SEN within every area of the curriculum, and in giving them equal access to it. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are comprehensive and specify targets, which are tailored to meet the pupils' needs very well. Pupils are effectively and fully involved in every possible aspect of school life, including extra-curricular activities. This provision enhances and promotes their opportunities to benefit from the school's complete curricular provision.

26. The curriculum is appropriately enhanced by a sound range of educational visits. These visits have included Framlington Castle, a sugar factory and Imperial Chemical Industries. The visits are well supported by parent helpers. The benefit to the pupils is very clear from the animated way they recall their experiences. The curriculum is also broadened by a suitable range of visitors, for example, the local vicar, the school nurse and representatives of public services such as the fire brigade and the police. However, the range of extracurricular activities offered in the form of clubs is

significantly less than that found in most comparable schools. At the time of the inspection only three clubs were offered none of which were run by teachers. An interesting aspect of this extracurricular provision is that pupils who have an idea for an activity are supported by staff who find an adult to organise it for the pupils. Parents also expressed concerns about this aspect of the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The induction arrangements for children in Reception are good.
- There are effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- All adults know pupils very well and provide very good levels of care.
- There are good systems for monitoring pupils' academic standards and progress.
- Arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are effective.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is good.

### **Commentary**

27. There are good arrangements for children when they start at the school. The arrangements include preliminary visits to the school by both children and parents and home visits by two members of the Nursery and Reception staff. These visits enable teachers to gather information about the children and, as a result, children settle in quickly and make good progress. Pupils who join the school at other times are welcomed informally by other pupils. Parents at the meeting commented on how well their children had settled into the school. Procedures for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education are thorough.

28. The children in Year R benefit from being in a happy and caring environment in which they feel valued and secure. These factors protect children against early failure and low self-esteem. Children with disabilities are well cared for and looked after. Assessment procedures are good with all adults taking an active role in the progress of each child.

29. The school has good health and safety procedures. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are very good. All staff have been trained in first aid. Emergency procedures are thorough. Governors carry out risk assessments regularly and a Health and Safety audit is taken by the LEA each year. Additional assessments are carried out for trips and visits. Security is very good. Child protection procedures are effective. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care. She has been trained and her training is to be updated later this term. Staff are very aware of child protection issues and maintain good logs of concerns. There is informal training for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Links with local social services are satisfactory.

30. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. All pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt there was at least one adult to whom they could turn for advice. Adults know the pupils very well and monitor their personal development effectively through class files, the monitoring of celebration assembly awards and annual reports. Academic monitoring is used well to inform pupils' reports and pupils are involved in setting their own targets. Good tracking systems are used to check on pupils' progress and pupils really understand what they have to do to improve. Pupils' views are sought consistently through 'circle time', assemblies and PHSCE. Pupils felt confident that their views would be heard and acted upon.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are good. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with good information.
- The school has good links with parents through homework books, parent helpers and parent forums.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures that parents are involved in the setting of their child's IEP and in its regular review.
- Good links with the middle school ensure smooth transition.
- The school has good links with the local community and with the wider community.
- A significant proportion of parents did not feel satisfied with extracurricular activities and with the information they receive on their children's progress.

### Commentary

31. In a good return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed positive views on most aspects of the work of the school. They felt that the range of activities was limited and the findings of the inspection support this view. They also felt that they were not well informed about their children's progress. Information provided for parents is satisfactory, through annual reports and consultation meetings. However, reports provide too much information about what children have learned and not enough about their progress against national standards. Otherwise, information provided for parents is good. Details about the work pupils are to cover are provided each term. Home/school books are used well as a means of dialogue between school and home. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed of events and the headteacher and all teaching staff are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day. The school prospectus is very clearly written, informative and attractively presented. The governors' Annual Report is clear and informative.

32. The home/school agreement has been signed by all parents. Homework was felt to be adequate and guidelines are given to help parents. Parent forums are held each term to enable parents to discuss any areas of concern and the "Come and join in sessions" for Reception children are much appreciated by parents. Consultation meetings in the autumn and spring terms are well attended. Links with parents and carers of children in Year R are good and this has a positive effect on children's learning. The teacher gives good guidance to parents to ensure that they know how to help their children to learn. Children take reading books home regularly and receive good support there.

33. The school is meeting the requirements of the most recent SEN Code of Practice and, as a result, places a greater emphasis upon a stronger partnership between its parents, pupils and itself. All parents of pupils with SEN are included in the setting and reviewing of their child's targets and IEP.

34. There are good links with the local middle school, ensuring a smooth transition for pupils. Visits before transition include sports events and open days to which parents are invited. Year 5 pupils visit the school with the headteacher and staff from the middle school to ensure continuity of curriculum and pastoral care. Pupils from other local small schools have joined forces for sports, music and drama. There are good links with the local nursery and playgroup.

35. Parents support the school well through the Friends' Association, which runs a good range of social and fund-raising events. It raises good sums to support trips and visits and buy playground equipment. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis and more help on trips and visits.

36. The school has some good links with the local community through industry. Through their links with a large company, pupils' artwork has been reproduced in a calendar, which has been distributed world wide. Pupils also took part in a Young Enterprise scheme with another local company. Students from local secondary schools use the school for work experience. Pupils sing to local elderly people at Christmas and were recently involved in a poetry reading for charity.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Overall, other leadership roles are fulfilled satisfactorily although the management of the school's provision for pupils with SEN and the Foundation Stage is good. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership by the headteacher results in a successful focus on high standards.
- The school's self evaluation is realistic.
- There is a very strong team spirit in the school which has largely overcome the significant difficulties it has faced.
- Although the school has overcome the frequent changes in management, these changes have resulted in some loss of confidence in the school.
- There are strengths and weakness in the roles of co-ordinators.
- Strategic planning is a comparative weaknesses.
- Financial management is rigorous but aspects of seeking value for money are under developed.
- Procedures for the recruitment and retention of headteachers have not been successful.

### **Commentary**

37. The headteacher is very committed to the best interests of the school. She has a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is determined that it will be a successful school. Above average academic standards and the personal development of the pupils are central to this commitment. Its accomplishment is evident in the standards reached by the pupils and in the quality of their attitudes to work and their behaviour. It is also reflected in the quality of its self evaluation. In many instances, for example, the overall judgement of the school, relationships with parents and pupils' attitudes, the findings of the inspection and the school's self evaluation were the same. In most instances where there were differences, the school took a harsher view of its performance than the inspection did. The only significant exception to this was the inspection's judgement of the quality of curricular provision. There is no complacency in this school which is effectively committed to examining and improving all aspects of its work.

38. Since it was last inspected, the school has faced three changes of permanent headteacher and two periods of acting headship. There has also been significant mobility amongst the pupils and some changes of staff. Nevertheless, the team spirit and commitment generated amongst the staff, pupils and governors have, essentially, overcome these problems. This is shown by the fact that the inspection judges the school's improvement since it was last inspected to have been good.

39. Nevertheless, important weaknesses in management, standards and curricular provision exist. These illustrate both the effort that has been required to overcome the school's problems and the potential difficulties for the future. The school has 36 fewer pupils on role than when it was last inspected. This reflects the loss of confidence in it by some parents. In addition, curricular provision is unsatisfactory in the respects detailed in the standards and curriculum sections of this report. Standards in RE are below average.

40. The management role of co-ordinators varies in quality and effectiveness. For example, although relatively new to the Foundation Stage, the teacher is managing a good department which

caters for the needs of all the children very well. There is a good atmosphere in the classroom with many exciting activities to stimulate and motivate children to learn. The teacher has a clear philosophy, firmly rooted in good educational principles, as far as the Foundation Stage is concerned. The SENCO has established strong teamwork amongst the teachers and LSAs and has also promoted viable and productive links with outside agencies such as local speech therapists. She operates an efficient system of record keeping which is used throughout the school. This enables staff to support assessments effectively and to plan the pupils' next learning needs. She also makes use of data to assist in identifying SEN pupils, the setting of targets for pupils and in monitoring their progress. However, the use and application of whole-school performance data are not fully developed. In other cases, co-ordinators are heavily burdened or new to the role and have made little impact on their areas of responsibility. There are particular weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and learning in some subjects and in planning for improvement.

41. The school improvement plan includes all appropriate aspects of the school. However, it only covers one year and contains a great deal of information. This makes it difficult to use easily. The plan also contains a large number of priorities and it does not make it clear which are the most important. The school's finances are soundly planned and managed and rigorously controlled. Expenditure associated with the school's educational priorities as set out in its school improvement plan is suitably estimated. However, although the school has a statement of how to obtain the best value for money, this is not central to its financial management.

42. Although the school is doing well overall, clear weaknesses in aspects of its work are developing. These are associated with the difficulties faced by staff in dealing with the barriers to improvement, notably the frequent changes of headteacher that the school has faced. These changes, in many respects, were unavoidable and every effort was made to counteract and avoid them. However, in spite of this, the school's procedures for the recruitment and retention of headteachers have not been successful. This is undermining its ability to continue to prosper.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	252,936	Balance from previous year	-1,161
Total expenditure	236,995	Balance carried forward to the next	15,941
Expenditure per pupil	3,485		



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

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

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction procedures for children starting school are good.
- The Reception children achieve well in all areas leading towards the Early Learning Goals.
- Most children reach standards above those expected for their age.
- Personal and social development is promoted well in all areas of learning.
- The children are very well behaved.
- There are weaknesses in the outdoor accommodation which constrain some aspects of their learning.

#### **Commentary**

43. Children are admitted to school in the September of the year in which they become five. The practice is for children to attend full-time from the term in which they become five. Until then they attend mornings only. Hence, it is not until the summer term that all the children are there full-time. There are good arrangements for introducing children to school. As a consequence, they are happy to leave their parents and quickly get used to the school routines. The teacher has created good working links with the local nursery and parents feel welcome in the school.

44. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of development and, overall, promotes good achievement. By the time they go into Year 1, most children are on course to exceed the goals children are expected to reach in mathematical development, communication, literacy and language skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. The outdoor provision places some restrictions on aspects of the children's physical development, being too small to allow children to use, for example, large wheeled toys and bicycles. Consequently, it is difficult to provide a broad range of situations in which the children can use and extend their learning outside. Children do, however, have access to the large climbing equipment in the playground at other times. The curriculum provides a wide range of activities that are imaginative and well matched to all the children's needs. The provision for Reception children is well managed and their progress is well monitored. All adults have very good relationships with the children and they are cared for and supported very well. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been maintained at the good standards reported by the last inspection.

45. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development**, children achieve well because the good teaching ensures that they are encouraged to make independent choices and take responsibility for themselves at an early age. Children are given effective help to establish the boundaries for acceptable behaviour through the very good relationships, which are very quickly established with staff. Relationships between adults and children are very good, and this helps to promote children's self-esteem and confidence. Children show respect for each other's needs and views and learn to share. They behave very well and are attentive when the teacher is talking or when explaining their activities. Children are encouraged to make independent choices, for example, in their daily activities, and remain focused on their chosen or planned task. Personal and social development is promoted well in all other areas of learning due to good teaching. Well established routines and the caring nature of the provision ensure that all children, including those with SEN, feel secure and grow in confidence. This enables them to achieve above average standards in their personal, social and emotional development.

46. The teaching and curriculum for **communications, language and literacy** are good. The text used in the observed lesson was *This is the Bear*, and it was self-evident that children's listening

skills were well developed. They were totally focused on the teacher as she read the story to them and, when children were asked to discuss what they would do if their teddies went missing, the quality of speaking between the various groups was very high indeed. By the end of the Reception year, the children have a good appreciation of books, and understand that writing conveys meaning. They have their own reading books, which they take home regularly. Frequent opportunities for them to practise in class, and good support from home ensure that the children achieve well in this aspect of their learning. The promotion of early writing skills is well developed, for example, when a letter was sent to a visitor thanking him for coming to the school. Letters are formed correctly and handwriting is practised regularly.

47. The provision for **mathematical development** is good. By the end of the Reception year, most children have a good understanding and knowledge of number and are able to count and recognise numbers up to ten with good levels of confidence and accuracy. Children working in the cycle shop had a till and, when asked to name the various sums on the counters, they identified them without any trouble. Number games are used to reinforce addition and subtraction. The children were thinking about recycling as part of their current topic and, under the supervision of the teaching assistant, were throwing a die, counting either forwards or backwards all the way to a dump in which teddies were waiting. This idea was cleverly linked to the story which the children had just heard. A good selection of mathematical games is available to help children reinforce their understanding of basic number. Good ongoing development of the children's vocabulary by the class teacher and assistant helps the children to explain their mathematical ideas accurately and clearly.

48. The children were very excited and stimulated by the cycle shop in the classroom. As part of the **knowledge and understanding of the world** element of the Foundation curriculum, this had been set up with the help of a shop owner from Stowmarket. He had donated a bicycle and visited the school to talk to the children about all the cogs, wheels, nuts and bolts which make cycles work. The teacher had created the shop, complete with all the necessary tools and there was a great deal of fevered activity and discussion whenever children were working in there. Most children had a good idea of clockwise and anti-clockwise rotation and were already coping with the wider vocabulary associated with mechanics. Good use is made of the school grounds to enable children to develop an awareness of the environment and, in connection with spring, the teacher had created a habitat suitable for tadpoles. The recycling topic is helping children to understand the importance of taking care of the world. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is suitably enhanced through stories. A strong sense of their own religious customs is well promoted. ICT is available in the classroom and was well used during the inspection. The children are enthusiastic learners who show good levels of interest in all activities.

49. In terms of their **physical development** it was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision and teaching or learning because PE lessons were not on the time-table during the inspection. However, it is clear that children's attainment and achievement are hindered by the size of the outdoor play area which is not big enough for children to ride bicycles or use large wheeled toys. The children show good control of brushes, pencils and scissors and manipulate small objects well.

50. The provision for **creative development** is good. The classroom is well organised to provide planned creative role play activities to capture children's imagination. The cycle shop was a really good example of this. Both the shop and the imaginative play area itself were in constant use throughout the inspection. Making models out of junk materials was also a good example because it developed the theme of recycling materials, enabled children to discuss with each other what sort of model they would make and why, and finally to choose the materials and build it. Children were happy to work independently, only seeking help when it was necessary. Although painting was not observed, the many good displays confirmed that children were introduced to a variety of techniques and media during their time in Reception.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

## ENGLISH

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average.
- In Years 2 and 4, standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are above average.
- Pupils' achievement in Years 2 and 4 is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Year 2 and Year 4 is good.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well.
- Assessment procedures enable teachers to plan effectively.
- The quality of handwriting is often unsatisfactory.
- The amount of homework is variable.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy in other subjects.

#### Commentary

51. Overall, standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are above average. This represents good achievement and is an improvement on standards found when the school was last inspected. At that time, only reading was considered to be above average, whereas in 2003, and at the time of this inspection, all aspects of the subject were judged to be above average. The indications for the 2004 national end of Year 2 tests are that these above average standards are going to be maintained.

52. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are above average. The good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage continues through to Years 2 and 4 and achievement overall is good. Almost all the pupils are good listeners and readily participate in any discussion, displaying their ability to express ideas clearly. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss and ask questions and are encouraged to talk to each other about their work. This is very noticeable throughout the school. As an example, in the Years 1 and 2 class, pupils were sharing a story with the teacher. They listened intently, thoroughly enjoying the escapades of the main character and offering sensible opinions about the eventual outcome of her bad behaviour. There is no reluctance to participate in class discussions and teachers encourage the use of a broad and varied language.

53. In Year 2 and Year 4, standards in reading are above average. Pupils read a variety of books at an appropriate level and display fluency, accuracy and understanding. There is a structured reading programme, and pupils work through a suitable range of published schemes. All pupils are encouraged to read at home and this helps them to move forward. The more able pupils and average pupils read independently and retell a story, capturing the main points of the plot. They can predict the possible course of a story with accuracy. The lower attaining pupils make good progress at an appropriate level and show enthusiasm for reading and a determination to learn. The school has a good range of books which stimulate interest and enjoyment. Most pupils could describe how to use books to find information.

54. Standards in writing are above average in Years 2 and 4. There are no apparent differences between the progress of boys and girls. In Year 2, the range and form of pupils' writing are varied and pupils are beginning to write imaginative stories of a reasonable length. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 pupils were looking at humorous verse, in particular *The Land of the Bumble Boo* by Spike Milligan. The teacher explored 'playing' with words and rhyming patterns. Pupils quickly understood how to write nonsense verse for themselves, cleverly supported by appropriate word games devised by the teacher. Subsequent visits to the class confirmed really good results from pupils across the range of ability. They were pleased by their success and anxious to share their

work. The presentation of work is, however, variable. Even though the content is usually good, handwriting is insufficiently developed and the work is sometimes untidy.

55. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Year 2 and in Year 4. In both the observed lessons, the pace was good, teachers had a very good understanding of the subject, pupils were well challenged and good progress was made. These judgements were confirmed in the analysis of work and in discussions with pupils, who felt the work was hard but enjoyable. Lessons are well planned to incorporate all aspects of the subject and the National Literacy Strategy is implemented to best effect. Good booster systems are in place to support pupils who experience problems, and effective assessment of the pupils' progress enables teachers to plan their work to suit individual need. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEN make good progress. Targets for improvement are agreed between teachers and pupils. Homework is provided on occasion, but is an area for further development.

56. The management of the subject and its improvement since the school was last inspected are good. Standards of teaching and learning in English have improved at the school in spite of considerable disruption. Previous good leadership in the subject has recently been passed to a relatively inexperienced teacher who is nevertheless highly competent and enthusiastic. As a further development, the co-ordinator will have the opportunity to monitor standards in the classrooms.

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

57. The development of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. In many subjects, there is insufficient depth and detail in pupils' working and recording skills. An analysis of work in subjects such as RE in Year 2 revealed work which did not use English skills to good effect, the work was short and undemanding. ICT is sometimes well used to support English, an example being when Year 4 pupils accessed the website to find groups of words with two, three and four syllables. However, the evidence did not show that this was widespread. Pupils, including those with SEN, were able to do this competently and printed out the information at the end of the session.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards achieved are strongly influenced by the high expectations of the teachers.
- The quality of teachers' lesson planning has a clear impact on the good progress made by pupils.
- The teaching of mental strategies is a particular strength across the school.
- Support in mathematics for pupils who have SEN is good.
- Assessment arrangements for tracking and evaluating the progress of pupils are not fully developed.
- Opportunities for curricular links with other subjects, especially ICT, are under-developed.

58. Standards of attainment are well above average in Year 2, and above average in Years 3 and 4. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection, but shows an improvement in standards in Year 2. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. The progress pupils make in Years 1 and 2 is very good, and it is good in Years 3 and 4. The variation is largely explained by differences in the quality of teaching.

59. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established, and the time devoted to mathematics each day means that pupils' learning is systematically built upon. Mental work is particularly well taught, so that pupils of all ages learn appropriate strategies and processes to

enable them to progress well in their learning. Additional features, which promote effective teaching, include the good and constructive use of LSAs, and in Years 1 and 2 in particular, the organisation of pupils into small groups for many lessons. In all lessons, observed the quality of teachers' planning was good. This had a favourable impact on the rate of pupils' progress, including those having SEN who made consistently good progress. In all lessons observed, the planning ensured the provision of activities that were well suited to pupils' needs and presented most of them with high levels of challenge. For example, pupils in a Year 2 lesson acquired very good knowledge and understanding about place value and subtraction. This was achieved because the teacher had used high quality teaching aids earlier in the lesson, which caught the pupils' interest and made learning fun. It was also achieved by the careful selection of appropriately demanding number games which every pupil was expected to play. The games were graded for difficulty, demanded very good intellectual effort from every player and were evidence of the teacher's high expectations of her pupils.

60. Good assessment procedures have been established for tracking and assessing the progress made by pupils. These lead to targets which are shared with pupils and which guide planning and teaching. However, the annual assessment tests the school has recently introduced require more time for them to become established features of the assessment process. The school's methods of scrutinising the quality and standards of pupils' work lack sufficient rigour. Marking of pupils' work is usually good, but teachers do not consistently use it to ensure that their pupils know how they can improve.

61. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has already identified the need to improve some of the points made above. The subject's co-ordinator has a clear sense of direction about how to improve standards in mathematics across the school. She is putting the analysis of performance data to increasingly better use. Good links have been established with parents to assist in developing mathematics at home as well as at school. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. The provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are a few examples of links with science, such as the compiling of bar graphs to show data obtained from thermometer readings. However, very little evidence was found of the effective use of ICT.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils do well in this subject.
- Investigative work is strong and pupils enjoy it.
- Pupils benefit from wide curricular provision.
- The pupils' ICT, numeracy and writing skills are not developed well enough in science.
- Overall, management of the subject is good although there are areas needing improvement.
- Assessment procedures have improved.

### **Commentary**

63. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection. This improvement is due to the fact that quality of teaching is better and is now consistently very good. The judgement is also better than the standards reached at Level 2 and above in the national assessments made by teachers in 2003. The difference is due to the differing abilities of the pupils in the two year groups

involved. Standards at Level 3 and above in the national assessments made by teachers in 2003 were well above average.

64. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4 is very good. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection which judged teaching to be never less than sound and mostly very good. Teachers promote investigative work very well and involve all aspects of the subject in this type of work. For example, pupils in Year 2 have tested the effect of increasing the number of bulbs in an electrical circuit and have placed ice cubes in different locations to test how long they take to melt. This work is extended in Year 4 where pupils have tested circuits to identify materials which conduct or do not conduct electricity and have recorded them diagrammatically. They have also extended their work on the effect of heat on ice by seeing how well various materials insulate ice and increase the time it takes to melt. The pupils respond well to this approach. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils were seen to select the equipment required to separate materials using sieves and magnets. They worked very well in groups and were clearly used to organising this type of activity. In this lesson, pupils were well supported but required to work independently and to think for themselves. They were set a very demanding task to think about for homework. In conversation, the pupils feel that they have to work hard, but enjoy this and show a very strong knowledge of scientific vocabulary.

65. Curricular provision is significantly enhanced in science. For example, good use is made of the school's field and pond area to promote the pupils' understanding of habitats, mini beasts and food chains. Similarly, visiting a Science Fair at a sugar factory has broadened curricular provision for the pupils.

66. There are examples of the use of ICT to support the pupils' learning in science. For example, they have produced block graphs and pie charts of the speed with which puddles have evaporated. Additionally, considerable use has been made of a digital camera to photograph and record aspects of their work in the subject. However, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in science is not sufficiently consistent or broad enough. Similarly, opportunities to develop the pupils' numeracy skills in the subject are missed although there are examples of the development of these skills. For example, in addition to the use of graphs, pupils have measured and recorded temperature and used syringes to measure the amount of water used in investigative work. The pupils' writing skills are not enhanced well enough. In general, pupils produce a limited amount of work which is not presented well enough and which shows under developed handwriting skills.

67. There has been a good improvement in the subject since the school was last inspected. Standards have risen and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no formal action plan for the improvement of science and direct observation of teaching and learning has not taken place although this is planned for next term. Assessment procedures have improved since the school was last inspected. Pupils assess and record what they know at the beginning and end of topics that they study. These assessments are related to the levels of the National Curriculum by teachers who also record how much progress pupils have made.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils reach good standards in Year 4.
- Pupils are confident and enjoy work in this subject.
- There are some deficiencies in provision for ICT which the school is addressing.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is not fully developed.

### **Commentary**

68. Standards in Year 2 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. In Year 4, standards and above average and pupils' achievement is good. This is the same standard as found by the school's last inspection in Year 2 but is an improvement in Year 4. Reasons for this improvement include better curricular planning and assessment.

69. No direct observations of teaching and learning in ICT were made during the inspection although the subject was seen to be used to support the teaching of English. No definitive judgement of the quality of teaching and learning can, therefore, be made. However, the indications are that teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. Some good use of ICT to support the learning of pupils with SEN was seen. No judgement was made about teaching and learning in ICT when the school was last inspected. Conversations with pupils in Year 2 and analysis of their work showed that they are competent in all areas of the curriculum except for the use of models and simulations. The pupils present, communicate and develop their ideas through word processing and art. They have programmed a robotic toy and understand several of the basic functions of a computer keyboard. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils, for example, have used the Internet to find information, have sent and received E mails, handle data, control movements on a computer screen and explore imaginary situations. However, their keyboard skills are very variable.

70. The pupils like their work in this subject. They talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about what they have done and what they understand. The pupils remember what aspects of the subject they have covered in the past and express great confidence about their abilities to understand and make progress in ICT.

71. The subject is well managed particularly in view of the fact that the co-ordinator is also the acting headteacher and has, therefore, faced significant management problems. The school recognises ICT as an area requiring further development, for example, in networking new computers, providing improved access to the Internet and making more use of the subject to support the pupils' learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, a good improvement in its provision for ICT has taken place since it was last inspected. For example, standards have risen in Year 4, assessment and curricular planning procedures have improved and the school has its own web site.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

72. ICT is used to support the pupils' learning in most subjects. Its use was evident in English, mathematics, science, art and design, RE, music, geography and history. It was also observed to support the learning of pupils with SEN effectively. Good use is made of a digital camera to record work that the pupils have done. However, as at the time of the school's last inspection, the use of ICT in other subjects is not sufficiently well structured or in sufficient depth.

### **HUMANITIES**

Insufficient evidence was gathered during the inspection to make any comments on the school's provision in **history** or **geography**.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

Provision in RE is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is unsatisfactory.
- Planning and schemes of work are satisfactory.
- Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity.
- Use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

73. It was not possible to observe any lessons in RE during the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, made on an analysis of work completed and discussions with pupils and teachers. The evidence indicates that quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. They were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection.

74. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are below average. In discussions with pupils, it was evident that Christianity had been introduced and studied in some detail. The various Christian festivals had been celebrated and pupils had a sound knowledge about well known characters such as Daniel in Old Testament stories. They had thought about people who were less fortunate than themselves, for example, those with disabilities, and had also been encouraged to express feelings. However, very little recording had been made and, therefore, the evidence to justify a satisfactory judgement was not available.

75. Locally, pupils visit the church frequently, including the nearby cathedral and, in turn, are visited by the vicar and by clergymen from other Christian denominations such as the Salvation Army and the Baptist church. Judaism and Islam feature as alternative faiths but not until later in the year. There was no evidence to confirm that ICT had been used in RE studies.

76. The management of RE has been badly disrupted by the movement of staff. The present co-ordinator is on a short-term appointment and has not been able to influence the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. This is unsatisfactory. Planning documents do exist and are satisfactory. However, these plans are not implemented effectively. Improvement in the provision of RE since the school was inspected in 1998 has been unsatisfactory. In 1998, standards were found to be average rather than below average as they are now.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Insufficient evidence was gathered during the inspection to make any comments on the school's provision in **art and design** or **music**.

77. No **Design and Technology** (DT) lessons were observed during the inspection and inspectors did not obtain sufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement about standards. The subject is often taught through the use of special technology days during which a major part of the day is focused upon a specific aspect of the DT curriculum for each class. An attractive display entitled "Technology Day: Making Vehicles" was seen. It illustrated designs of vehicles and descriptions of the purpose of these vehicles undertaken by the pupils. It also contained evidence of pupils using ICT to create appropriate decorations and colour schemes for the models they planned to construct. A range of model vehicles constructed by the pupils and evidence of pupils using construction kits to create vehicles were observed. A further display of the pupils' work was titled "Design and make a money container". It included evidence of pupils investigating a range of containers, ways of joining fabrics and evaluating the process they had followed and their end-products. From evidence that was provided, indications are that standards in DT are satisfactory. This would match the findings of the last inspection for Year 2, but no judgement was provided then for standards in Year 4.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

Provision in PE is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do well in swimming.



- Pupils enjoy their work in this subject.
- The school's small hall restricts the pupils' progress in some aspects of the subject.
- Although the school's field does not drain well, its use is not maximised.
- Assessment procedures are informal except in swimming.
- A limited range of extra curricular activities and competitive sporting fixtures is provided.

### **Commentary**

78. Only one PE lesson was seen during the inspection. This was a Years 3 and 4 dance lesson in which the pupils reached average standards and achieved satisfactorily. Discussion with teachers and pupils and examination of the school's documentation also showed that good provision for swimming is made for Years 3 and 4. The evidence indicated that standards in swimming are above average and that achievement is good. All pupils are confident in the water and significant numbers swim at least 25 metres safely and unaided using a recognised stroke. Standards in dance were the same as they were when the school was inspected in 1998. No evidence was gathered to make judgements about other aspects of the subject in Years 3 and 4 and no evidence at all was collected for Years 1 and 2. As a result, no other comparisons can be made with the findings of the school's last inspection.

79. In the dance lesson seen, teaching and learning were good. This was the same judgement as that made when the school was inspected in 1998. The teacher planned and executed the lesson well and emphasised the importance of safe working. There were useful warm up activities and the teacher made sure that the pupils understood why these were necessary and how exercise affected their bodies. The varied dance activities in the main part of the lesson interested the pupils and helped them to progress and the lesson concluded with a suitable cooling down exercise. The pupils took part with great enthusiasm. They followed the teacher's instructions carefully and worked together very co-operatively. The strongest elements of their performance were the pupils' use of their imagination, the use of techniques such as varying the height of their movements and the way in which they evaluated each other's work. Weaker elements of the pupils' performance were their use of space and the poise and finish of their movements.

80. The school hall is too small to allow pupils to develop their movements and skills fully. In the dance lesson seen, they were careful not to bump into each other and acted very safely. Nevertheless, this prevented them from moving freely and restricted their achievement. The small size of the hall is emphasised because of the school's need to use it for storage which also creates potential hazards. The school does all it can to overcome this problem. Safe working is emphasised. Additionally, the pupils work outdoors when this is possible and, for example, make use of the school's adventure playground apparatus and have more space to move in. However, the evidence indicated that the school's good field was under used even allowing for the fact that it does not drain well. At the time of the inspection, it was not usable because the grass had not been cut. In conversations, pupils felt that they did not often use it.

81. The subject does not have a designated co-ordinator. The staff share this responsibility jointly which is a satisfactory arrangement in a small school. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning in PE have been maintained since the school was last inspected. Improvement since 1998 is, therefore, judged to be satisfactory. Relative weaknesses are the lack of whole school assessment procedures for most aspects of the subject and limited participation in competitive activities. Additionally, the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school which support the pupils' PE is limited to a football club at present.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

## **PSHCE**

Inspectors only observed one lesson in this subject. In addition, inspectors had discussions with pupils in Years 1 to 4. Due to insufficient evidence being obtained, it was not possible to reach a secure judgement about standards. However, the evidence observed during the inspection indicates that standards in PSHCE are good. This matches the findings of the last inspection which concluded that the subject was one of the school's strengths.

82. The subject is taught as a specific subject and through learning opportunities provided during 'Circle Time'. Pupils are encouraged by appropriate guidance from their teacher to discuss their feelings and experiences. During the observation of a good Years 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher skilfully encouraged every child to become involved in discussing the story theme of a book that the class had been following. The pupils considered the manner in which a main story character had not readily shared the use of a bicycle, the resulting consequences and constructive ways in which a more socially acceptable ending could have been achieved. Throughout the lesson, pupils were clearly developing many vital social skills and personal confidence. They were also effectively learning about good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

83. During discussions with pupils, those in Year 2 showed clear evidence of being able to express themselves clearly on issues that affect them. They also had real enthusiasm for protecting the environment and for developing a healthy, safer lifestyle. Discussions with Year 4 pupils revealed strong evidence that they had been learning about playing an active and responsible role, not only within the school, but also as citizens in the wider community.

84. The subject's co-ordinator has produced an effective and comprehensive action plan for its future development. Included within this plan is the need to review and update the subject's policy, which does not adequately support the needs of the subject.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*