

INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT WALDINGFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Waldingfield, Sudbury

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124699

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Garner

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Britton

Dates of inspection: 22-25 September 2003

Inspection number: 256265

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	81
School address:	Folly Road Great Waldingfield Sudbury Suffolk
Postcode:	CO10 0RR
Telephone number:	01787 374055
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev J Fieldgate
Date of previous inspection:	27 April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average Church of England Voluntary controlled school. There are 81 pupils on roll aged between four and nine years old. Of these, 11 attend the reception class on a part time basis. Most pupils are drawn from the local area and live in a mixture of private and rented accommodation. Many parents work in low-paid temporary jobs. About one in three of the pupils come from further afield; their parents choose the school for its caring ethos and good reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs. In the academic year 2002 to 2003, two pupils joined the school and two left other than at the usual time of first admission. The mobility of pupils (five percent) is low.

When children start school in the reception class, a high proportion have not reached typical levels for their age in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development and overall standards on entry are below average. The school received a Schools Achievement Award in 2000. A Family Learning Project has been introduced on one afternoon each week. Two pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no refugees, asylum seekers, Traveller pupils or pupils from minority ethnic groups who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (16 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Eighteen pupils (22 per cent) are identified as having special educational needs which is a little above the national average. The range of difficulties experienced by these pupils includes: moderate learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; speech/communication difficulties and hearing impairment. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need, which is below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17678	Margaret Britton	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum; mathematics; science; music; physical education; religious education; personal, social and health education; English as an additional language
9958	Tim Page	Lay inspector	
7813	Kevin Wood	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology; art and design; design and technology; geography; history; special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that gives **good value** for money. A high proportion of children starting in the reception class attain levels below those typical for their age; standards overall are well below average. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. Many achieve well. Standards rise but remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 though not by very much. Standards in science are average by the end of Year 2. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 make more progress than expected and achieve well. By the end of Year 4, standards are average in English, mathematics and science even though there are a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of education is good. Pupils are given every opportunity to do well and the provision for the above average number with special educational needs is very good. The school has improved at a satisfactory rate since the last inspection and the headteacher and staff are determined to raise standards further.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The caring, Christian ethos enables all pupils to do the best they can.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has been successful in building strong teamwork among the staff and governors.
- The members of staff create a positive environment for learning. This has a good effect on pupils' attitudes to learning and helps them to achieve well.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The learning support assistants make a very good contribution to the progress pupils make.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is good. The development of pupils' social skills is very good. Relationships at all levels are very good.
- The school's partnership with parents and the community is good
- Although the quality of teaching is good in the reception class and in Years 3 and 4, there are weaknesses in the way some of the learning is planned and taught in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in writing are too low and not enough time is devoted to developing pupils' writing skills even though these have been identified as a weakness. Opportunities are missed to develop these skills in other subjects; written work is often untidy and poorly presented.

The school has made steady and sustained improvement over the period since the last inspection. There has been good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for children in the Foundation Stage. Standards in mathematics have been improved, rising to well above average in 2002, and there have been significant improvements in reading and in science. Although standards in writing have improved, they are still below average and more needs to be done. The school's assessment procedures have been developed well and are now good. The provision for pupils' social development has improved and is now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	D	E	E	E
Writing	E	E	C	D
Mathematics	D	E	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*

Results vary from year to year because of the small year groups and higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and caution is needed in interpreting the above table. Children in the reception class make good progress, many from a low starting point, and achieve well. About half attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily and make at least typical progress in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The early indications of the 2003 results in Year 2 are that standards have risen and are in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current standards in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics and science are average. Although an increasing number of pupils attain nationally expected levels in writing, standards overall remain below average in this subject because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science and current standards are average in these subjects. They achieve at least as well as can be expected. Throughout the school, pupils, with special educational needs and those identified by the school as being gifted or talented achieve at least as well as can be expected and make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress.

Pupils' personal qualities are **developed well**. The school is very effective in developing pupils' social awareness. Both spiritual and moral development are good and strongly underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They have caring attitudes towards others and quickly form very good relationships and this leads to a productive learning environment. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where the quality of teaching is good, the pupils are actively involved in the learning through question and answer sessions. The activities are varied and stimulating and the teachers use their time well to support and challenge pupils in their learning. In these lessons, pupils make good progress and achieve well. When the pace of learning slows, it is generally because the tasks the pupils are asked to do are not well matched to their age and do not challenge them or engage their interest. The school provides a good curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant, except in Years 1 and 2 where there are some shortcomings. There are good opportunities for enrichment through educational visits, visitors to the school and after school clubs. The school provides well for pupils' health and safety. Good links have been established with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is very good and provides staff and governors with a clear vision of future developments for the school. Members of staff with responsibilities for the curriculum provide good leadership and useful support for their colleagues. The school is well managed, runs efficiently and all staff are clear about the part they play in the team. The governing body carries out its roles and responsibilities well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive. All those who replied agreed that their children like school and the overwhelming majority agreed that teaching is good and that their children behave well in an atmosphere free of oppressive behaviour. The school provides good quality information for parents about their children's progress in annual written reports, an outline of topic coverage at the beginning of each term, a progress chart at the end of the autumn term, and reading ages noted in pupils' reading diaries. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, and this is confirmed by their enthusiastic responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - placing greater emphasis on the teaching of writing in the time allocated to English;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills for a range of purposes across the curriculum;
 - improving the quality of pupils' written presentation in all subjects.

- Change the approach to teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 by building on the good practice in the Foundation Stage to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn through relevant, well structured play and practical activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve **at least satisfactorily** throughout the school and often make **good progress** from a low starting point. Achievement in the reception class is good and children make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily although standards were still below those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of Year 2 tests and assessments in 2003. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to achieve at least as well as can be expected and often do better in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 4, standards in these subjects are average. Across all other subjects, pupils in Years 1 to 4 achieve at least satisfactorily and standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs and those identified by the school as being gifted or talented achieve at least as well as can be expected and make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress. Any differences in the standards of achievement of boys and girls are generally linked to the proportion of pupils of each gender with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment on entry to the reception class is below average.
- Standards and achievement in mathematics and spelling have improved since the last inspection.
- Good use is made of tests and assessment results to target support for individuals and groups of pupils.
- Standards in writing are a weakness. Boys' reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 are a particular weakness.
- The number of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is variable but in most years, there is a high proportion of children who do not reach typical levels for their age in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. The children make good progress in the reception class and achieve well. By the end of the year, about half the children reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The remaining children achieve the early learning goals in the creative, physical and mathematical areas of learning and have moved closer to reaching the goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. However, standards are still below average by the end of the reception year.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (12.5)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.7 (14.8)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Although there has been a trend of improvement, standards in reading and writing were below average in 2002 and in 2003. The school's emphasis on improving standards in mathematics has been very successful and there has been an overall trend of improvement since the last inspection in 1998. Standards in mathematics were well above average in 2002. This improvement has been sustained in 2003 even with the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group.
3. There has been a good improvement in the number of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher level, Level 3 in writing in 2003 and the proportion is now well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who reached Level 3 reading and in mathematics in 2003 was above the national average. This shows a marked improvement on the results in 2002 when the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in reading was below average and well below average in writing. This improvement is due to the careful and detailed use of assessment information to provide pupils with well matched and challenging learning tasks that enable the more able pupils to achieve well.
4. Teachers' assessment of science in 2002 showed most pupils reaching an average level. Inspection evidence shows that in 2003, pupils attained average standards in science. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in science. Overall, standards of achievement by the end of Year 2 are satisfactory.
5. Pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 in English, mathematics and science. They achieve at least as well as can be expected and often do better. The results of local education authority tests in reading and mathematics show that the standards reached by Year 4 pupils in 2003 were slightly above the county average. Seven out of ten pupils made the expected progress or performed better than expected during Years 3 and 4. The good use of assessment information to target specific pupils for support and the good quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 are contributory factors in ensuring pupils' steady progress. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 4 attain average standards in science and that their achievement is good. The good quality of the teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes to learning science contribute to the good rate of progress over Years 3 and 4.
6. The school looks carefully at its national and local education authority test results with a view to identifying any differences in the performances of boys and girls. Once any differences are identified, they move quickly to ensure that pupils are given well focused support and can make the best progress possible. For example, the teachers have analysed the results of the 2003 tests for Year 2 pupils and have identified that the boys are falling behind the girls in writing; they have targeted boys' writing as a focus for improvement. The 2003 test results for Year 4 show that boys did slightly better than girls in both reading and mathematics. The school is concerned that some girls did not do as well as expected and teachers are monitoring the current Year 4 girls' progress carefully to ensure that this is not repeated. During the inspection, the inspection team did not find any particular differences in the achievements of boys and girls.
7. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is satisfactory; they achieve at least as well as their peers. They are generally meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. Due to the strength of teaching in Years 3 and 4, and where there is individual support in classes pupils often make good progress in lessons. Many pupils with special educational needs achieve well in information and communication technology and often attain higher standards than some of their classmates. The school has identified a number of pupils as gifted and talented. These pupils have particular skills in art and design, physical education, mathematics and science and the school ensures that they are provided with sufficient challenge to help them make at least satisfactory progress.
8. Since the last inspection, the school has placed an emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics and science and has been successful. The headteacher has provided a strong lead through, for example, the development of the use of assessment information to plan

interventions in pupils' learning. She has had a direct influence by being an effective English and mathematics teacher for the Year 2 pupils. The training of teaching assistants and the good quality of their teaching and support for small groups of pupils has also had a positive effect on the rate of pupils' progress and their achievement. However, there has been less emphasis on other subjects and although standards have been maintained, there is less evidence of improvement. In design and technology, geography, history and personal and social education there was insufficient evidence available to support a secure judgement on standards at Year 2 or at Year 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their attendance is good, and punctuality is very good. Pupils' social development is very good, their spiritual and moral development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' are enthusiastic about school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils form very good relationships amongst themselves and with adults who work or help in school. Their views are valued and the School Council is effective in providing pupils with a voice in the management of the school.
- Pupils are eager to come to school and their punctuality and good attendance contributes to the progress they make.
- The school's Christian ethos plays an important part in pupils' personal development.

Commentary

9. Pupils' have very positive attitudes to school, and this is confirmed by their enthusiastic responses in their pre-inspection questionnaires. Their behaviour is good. They subscribe to the school's three basic rules which are: to take care of ourselves; to take care of each other; and take care of our school.
10. Pupils are eager to come to school because they find it friendly and have the trust of their teachers. They quickly form very good relationships amongst themselves, and with adults, and this leads to a productive learning environment and an atmosphere free of oppressive behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take on minor responsibilities as soon as they join the Reception class, and these grow in importance as they move through the school. Pupils' views are actively sought. There is a school council that is proving to be an effective and influential forum for discussion.
11. School council members are democratically elected, guidance is provided by teaching assistants so that discussion is not inhibited by the presence of teachers. Recent decisions have led to new safety rules for play equipment and a review of the arrangements for football during breaks so that a minority do not monopolize playground space.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

12. Good attendance is promoted with pupils through the award of certificates. A good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities and clubs, many of which are provided by the wider

community, enhances pupils' liking for school. There have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions in the year prior to the inspection.

13. Spiritual development is good; the lighting of a candle in a class assembly successfully promoted a sense of reverence in a Reception year classroom assembly. The reading of the poem 'And my heart soars' by Native American Chief Dan George, prompted Year 3/4 pupils to reflect on God's gifts and consider their own experiences as a source of celebration. The school's outside environment provides an uplifting experience that is reflected in the care shown by the overwhelming majority of pupils.
14. Moral development is good and is based on a secure understanding of the school's rules, the caring Christian ethos, and the trust of adults. Wall displays, such as posters promoting keeping ponds clean show an emerging social conscience and the assumption of civic responsibility.
15. Pupils' social development is very good, particularly as their social and emotional development is below expectation when they enter the Reception class. Pupils understand their responsibilities of living in the school community, they play together well, older pupils befriend younger ones, and they generally display polite behaviour.
16. Cultural development is satisfactory. Arrangements for teaching pupils about a range of religions are good and visitors to the school effectively enhance the curriculum. The celebration of national traditions such as Maypole and English country dancing is encouraged. In music, there is an Ocarina Club, and pupils have played Indonesian Gamelan instruments. Otherwise, there are insufficient examples of art and literature from other cultures influencing pupils' work, and few opportunities for them to experience or appreciate a multi-cultural society at first hand.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. The school provides a good curriculum for all the age groups. The curriculum is well enriched by a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school. The members of staff provide a good number and range of after-school clubs that further enrich the pupils' learning experiences. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides them with good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in the development of the school. Links with parents and with the community are good and have a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and achievement. However, the school has missed some opportunities to involve parents by actively seeking their views. Links with other school are good and are used well to develop the curriculum and to help pupils to make a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work is good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers throughout the school make good use of praise to encourage the pupils in their work. However, teachers' written marking is not sufficiently focused on what the pupils are to learn. Teachers do not consistently expect pupils to present their work tidily and to a good standard.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants are very well involved in the lessons and are able to make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

- There is an appropriately strong emphasis on teaching English but some of the lessons are too long and the rate at which pupils learn is slow.
- The teaching methods used in Years 1 and 2 are sometimes unsuited to the age of the pupils.
- Pupils throughout the school are generally eager to learn and concentrate well on their tasks. They work very well together in pairs and in small groups.
- The good use of assessment to plan pupils' work and give them additional support is helping them to achieve well and has contributed to the trend of improvement in standards.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	13	6	1	0	0

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

17. The overall quality of teaching in the school is broadly the same as the previous inspection, with a similar proportion of very good teaching and unsatisfactory teaching to that found in 1998. The quality of teaching for children in the Reception class has been improved and is now good. The example of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in Year 1 reflected work that was not well matched to pupils' learning needs and was not typical of the teacher's work in other lessons. The good quality teaching is evident in the expected and often better progress that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make from a generally low starting point. The good teaching has been effective in raising standards since the last inspection and there has been a good improvement in the number of pupils attaining the higher levels.
18. Pupils respond well to enthusiastic and well prepared teaching found in the bulk of lessons. Teachers throughout the school are effective in engaging and sustaining the pupils' attention in the introductory part of lesson and in class discussions. Lessons are well prepared and effective use is made of a range of good quality learning resources and artefacts to engage the pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 1 were attentive because they were interested in the antics of a toy frog used to help them understand addition. Teachers use praise and encouragement well to make their expectations clear and this spurs pupils on to greater efforts and they achieve well in these lessons. Story telling is a particular strength of the teaching and pupils throughout the school listen with rapt attention. When they are asked to work in pairs or in small groups, pupils are willing to share their ideas and resources and sustain their concentration on the task.
19. A characteristic of the good teaching for pupils with special educational needs is the way in which the teachers and learning support assistants work closely together to plan the work for the pupils. They take care to plan the tasks so that pupils achieve well and have a sense of success. For example, questions are often adapted and pupils are given simpler ways of recording their work. The teaching of individuals and small groups is of good quality and relates closely to the targets set in pupils' individual education plans. The learning support assistants are effective, sometimes very effective, helping pupils in lessons with tact and rigour and providing good quality guidance in their learning. Support for higher attainers is good. Teachers adapt the tasks to give the pupils an appropriate level of challenge and pupils sometimes work with an older age group to ensure that their learning needs are met.
20. The members of staff have recognised that they need to make decisions about the way in which the time allocated to English is used so that the pace of learning is brisk for all pupils. In a mathematics lesson, the introductory session was relevant and interesting for the pupils but they achieved little in the main part of the lesson. This was because the pupils were not given opportunities to consolidate their understanding of the mathematical idea through using practical activities and the over-emphasis on completing worksheets meant that the teacher

could not focus sufficiently on teaching the pupils. In this lesson the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Where the teaching of in Years 1 and 2 was most effective, the pupils were involved in well structured play or practical activities that helped them to be successful and gave the teacher and learning support assistant opportunities to interact with the pupils. For example, Year 1 pupils were helped to make good progress in reading skills by acting out the story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' they had heard in the literacy lesson. They concentrated for a long time on making the troll's dinner and building a bridge for him to hide beneath. As they worked, they used the language they had heard in the story, and retold the events of the story in the correct sequence which helped them to predict and recognise words and phrases in the text.

21. Although teachers talk to the pupils about their work and often praise them orally for their efforts, an examination of a sample of pupils' work from across the curriculum and all age groups showed that written comments are rare. Pupils' work is marked regularly but often with just a tick. Written comments are not sufficiently well linked to the learning objectives for the task and they do not point out what the pupil has done well or what he or she needs to do to improve. There is very little emphasis on helping pupils to improve their handwriting and presentation skills and teachers often appear to accept work where the presentation is poor. It is clear that not enough is expected from pupils who take little pride in the appearance of their work.
22. Teachers' plans for English, mathematics and science are firmly based on their good use of assessment information from national tests and interim assessments. Pupils in need of additional support for English and mathematics are identified and often work with learning support assistants on specific targets. This has helped to raise standards. Assessment in other subjects is used well to identify pupils with particular gifts and talents and to make changes to the curriculum.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant, except in Years 1 and 2 where there are a few shortcomings. There are good opportunities for enrichment, both through extra-curricular provision, which is good, and through the use of educational visits and visitors to the school. There is a good level of resources to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum, and good outside accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good approach to curriculum improvement. Good use is made of assessment information to identify parts of the schemes of work that need to be strengthened.
 - Not enough time is given to improving pupils' writing.
 - The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and enables them to make good progress towards their individual targets.
 - The curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been improved and is now good. Developments in the outdoor classroom are providing a richer learning environment.
 - A good number of the learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
23. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements including provision for religious education. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and these have contributed to the improvement in standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection. Adaptations have been made to schemes of work in order to tailor them to the learning needs of the pupils. The good relationships with neighbouring schools have been helpful in developing schemes of work that ensure pupils' smooth transfer to the next stage of education. The headteacher is aware that further decisions need to be made about the use of time in English and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 if standards are to be raised further. Some of the lesson periods are too long and the activities insufficiently varied to sustain the pupils' interest. The time allocated to English throughout the

school is not organised to allow sufficient emphasis to be placed on developing pupils writing skills.

24. A particular strength is the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school carefully assesses the needs of pupils and draws up good quality individual education plans. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with work that is well matched to the specific targets for improvement in their individual education plans and they make good progress towards those targets. There is good provision, for example where a pupil is given the use of a laptop to both encourage writing and to ensure her access to lessons and recording her work.
25. The curriculum for children in the reception class has developed well. The children are taught through well structured practical activities and play that promote the six areas of learning well. The courtyard area is used well to support the children's learning and the development of the outdoor classroom is adding interesting opportunities for them to learn in a different environment.
26. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good, for example the provision for art activities is enhanced by the bi-annual art exhibition, and literacy by the pupils' participation in the East Anglian Daily Times scheme, 'Language in Action'. Subjects such as music, history and geography, and other cultural opportunities, especially connected to the Church and the community, enhance the curriculum provision. The school makes good provision for religious education.
27. The Learning Support Assistants are well qualified and trained to support the pupils. They support and complement the teaching well and make a significant difference to the experience the children have of the curriculum. With their support, all pupils are able to take a full part in lessons and this promotes inclusion well.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides well for pupils' health and safety. Policies and procedures are secure. Support and guidance for academic and personal development is good, it is founded on staff knowing the pupils well, good assessment and marking, and very good relationships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has effective procedures to support the welfare of its pupils.
- Relationships are very good; they are based on trust and mutual respect.
- Assessment is good, but pupils are not systematically informed of levels or targets.
- Pupils' opinions are taken seriously, and have been effective in contributing to improvements in the school.

Commentary

28. The school has a well-written health and safety policy. There are effective arrangements for regular risk assessments, which involve frequent inspections by the governors' premises committee, and equipment safety checks. Child protection arrangements are secure, the school follows locally agreed procedures, and staff members are aware of their responsibilities.
29. Pupils quickly establish secure and trusting relationships amongst themselves, with teachers, and with other adults who help in school. Induction arrangements are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and take account of the majority of reception children who have had no nursery or pre-school education. Every effort is made to make them feel welcome and raise their self-esteem by valuing their contributions and encouraging them to take responsibility.

30. Effective assessment of pupils' attainment leads to the efficient deployment of teaching assistants who support pupils' learning very well. Pupils are aware of their relative attainment because of the teaching groups in which they are placed but they would have a better understanding of how they could improve if they received more focused marking, and were set targets. Class teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils, they track pupils for whom they have a concern and are at a stage before being identified with special educational needs, and are able to provide good pastoral support for all pupils. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
31. The school is receptive to pupils' opinions and their suggestions have had a positive effect on behaviour, the environment, and pupils' safety. Year 3/4 pupils evaluate and help organise assemblies, and provide regular feedback to teachers. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 write a self-evaluation of progress achieved, in their annual reports.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the community. The school is accessible and parents are provided with good information about their children's progress. Parents have good access to educational and support services that enable them to share more fully in their children's education at home. Although parents' views are canvassed, more opportunities could be found to seek their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff and governors are approachable and welcoming
- The school provides good quality information to parents about their children's progress, and provides workshops to develop parents' understanding of what their children are learning.
- Other communications are of good quality and keep parents in touch with school life.
- There is good community involvement.
- The school consults parents through a questionnaire every two years but some opportunities are missed to seek their views.

Commentary

32. Good links have been established with parents. Responses contained in their pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive. All those who replied agreed that their children like school and the overwhelming majority agreed that teaching is good and that their children behave well in an atmosphere free of oppressive behaviour. The principle area of disagreement identified by approximately 30 per cent of those parents who responded, was concern about being kept well informed about their children's progress. The inspection team do not agree with these parents' view and find that the school provides good quality information for parents about their children's progress.
33. Pupils' annual reports are well written, set targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science appropriate to the age of their children, and include comments on their personal development, and achievements. There is a good flow of written information that keeps parents informed of what is happening in school. A file of letters home is available for parents to check in the main entrance area.
34. The school is open and welcoming. Staff and governors regularly make themselves available to talk to parents and this is good practice. Parents are formally consulted every two years. Their opinions have contributed to improved playground drainage, and the introduction of an evening performance of the nativity play. The parent and teachers association plays an important role providing a bridge between home and school, organises a range of social events, and raises funds for the school.
35. Community links are good. The school is an integral part of the community and pupils benefit from the way in which the curriculum is enriched by taking part in community events and

competitions. Extra curricular activities have benefited from the help of local groups: Colchester United FC, and Sudbury cricket, hockey, and rugby clubs all provide pupils with sports coaching.

36. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the middle school are well managed. Pupils spend a half-day in their new school before joining, the schools arrange subject liaison meetings, and teachers meet to discuss pastoral issues. All of this support is effective in ensuring a smooth transition for the pupils and a reduction in anxiety. Pupils also benefit from the school's wider educational links with the West Suffolk College, and Homerton College, both of which place trainee teachers and nursery nurses in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's leadership is very good and provides staff and governors with a clear vision of future developments for the school. Members of staff with responsibilities for the curriculum provide good leadership and useful support for their colleagues. The school is well managed, runs efficiently and all staff are clear about the part they play in the team. The governing body carries out its roles and responsibilities well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She leads by example and has played a key role in raising standards since the time of the last inspection. She has created a good sense of teamwork amongst staff and governors who share her high aspirations for the pupils.
- The headteacher and senior teacher are very effective curriculum leaders and teachers who have been successful in helping the school to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Members of the governing body know and understand the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school and play a good part in shaping its future development.
- Although the issues identified by the school for improvement in the school's improvement plan are appropriate, the measures for evaluating the effect of any change are not sufficiently precise.
- The special educational needs coordinator has established very good links with parents and other professionals. These links are having a positive effect on the provision made for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

37. The headteacher is dedicated to ensuring that pupils achieve as well as possible in all aspects of their development. The caring, Christian ethos and the strong emphasis placed on ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to be successful are indicators of the headteacher's success in communicating her vision to her colleagues, governors, pupils and parents. Governors and staff share her aspirations for school improvement and there is a strong sense of purpose that is well focused on pupils' achievement. Her honest and self-critical appraisal of the school and her willingness to take and act upon advice from the local education authority's advisory team have been important factors in the school's successful drive to raise standards.
38. The headteacher and senior teacher have played a leading part in raising standards in English, mathematics and science. They have been innovative in making changes to the curriculum and the way in which support staff are deployed. Many of these decisions have been based on their detailed analysis of the results of tests and assessments and the observation of lessons. They have ensured that teachers and learning support assistants have had access to good quality training which has helped to address any gaps in their expertise. These strategies have been effective in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning and in increasing the opportunities for pupils to achieve well.

39. The working relationship between the headteacher and the governing body is very good. It is based on mutual respect and this enables them to work well together in making decisions about the strategic development of the school. The headteacher provides governors with detailed information about the school and they have the confidence to question or challenge on professional matters. From their visits into school and the detailed information received from the headteacher, the governors have clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are helping them to strategic decisions. Governors are fully involved in the school improvement planning process. They monitor progress towards the targets for improvement that the school has agreed but, because the success criteria are not consistently measurable, they are not able to evaluate for themselves the changes in terms of their effect on the quality of education and pupils' progress. This is a shortcoming in judging whether or not best value has been achieved. Governors work efficiently in committees and in full meetings and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well.
40. That the school day runs smoothly is evidence of the efficient and unobtrusive management systems and routines that have been put in place. Much of this is due to the very good support provided to the headteacher by the administrative assistant. This creates a calm, orderly and friendly atmosphere.
41. The school manages its provision for pupils with special educational needs well. The devolved special needs budget is used well to provide a good level of staff and other resources. These resources are well organised and managed. The policy is clear, helpful and up-to-date; it conforms to the national Code of Practice. There is good communication between the coordinator, the governor with responsibility for special educational needs, the learning support assistants and outside agencies. The special educational needs coordinator is very well organised and provides good, energetic leadership for her colleagues. Her good leadership and management is an important factor in enabling pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets.
42. The headteacher, staff and governors make good use of all available information, including self-evaluation, when they decide on the priorities for improvement to be included in the school improvement plan. School self-evaluation is developing satisfactorily. Performance management targets have been well linked to school targets for improvement and this has also helped in the effort to raise standards.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	266,289	Balance from previous year	14,476
Total expenditure	239,428	Balance carried forward to the next	26,861
Expenditure per pupil	2,690		

43. The school's financial resources are used well to support the targets for development identified in the school improvement plan. The budget is carefully drawn up to allow for all the necessary expenditure and to allocate funds for specific developments. There are very good systems for financial control and all the recommendations of the most recent auditor's report have been acted upon. Technology is used appropriately to help in the management of the financial records. Governors are provided with detailed and accurate information to ensure that finances are in good order. Governors make satisfactory use of the principles of best value when making major spending decisions. The administrative assistant provides efficient and unobtrusive support that enables the headteacher and staff to focus on their work with the pupils. A relatively large surplus has accrued and is earmarked for school improvements.

44. Overall, the good quality of leadership and management is having a positive effect on the quality of education, particularly, the quality of the climate for learning. The school is well placed to make further improvements. The headteacher, staff and governors work very effectively together and there is a shared understanding of what is to be done. Weaknesses identified by the last inspection and through the school's self-evaluation have been addressed satisfactorily and, as changes in staff have strengthened the team, the potential for further improvement is greater.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of the Family Learning Project?

The Family Learning Project was started in the summer term 2003. Five parents attended a series of six meetings on literacy entitled 'Keeping up with the children. A second series of meetings, this time on numeracy, has started in the autumn term and 12 parents are taking part. It is too early to judge the effect of the Project on parents and their children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff value the Project and are very supportive of the tutor and of the parents taking part.
- The tutor is enthusiastic, well prepared and committed to the Project.
- Those parents who have taken part say that they have benefited from the experience and now have a better understanding of the way in which their children are taught.

Commentary

45. The school encourages parents to support their child's learning. The members of staff see the Project as a very positive way of increasing parents understanding of what is taught and why it is taught that way. Parents respond well to the tutor who prepares the sessions well and provides them with lots of ideas and activities to try at home with their children. She explains the mathematical vocabulary and the educational jargon well. Parents who took part in the literacy session spoke positively about the experience and said that what they had learnt was helping them to support their child. That most of the first group have returned for the numeracy sessions and have encouraged other parents to come along indicates that the Project is of value to these parents.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong links with parents and carers help the children to make a good start in the reception class.
- Children make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning because the good teaching ensures that they have carefully structured opportunities to develop self-confidence and independence.
- The class diary provides a good record of the children's personal development and learning over the first few weeks in school.
- By the end of the reception year, almost all the children reach the goals they are expected to reach for their age even though standards were below average in this area of learning when they started.

Commentary

46. Close links with parents and carers and good induction procedures mean that children come to school confidently and settle in quickly. Although the children had started school only a few days before the inspection, they were already familiar with the routines and knew what was expected of them. For example, when they arrived each morning they were confident to hang up their coats and then to sit on the carpet ready for the start of the day. Most children behave well, listen carefully and respond appropriately to instructions. They are beginning to form good relationships with the adults who work with them and most can take turns and share fairly in their play. Most of the children can dress and undress with a little help with the trickier items of clothing. They all manage their own personal hygiene satisfactorily.
47. The activities are well planned to encourage the children to make choices, share the resources and take turns and this helps them to develop the confidence to try new activities alongside different groups of children. For example, in the courtyard area, children enjoy working with the bricks and share the resources well. In the role-play area, they are gaining confidence in relating to other children as they pretend to cook a meal, do the ironing or clean up the house.
48. The teacher records in photographs and words the children's progress in, for example, making friends, remembering to raise their hands to ask a question and changing for physical education. The diary helps the children to understand that they are valued members of the class group and forms an effective link with parents. Because of the good teaching and the well thought out learning activities, the children are likely to reach the goals expected by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good** except in writing where it is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- When children start school in the reception class, about one third do not reach the levels typical for their age.
- Good use is made of elements of the National Literacy Strategy to develop children's reading skills.
- There is an over-emphasis on writing practice in the form of tracing over or copying beneath the teacher's writing. Opportunities to encourage children to write as part of their play are missed.

Commentary

49. A high proportion of children start school with poorly developed language skills. For example, some speak in single words or in two or three-word phrases and others have problems in speaking clearly. The teacher identifies problems early and involves the speech therapist as soon as possible in order to give the children the best possible chance of making good progress. The teachers and the Learning Support Assistants (LSA) take every opportunity to develop the children's language and communication skills. The teaching is good overall and the children make good progress so that, by the end of the reception year about half reach the goals expected nationally. The remaining children achieve well and make good progress towards the national goals for the age group.
50. Children develop their speaking skills well through role-play. Most children still talk alongside others rather than with them, but the interaction with adults is helping them to extend their vocabulary and to learn to take turns in a conversation. In one very effective session, the children went outside with the LSA. They were encouraged to listen to the sounds and identified that when the wind blew, the autumn leaves 'rattled'. With encouragement and good modelling from the LSA, they used words such as 'smooth', 'spiky' and 'cold' to describe the leaves they collected. The children show an interest in books. Most handle books correctly and are absorbed by the illustrations. Letter sounds are taught systematically and the children's understanding is reinforced through songs, rhymes and play activities. Most children make good progress and achieve well in early reading skills.
51. Children do not have enough opportunities to develop their manipulative skills before they are asked to write by copying over the teacher's writing. As a result, they develop bad habits in letter formation and are not helped to understand the purpose of writing in real situations. The focus on correct letter formation rather than developing the children's vocabulary, sentence structure and ideas through play activities is a possible factor in the low standards in writing in Years 1 and 2.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress, especially when they learn through practical tasks where they are actively involved.
- The use of correct mathematical language is taught well.

Commentary

52. Teaching and learning are good. The adults take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical skills and the development of mathematical language. For example, a well planned 'shape walk' enabled the children to identify circles, rectangles, squares and triangles in the school grounds. The children were excited by the activity and concentrated for about 20 minutes on finding, marking and naming the shapes. They did not tire of showing the adults what they had found and by the end of the session, had a secure knowledge and understanding of the names and some of the properties of the shapes.
53. The children create patterns using shapes. They copy the numerals and count objects to ten, though not always accurately. By the end of the reception year, most children in last year's reception class recognised numbers to ten and could match the number of spots on a ladybird to the numeral. A few children recognised numbers to 20. Standards are average in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning, but the work seen was good. The children investigated the outdoor area to look for changes. They noticed that the leaves were changing colour and some were able to describe the colours and textures of the leaves. They learnt that different trees have different shaped leaves. When they use the construction toys, the children concentrate well and show an understanding of how things fit together and balance. The children use computers with confidence and often concentrate for long periods when, for example, they drag items across the screen to dress the teddy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children use their bodies with good control when they run, skip or make large movements.
- The children concentrate well when they use small equipment, but their fine control, such as for holding a pencil or handling tools is weaker.

Commentary

54. In a physical education lesson, the children walked, skipped and marched with knees lifted high. They were able to vary the speed and direction of their movements and showed a good awareness of space. The lesson was taught well and the children improved their coordination because the teacher provided them with a good model, praised what they did well and gave them time to improve their performance. The outdoor classroom provides children with opportunities for more boisterous play. When they use this, they show a good awareness of others and move about safely.
55. The children generally handle books and equipment carefully. However, their skills in drawing and in the early stages of writing are less well developed. Although most children can manage to dress and undress themselves, several still find it difficult to turn their sleeves or socks the right way out. Some struggle with buttons and other fastenings. When they investigate malleable materials, they squeeze, pinch and twist the dough to create for example, an animal. Standards in this area of learning are average.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning, but the work seen was good. The children using the role-play for imaginative play were beginning to take on roles especially when an adult interacted with their play. They concentrated hard on painting zoo or farmyard animals and enjoyed the way the colours mixed as they painted. The children tried to join in with singing 'I love the sun' and all joined in the actions. They were able to describe some of the colours and textures of the leaves they collected and thoroughly enjoyed throwing armfuls of dry leaves up in the air and watching them blow in the wind.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are below average. Although the time allocated to teaching English is generous, not enough emphasis is placed on the teaching of writing.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other subjects are missed.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good and enables the pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils' handwriting is often poorly formed and untidy. Their poor skills in presenting their work detract from the quality of their work.
- The subject coordinator provides good leadership for her colleagues and makes good use of the results of tests and assessments to target support for individuals and groups of pupils.

Commentary

56. Improvements in standards in reading and in speaking and listening have been slow but steady since the last inspection. In 2003, an above average proportion of Year 2 pupils reached the higher level (Level 3) in reading although standards overall were below the national average. This is explained by the high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group, who, although they make good progress from a low starting point still do not reach average levels. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 and maintain at least average standards except in writing.
57. Although there has been a gradual improvement in writing since the last inspection, standards are still below average. Pupils' in Years 1 and 2 in are not making enough progress in writing. In Year 1, too great an emphasis is placed on formal writing exercises before the pupils have developed their spoken language and are comfortable with the physical challenge of writing. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language through role-play, drama and practical activities are missed, as are opportunities to write as part of their play. This slows the rate at which pupils develop their spoken and written language skills. In Year 2, pupils' writing is best when it is related to practical activities because they are then able to write from recent and relevant experience. Although some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills in this way, opportunities are not well exploited across the curriculum. In Years 3 and 4, the strength of teaching means that pupils achieve well in lessons and make good, sometimes very good progress in writing although standards remain below average. Throughout the school, the time allocated to teaching English is generous but most of this time is focused on teaching reading skills and too little emphasis is placed on developing pupils' writing. The headteacher and staff have planned further appropriate strategies to raise standards and have the confidence to make radical changes to the way in which English is

taught. This inspection confirms the appropriateness of the school's planned action for improving writing.

58. Where teaching is good, the teachers' choice of materials is relevant and stimulating. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were engrossed in the text describing the way in which dinosaurs are likely to have moved. The teacher's skilled questioning challenged pupils' thinking and helped them to improve their explanations of 'migration'. Occasionally, teachers fail to take account of pupils' independent learning skills. For example, in Years 1 and 2 a group worked well with the teacher, who encouraged them to find information from a simple and familiar text. However, the rest of the class expected by the teachers to read independently, were unable to sustain their attention without a specific focus for their reading and made insufficient progress during the short session.
59. Standards of handwriting and presentation are poor throughout the school. Teachers teach handwriting and pupils respond positively. However, pupils do not transfer their handwriting skills to their work in other subjects. Samples of the pupils' work show that teachers do not consistently insist that they work carefully and neatly; as a result, their handwriting and presentation skills develop haphazardly.
60. The subject coordinator makes good use of the results of tests and assessments to identify groups of pupils who need additional support. Interventions such as the Additional Literacy Strategy have been used successfully to help these pupils make progress in reading. The coordinator has also identified a group of boys in Year 2 who were not making enough progress in reading and the school has reacted quickly by providing them with additional support in literacy lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. Although the literacy strategy has been fully implemented in terms of English teaching, opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects are less well developed. Teachers give pupils opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in class discussions and in question and answer sessions in most subjects although extended answers are not consistently expected. Insufficient use is made of role-play to develop pupils spoken language in Years 1 and 2. Opportunities for pupils to use their reading skills to find information are satisfactorily planned across the curriculum. In science, some good use has been made of 'writing frames' to give pupils an appropriate structure for their writing. In other subjects, pupils often write to record their learning but the learning objectives are not sufficiently linked to their work in English and so the learning is not transferred. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing for a range of purposes and in a variety of genres in more realistic situations than in an exercise in English are missed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not enabled to practise their writing through relevant play situations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved dramatically over the last three years. The subject coordinator's very good leadership and her enthusiasm for the subject have been key factors in raising standards. She uses assessment information well to identify areas for improvement.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics, have positive attitudes to learning and generally achieve well.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good and provides pupils with challenging tasks that help them to make good progress.
- The Learning Support Assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' progress throughout the school.

- The tasks for the Year 1 class are not consistently matched to the way pupils of this age learn.
- Although pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers write positive comments, too little guidance is given to pupils to help them improve.

Commentary

62. The subject coordinator's determination to raise standards in mathematics has brought success. Mathematics has been a focus for whole school improvement for the last two years and a target for individual teachers' performance management. The coordinator has ensured that teachers and Learning Support Assistants have had access to good quality training and support and she has monitored the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observations, work samples and by tracking the progress of a representative group of pupils from each year group. Information from tests and assessments is used well to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and then to make changes to the provision. As a result of the use of these and other interventions standards have risen. A particular success is the increase in the number of pupils gaining the above average level, Level 3 in the Year 2 national tests.
63. Pupils' positive attitudes to mathematics are a result of the lively pace of the teaching that requires them to be actively involved almost all the time, particularly in the mental and oral session at the start of most lessons. They work very productively individually, in pairs and in small groups. They share their ideas and concentrate well on the tasks they are given for significant periods. Their positive attitudes and willingness to work hard contribute to the progress they make and help them to achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that standards are average in Year 2 and in Year 4.
64. Where the quality of teaching is good, pupils are challenged by the tasks and the teacher expects them to work hard. For example, pupils learning to use the empty number line to solve problems such as 33 subtract 19 understood how to use the strategy because the teacher made good use of repetition. The pupils made good progress in the lesson and achieved well.
65. The teachers involve the Learning Support Assistants very well in planning the lessons and give them responsibility for teaching a group of pupils. Because the preparation has been thorough, the Learning Support Assistants are confident and provide pupils with effective teaching. The pupils respond very well to the Learning Support Assistants, work hard and make good progress in small groups.
66. Pupils in Year 1 made little progress in a lesson about adding on one, two or three to a number. Most pupils were interested in the first part of the lesson because the teacher used a toy frog to jump from one number to the next and most were able to count on one or two accurately. However, when they were asked to complete a worksheet, most of the pupils clearly had little understanding of the idea. The pupils' concentration lapsed, their behaviour deteriorated, and they made no progress. The teacher had not provided enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning by using practical activities and had moved them on to written recording too soon.
67. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and give them positive written and oral feedback to encourage them in the learning. However, there are few written comments that help pupils to see what they need to do to improve their work. This was identified as a shortcoming at the time of the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Although pupils have some opportunities to use their mathematical skills in science and to some extent in design and technology, this aspect of the subject is not well developed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in planning and assessment since the last inspection have contributed to an improvement in standards.
- Very good use is made of practical activities to help pupils to develop investigative skills. Procedures for assessing this aspect of science are developing well.
- Pupils' written work is often untidy and the poor presentation detracts from the quality of their work.
- The subject coordinator's good leadership is strengthened by the strong and productive links with the local pyramid of schools.
- There is a very good range of learning resources including information and communication technology software. The school grounds provide a particularly rich resource.

Commentary

69. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils in Year 4 reach at least the levels expected for their age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve at least as well as can be expected and make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 and 4 pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress.
70. The good assessment procedures that enable teachers to pinpoint where pupils need more help have enabled the school to make changes to the plans for teaching to target areas of relative weakness. The developments in assessing pupils' investigative skills are having a positive effect on teaching and learning because of the emphasis this places on practical activities. For example, pupils in Year 2 have carried out simple investigations using magnets and have devised tables in which to record their findings. The practical activities interest the pupils and help them to sustain their concentration in lessons. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were fascinated by a collection of simple pumps and were keen to share their ideas about how they worked. They made sensible suggestions and because of the good quality of the teacher's questions, they were able to identify how the pumps were similar. This understanding was used well to help the pupils to understand how the heart acts as a pump and they achieved well in the lesson.
71. The subject coordinator has been successful in developing opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in writing through science. For example, Year 4 pupils have written reports to describe their investigations of friction and forces and Year 2 pupils have listed objects made of wood or metal and explained why their properties make the materials useful for some purposes but not for others.
72. Another successful development has been the emphasis placed on the use of correct scientific vocabulary and terms. Because many pupils have poor language skills when they start school, they often lack the skills and confidence to explain their ideas. This initiative has extended the pupils vocabulary and enabled them to express their ideas clearly. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, most pupils were confident to try to explain their ideas and used scientific terms correctly to describe the action of the pumps. This is having a positive effect on the rate of pupils' progress and the standards they attain.
73. Although pupils are confident to devise ways to present their findings, their work is often untidy and carelessly presented. Although teachers give the pupils support in developing strategies for recording their work, they do not consistently insist that pupils work carefully and neatly so there is little evidence that their skills improve over time.

74. The subject coordinator provides confident and knowledgeable leadership for her colleagues. She makes very good use of the support group within the local group of schools and this has helped her to lead her colleagues in developing the curriculum and its assessment. She manages the curriculum and resources well and has built up a very good range of learning resources of good quality. Good use is made of visiting experts to enrich the curriculum. Pupils have taken part in a Science Fair which helped them to identify science and its use in the community. A visit planned to study the development of a river makes good links between the pupils' learning in science and geography.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject coordinator provides good leadership and management. The resources are of good quality and support the teaching well.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning in English but its use in other subjects is not exploited as well as it could be.
- Well trained teaching assistants give pupils good support in lessons.
- Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment are not sufficiently well developed.

Commentary

75. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils reach the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and in Year 4. All the pupils in Years 3 and 4 use the Internet and gather information from a CD-ROM. They use the computers to word process, illustrate and print some of their work in other subjects. Pupils in Year 2 program a floor robot to reinforce their learning about shapes and angles in mathematics.
76. The subject coordinator's good leadership has had a good effect on the way in which ICT is managed and taught. Because of the nature of the building, computers are sited in each classroom but there is no central suite for class teaching. Consequently, pupils generally have to be taught in small groups. The decision to train all staff including the teaching assistants and some ancillary staff has increased the level of teaching and support available for pupils. This is having a positive effect on the progress pupils make. The subject coordinator has a clear vision for future developments: she has identified the development of pupils' research skills through increased use of CD-ROM and the Internet as key targets for improvement.
77. The school has a good number of computers and a good range of suitable software to support teaching in information and communication technology and in other subjects. The scheme of work, adapted from national guidance, matches the school's needs well and provides a good framework for developing pupils' skills. Good attention is paid to pupils' safe use of the Internet through a policy for monitoring their access; this is agreed with parents.
78. Pupils' progress is assessed and recorded each spring term. An appropriate checklist is used but because assessment takes place so infrequently, the information is not useful for planning the teaching each term. This is a shortcoming in the provision.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Information and communication technology is used well to support the teaching and learning in English but its use to support the curriculum in other subjects is less well developed. Pupils use some programs to support their learning in mathematics and to find information in

geography, history and science but this is not sufficiently well woven into the teaching and learning to allow the pupils opportunities to practise and develop their ICT skills.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident and enthusiastic in their teaching.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development.
- The curriculum is well managed and enriched by visits, the support of visiting experts and an after-school club.
- The subject coordinator provides enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership for her colleagues.
- The study of Islam is less well developed than the work on Christianity and Judaism but meets the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils' work is often untidily presented. There is little evidence in the teachers' marking that they are helping the pupils to improve these skills.

Commentary

80. Pupils' good achievement in religious education is the result of the teachers' positive and enthusiastic approach to the subject. In the two lessons seen, the teachers used imaginative ways of stimulating the pupils' interest in the subject. For example, when Year 2 pupils learnt about the way in which the seasons affect human activity, the lesson started with an energetic and relevant game on the playground. This was followed with an activity that involved pupils in sorting clothes by their suitability for different seasons and ended with a creation story and discussion. Because the activities actively involved the pupils, they sustained their attention and the discussion at the end of the lesson revealed that they all made good gains in understanding the relationship between man, his environment and beliefs about creation. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were helped to reflect on their understanding and experience of 'Celebration' by hearing the poem, 'And my heart soars' by the Native American Chief Dan George. The teacher led the discussion skilfully to elicit examples of pupils' own celebrations.
81. Although the sample of pupils' work showed that the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus are met, most of the pupils take little pride in presenting their work tidily and attractively. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly but rarely comment on pupils' handwriting and presentation or set them targets to help them to make improvements.
82. Pupils are involved in many practical activities and visits that help them to understand the relevance of special ceremonies and festivals for Christians, Jews or Muslims. Older pupils were involved in using the computer to write and publish a 'Church Trail' for use by visitors to the village church. This was an effective way of helping them to learn about the significance of different parts of the building and some of the religious artefacts. Good use is made of visiting specialists to enrich the curriculum. For example, when the pupils learn about Judaism, a visiting teacher brings artefacts and expertise that help them to understand the key ideas and to achieve well.
83. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, pupils consider the difference between customs and rules and relate these ideas to the life of the school. Strong links with the church and the Christian ethos of the school help pupils to understand how believers find their faith helps them in their day-to-day life. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the major Christian festivals and key stories from the Bible is reinforced well by the way in which they are encouraged to take an active part in services. An after-school club enables the pupils to take part in drama activities and to learn Christian songs and hymns that they then perform during the church services.

84. The subject coordinator's enthusiasm gives the subject a high status. She is instrumental in forging and developing many of the links with visiting experts, the local authority advisory team and the local Church: these are important factors in the richness of the curriculum. Her involvement in developing teaching materials for the local education authority has been beneficial to the school. The coordinator has identified that the teaching about Islam is less well developed and has identified several strategies to improve this.

HISTORY

The small amount of sampled work seen in this subject was **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well promoted through visits in the local area and visitors to the school.
- Pupils' enquiry skills are developed well using good quality historical artefacts and resources.
- There is little evidence that the tasks are varied to challenge pupils' different learning needs.
- The teachers are not consistent in expecting pupils to write neatly and present their work well.

Commentary

85. History is celebrated and given status in good quality displays around the school. In the one lesson observed, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good progress and achieved well because of the good quality of the teaching. The teacher provided pupils with interesting illustrations and encouraged them to look carefully and make deductions about life in Ancient Greece. They were motivated by the task and made good progress in understanding differences in life then and now. A study based on the village enabled pupils to make comparisons between old and new houses and the reasons for the development of the village. The pupils have examined extracts from the 1851 census and compared the work available then with work in 2003. Year 3 pupils show interest in poor conditions of work in Victorian times.
86. There was little evidence in the sample of pupils' work that the teachers provide tasks that challenge pupils of different abilities. Consequently, some pupils do not complete the task to a good standard while others are capable of doing something more challenging. Pupils do not always present their work well on work sheets or in their exercise books. There is little evidence that the teachers use marking and feedback to pupils to make their expectations clear or to insist that they make improvements.
87. Pupils are generally presented with relevant and interesting opportunities to learn and the curriculum is enhanced by visits to museums. Although some use is made of computers to find information, this is not well developed.

GEOGRAPHY

The small amount of sampled work seen in this subject was **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject coordinator leads and manages the curriculum well.
- The curriculum, including fieldwork, is well planned.
- The school grounds are used well to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of the area and of environmental issues.
- There is little evidence that the tasks are varied to challenge pupils' different learning needs.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently well linked to the curriculum.

88. The curriculum is well planned and includes fieldwork in the village and further afield. The school grounds are used well to promote pupils' knowledge and understanding of place, and its associated environmental importance. Some use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning but more could be done. In the work of pupils sampled for the inspection, there was little evidence of work being well matched to the needs of pupils with differing abilities. Assessment procedures are not sufficiently matched to the revised scheme of work to enable teachers to judge standards and progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy music and this helps them to concentrate and make good progress in lessons.
- The pupils sing well.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development particularly their spiritual, social and cultural development.
- Links are strengthened through the good opportunities pupils are given to perform for parents, friends and the community.
- The subject coordinator provides enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership for her colleagues.

Commentary

89. Pupils achieve well in music because of the good quality of teaching and their positive attitudes to the subject. Whenever they listen to, compose or perform music, pupils show that they have positive attitudes to the subject by their good behaviour and high levels of concentration. For example, when pupils in Years 3 and 4 composed sound pictures to describe the characteristics of an animal, they collaborated very well in groups of three or four making good use of the time by focusing on the task they had been given. When they performed their compositions, they did so with confidence and showed respect for others by listening carefully. Pupils in Year 2 worked hard to learn the Caribbean song, 'Tingalayo' and to add an accompaniment of three rhythmic patterns. They responded well to the challenge by putting in a lot of effort and the result was that they made good progress in the lesson and improved their performance. They had enjoyed the lesson so much that they did not want to stop.
90. Very good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. Recorded music is used to good effect to develop pupils' awareness of a wide range of musical traditions from across the world. The pupils have had opportunities to play the Indonesian Gamelan, and have access to instruments such as ocarinas and 'boom whackers' from other cultures. They have heard pupils from other schools play Samba drums, folk music and orchestral instruments. Religious music from the Taize community, used at the start of collective worship, created a calm atmosphere that helped the pupils to focus on a time of prayer and reflection. Opportunities to play musical instruments or to sing as part of a group make a good contribution to pupils' social development. Pupils' self-confidence is well promoted through regular opportunities to perform for parents and other members of the community in school or in the church. The pupils also perform with the adults in the church choir at the village concert. These occasions help the pupils to see themselves as part of the wider community and give good opportunities for adults to join in appreciating the pupils' achievements.

91. All pupils are taught to play the ocarina. This gives them an introduction to reading conventional music notation and to be successful instrumentalists. Singing is a strength of the school. The pupils sing tunefully, rhythmically and with obvious enjoyment. They are very proud of the compact disk of their favourite songs that they recorded last year.
92. The subject coordinator provides a strong lead for her colleagues. She has developed the curriculum well and has provided her colleagues with resources that enable them to teach their own music lessons even though they are not specialists. That her enthusiasm for music is infectious is evident in the pupils' response to lessons and to the choir and ocarina club that she runs after school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of the teaching and the pupils' positive attitudes.
- The insistence on high standards of behaviour ensures that no time is wasted in lessons, all pupils are safely involved and achieve well.
- The opportunities provided for pupils to take part in a variety of sports.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

Commentary

93. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen was good. The teachers made a brisk start to the lessons which meant that the pupils were actively involved right from the start. Because the teachers made clear that they expected them to concentrate and work hard to improve their skills, the pupils responded by persevering and achieved well within the lessons. The teachers chose the activities well. For example, pupils in Year 2 improved their skills in accurately throwing and catching a large ball because the range of activities was focused on the same skill but the variety of tasks kept them interested throughout the lesson. In Years 3 and 4, pupils were confident to devise their own warm-up activity and worked independently and with concentration. The oldest pupils are agile as they dodge and change direction and watch their partner or opponent carefully in ball games. In both classes, the pupils cooperate very well when they work with a partner or as a member of a larger group are developing a good sense of team work. Because the teachers have high expectations for the pupils' behaviour, the lessons move along at a brisk pace and this means that no time is wasted. The pupils enjoy the lessons and work hard which contributes to the good pace of learning. The good quality of teaching has been sustained since the last inspection.
94. The school is introducing a new scheme of work and plans to review and evaluate this at the end of the first year of implementation. Good arrangements are made with outside experts to compensate for the lack of specialist subject expertise in the school. Pupils have opportunities to take part in competitive games. Year 4 pupils take part in a day visit that gives them experience of adventurous activities. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils can swim at least 25 metres. Recent training in gymnastics has enhanced teachers' skills and raised their expectations of pupils.
95. Pupils are helped to develop an awareness of right and wrong and the importance of being a team player and in this way the subject makes a good contribution to their personal development. When they take part in competitive events such as sports day, pupils learn about winning, losing, and contributing to the team effort.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

No teaching was available for observation during the inspection week. A scrutiny of pupils' work was not practical so early in the school year. The new 'construction club' was observed and the coordinator interviewed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership and management of the subject leader.
 - Safety issues are well managed.
96. The leadership and management of design and technology are good. The subject coordinator has set appropriate priorities to promote new ideas and to replenish the good range of resources. The subject is considered important and has a high profile in the school. A week long focus on design and technology in the spring term gave pupils good opportunities to develop a range of skills. An end of week display of pupils' products was well attended by parents. Good attention is given to safety issues when teachers plan lessons. The coordinator requires teachers to plan in detail to show how they will ensure pupils' safety. She monitors these plans rigorously. The first meeting of a well attended after school club, 'the construction club', was held during the inspection week. One pupil was completely absorbed in following the instructions for constructing a helicopter. Other pupils worked collaboratively and cooperatively using a good range of practical construction kits. There are good resources.

ART AND DESIGN

The provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision is well led and managed and this has been effective in raising teacher expectations and pupils' standards of attainment.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The use of information and communication technology is developing well.
- There is a good range of good quality resources. Good use is made of the school grounds and the village as inspiration for pupils' work.

Commentary

97. The coordination and management of art and design are good. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and ready to give advice and encouragement to her colleagues. She leads by example through her effective teaching and promotes the subject across the curriculum well.
98. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good. The teachers created challenging activities that encouraged pupils to be inventive and to pay careful attention. Different groups of pupils, including those with SEN, are fully included and enabled to participate in artwork. Assessment procedures, including pupil observations and work scrutiny, successfully enable teachers to adapt the curriculum and to monitor pupils' progress.
99. There is a good emphasis on providing pupils with the experience of using a wide range of materials and methods. The range and quality of resources are good and this enables the pupils to achieve good results. The school grounds and the village are a source of inspiration for the subject; the attractive pencil drawings of trees as part of a community woodland project are of good quality. The use of ICT is developing well, and pupils use programs to create designs.

100. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, the very successful bi-annual art exhibition makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Their art work is sold and this helps them to understand the commercial value of their skills. There is good liaison with the middle school to which the majority of pupils transfer and a joint exhibition of pupils' work has been held.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in personal, social and health education but the outcome of the provision is good. A discussion with the subject coordinator, informal discussions with other staff and pupils and the examination of a sample of pupils' work provides sufficient evidence for the following judgements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council is used well to take account of pupils' views.
- There is a good range of activities that involve pupils in environmental projects within the community.
- The subject coordinator provides good support for her colleagues and has an enthusiasm for developing the subject.

Commentary

101. The aspect is developing well under the leadership of a coordinator appointed within the last two years. Under her leadership, a school council has been formed and pupils from all the age groups are benefiting from the opportunity to influence some of the decisions about the school community. For example, they have discussed their concerns about the use of the playground for football during playtimes and changes have been made in response to their ideas. Pupils of all ages take responsibility for daily tasks that help the school to run smoothly. For example, the youngest children take the register to the office and older pupils take responsibility for operating the sound system and overhead projector in assembly. These responsibilities are helping them to become aware of the ways in which they can contribute to the life of the school. Pupils in Year 2 learn about people's jobs and how they help the community and about their own responsibilities at home and at school.
102. Pupils' work in religious education has helped pupils to understand how different rules are needed for different situations and how these help people to live within a community. Collective worship also plays a good part in developing pupils' relationships and respecting the difference between people. For example, when pupils listened to the Bible story of 'Blind Bartimaeus', they were helped to see things from his point of view and showed a good understanding of his feelings. The teachers make sensitive use of opportunities to discuss issues of relationships and respect for others. They are used well to resolve issues such as inappropriate behaviour and incidents of bullying and to help pupils to make choices between right and wrong actions. Year 3 pupils have considered quarrels and what might have been said or done differently to change the course of events.
103. Pupils are taught what makes a healthy lifestyle. Year 4 pupils have written very clear advice on keeping clean and healthy. In a science lesson, pupils tested their pulse rate and discovered the effect of exercise on their heart. They began to understand how regular exercise keeps the heart healthy and created posters to promote physical activity. The pupils' involvement in environmental initiatives such as the development of a community wood is helping them to realise their responsibility for their local area.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

