

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HANDFORD HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124643

Headteacher: Mr Jon Trotter

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 256331

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	245
School address:	Gatacre Road Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP1 2LQ
Telephone number:	01473 251603
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Natasha Kidd
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Handford Hall Primary is a community school that is bigger than other primary schools. There are 221 pupils on roll from reception to Year 6 and a further 50 children who attend part-time in the nursery. The school's intake is ethnically diverse, which is valued as bringing understanding, interest and tolerance to the children's experience. The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is very high. The level of mobility of the pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is a little higher than average. The socio-economic circumstances of many of the families in the community are much less favourable than usual. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The school has identified around 21 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is above average, and of these the number with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average, provided for moderate learning and behavioural difficulties. There is a very wide range of attainment amongst the children on entry to the school and on average attainment is well below average. The school gained an 'ICT learning zone' award in 2002. It is also taking part in three local and national initiatives, one of which is related to 'The Children's Fund'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Music Physical education Personal and social education
8986	Philip Andrew	Lay inspector	
2756	Michael Barron	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs
31801	Yvonne Bacchetta	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has made good recent improvements under the strong leadership of the headteacher and now **provides a satisfactory quality of education**, with several good features. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children on entry to the school and overall, attainment is well below average, particularly in their communication and language skills. Achievement is good overall, and satisfactory but improving in Years 3 - 6 where pupils are more dependent on adult help. Standards by Year 6 are below average. Teachers prepare well-chosen tasks to provide interest and worthwhile learning although the curriculum in Years 3 - 6 has a few limitations because there have been problems in planning for the mixed-age classes. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well overall but standards in the present Year 6 are below average.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour, and learn well because teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good so that they make good progress.
- In Years 3 - 6 pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) who are new to the school experience difficulties because there are limited resources and support available to the school.
- The curriculum in Years 3 - 6 and assessment procedures require further work.
- The partnership with parents and the community is good but attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the school are good so that there are good conditions for learning, although the role of subject leaders requires further strengthening.

The school has made good improvements in its effectiveness since the last inspection. The headteacher's excellent vision for the pupils is having a significant impact on the quality of provision by ensuring that all members of staff work together towards common goals. The headteacher and deputy, working in effective partnership, have overcome the weaknesses in leadership and management that were identified during the last inspection. The headteacher has set up several far-sighted initiatives which are having a significant effect on pupils' learning, for example the focus on thinking skills and philosophy is promoting deeper questioning during activities. Teachers are using these ideas and encourage pupils to be active learners, who achieve better as a result.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	C	E	E
Science	E	D	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve well overall because good teaching is having a clear impact on their learning.** The trend in performance in the national tests at Year 6 is in line with the national trend. Many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills because expectations were too low previously. Standards in the work seen are below average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science but meet the expectation in most other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT). The trend in the school's results in the national tests at Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national trend because effective management by the Key Stage 1 coordinator and good teaching are having a positive impact.

By the end of Year 2, standards in the work seen are below average in reading and writing while in mathematics, science and ICT standards are average. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because management by the coordinator and provision are good. Pupils also achieve well in Years 1 - 2, where there is much thorough and lively teaching. While this thorough teaching continues in Years 3 - 6 pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall because their writing and other skills are underdeveloped and many pupils rely on adult support. There are encouraging signs that achievement is improving because expectations are now higher.

**Pupils have good personal qualities, such as friendships that promote racial harmony. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good,** as noted in school assemblies. Pupils' attitudes towards work and their behaviour are good and support good achievement. While the levels of attendance and punctuality have improved recently they are still unsatisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good through the school.** In the Foundation Stage teachers engage closely with the children so that they have rich and varied learning experiences. In the rest of the school there is generally a good balance of challenging tasks that include all pupils well; they promote good learning and develop skills, such as creating a spreadsheet in ICT. There is some very thorough teaching of basic skills in Year 6 as well as opportunities for creative work, such as composition in music. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good, enabling them to make good progress. Pupils with EAL make good progress in the earlier years at school but in Years 3 - 6 those new to the school experience difficulties because there are limited resources for their support. There are some good assessment procedures but these are underdeveloped. In subjects such as history the observations of all members of staff are brought together into a comprehensive and informative portfolio.

Despite considerable effort to review the curriculum and plan for progression, the curriculum through Years 3 - 6 lacks breadth because unsatisfactory provision in previous years for pupils in mixed-age classes has not yet been fully resolved. In order to meet these difficulties the headteacher has taken on a considerable teaching load, for example in Year 6 science. All members of staff give a high level of considerate care to the pupils, which helps them to learn and become confident. There are effective partnerships with parents and the local community, shown by the level of support and many visitors to the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher provides very good direction for school improvement and development, for example in the way he has communicated to teachers the value to pupils of extended questioning and discussion. He and the deputy have created a strong and effective senior management team that gives good direction within a strong team approach, quickly overcoming previous weaknesses. Subject leaders are supported in their role but there are areas for development. The governing body demonstrates a good, growing understanding of its role and provides good strategic direction. Governors ensure that the school complies with legal requirements.

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

Parents think the school makes good provision for their children and that the partnership is good overall. Discussions with children show that they feel confident with their teachers and enjoy school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Improve assessment procedures to provide helpful ways to track pupils' progress in all subjects.
- Review the structure of the curriculum and strengthen the role of subject leaders.
- Ensure that there is sufficient provision for pupils with EAL to match their learning needs.
- Improve the level of attendance and punctuality, making clear the effect on standards.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 - 2. For pupils in Years 3 - 6 achievement is satisfactory overall and improving. Standards in the work seen are average in mathematics and science by Year 2 but below average in English. Standards are below average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school; achievement for those pupils at an early stage of English acquisition is good overall but satisfactory in Years 3 – 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception make good strides in their understanding and skills from a low start.
- The trend in results of national tests at Year 2 is above the national trend.
- Standards are below average, but improving, by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition do not do so well in Years 3 – 6 because of limited funding.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress in learning as a result.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.9 (14.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.3 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.1 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (23.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.8 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.0 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Pupils' performance at Year 2 in the national tests of 2003 was well above average in writing, below average in reading and above average in mathematics. This shows good improvement over the results for 2002. The results have shown strong improvement over the last two years, particularly in writing because good teaching and whole school management are encouraging children to learn. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expectation in writing was double the national average, showing particularly significant performance in response to raised expectations. At Year 6, performance was well below the national average in all subjects and a drop in standards from the previous year, particularly in mathematics, because many pupils

had underdeveloped skills through low expectations previously. However, the overall trend in standards over the past four years is broadly in line with the national trend.

2. In comparison with schools having a similar proportion of free school meals in 2003, performance at the end of Year 2 was average in reading, very high in writing and in the top five per cent of the group, and well above average in mathematics. At Year 6, standards were below the average for schools having a similar proportion of free school meals in all subjects and well below the average for schools having similar performance when the pupils were in Year 2. These below average results relate to lack of direction and lower expectation in previous years which have been sharply addressed by the recently appointed headteacher, although the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are taking time to address.
3. Children enter the school with well below average attainment overall, notably in their communication, language and literacy skills, which acts as a significant barrier to learning. Many children enter school with very limited experience of the world around them. The good provision in the nursery and reception classes compensates well for children's lack of experiences and provides good opportunities for learning across all areas. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because teaching and provision are good. This good achievement continues in Years 1 - 2, where good teaching and well planned tasks are having a positive impact in raising standards. Standards in the work seen are broadly average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 but below average in reading and writing despite concentrated effort by the teachers.
4. Some very good teaching was observed in Year 6 which was thorough in carefully focusing on weak aspects of pupils' skills so that their learning was good in these lessons. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, however, through Years 3 - 6 because they have previously experienced some breaks in their curriculum and have not built up knowledge and skills progressively to become independent learners. Standards in the work seen in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Year 6 but there are encouraging signs of improvement. Achievement is good overall through the school since pupils enter with well below average attainment and standards of the current Year 6 pupils are below average.
5. Standards in the other subjects are broadly average by the end of Year 6, where there was sufficient evidence to form a judgement. Standards in ICT, for example, meet the expectation through the impact of good teaching in the very good computer suite. Standards are also on course to meet the expectation in religious education, physical education and music, where the enthusiastic subject coordinators ensure that pupils have good learning experiences.
6. Pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition make good progress in the earlier years - Nursery to Year 2 - because teaching and support is sufficient and adapted well to their needs. However, in Years 3 - 6 the work is more strongly related to the required subject content and children new to the school sometimes experience difficulties because resources and support are more limited.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. This is due to the very good care and support they receive both in and out of the classroom from teaching assistants and also because targets in individual education plans are very specific to individual needs.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupil's attitudes and behaviour are good across the school.

- Relationships between the pupils and between the pupils and all the staff are good. This reflects the very positive attitude the school has to creating a safe and secure environment for all the pupils from whatever background and capability.
- Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and are given plenty of opportunities.
- The school has very effective policies for dealing with any forms of harassment.
- The school takes full advantage of the diverse background of the pupils to promote a full understanding of all cultures.
- In spite of the school's good procedures, attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

8. The great majority of the pupils has good attitudes to learning and work hard in the classrooms. Behaviour across the school is good, in lessons, in the dining hall and in the playgrounds. There is a relatively small number of pupils with very challenging behaviour. The school has very good strategies for helping these pupils, for example the provision of a withdrawal room where pupils can have time to reflect and recover. Relationships are good and this is reflected in the co-operative spirit in classrooms and the way in which pupils value each other's ideas, comments and suggestions. Relationships with adults are good and pupils have trusting relationships with the staff. The school has a very inclusive approach to valuing the varied and rich backgrounds of the pupils to promote a sensitive understanding of all cultures. This helps to reinforce pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual and moral understanding.
9. The school meticulously records any incident that may have a racist element and has a detailed and well-planned follow-up system. This is used to ensure that any pupil who participates in an incident as a perpetrator more than once is helped to come to an understanding of the proper way to treat other people. This is a very good system, coordinated by a specialist support teacher, and helps to underpin the good relationships in the school. Parents are confident that the school deals with any cause for concern. For example, there are very effective procedures for dealing with any forms of harassment so that pupils are clear about expectations for their behaviour. The pupils are keen to accept responsibility and to help the smooth running of the school. The school council has recently been restarted.
10. Most pupils who have special educational needs have developed good attitudes towards learning and behave well both within and outside the classroom. However, a very small minority find difficulties in relating to school life and have the potential to disrupt when they are not adequately supervised in lessons.
11. Attendance is unsatisfactory but has improved since the last inspection. The school has good procedures for improving attendance and is helped by the educational welfare officer. There were 51 short-term exclusions in the last school year involving 6 pupils; four of the pupils had very severe and persistent behavioural problems. The school worked very hard to address the issues and the exclusions in no way reflect the overall attitude of the pupils but rather the school's willingness to try and resolve the difficult problems of a very limited number of disadvantaged pupils. A few parents do not manage to meet the school's expectations for getting their children to school punctually.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.6
National data	0.4

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	124	36	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	13	0
Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi	46	2	0

*The table above shows the number of exclusions by ethnic background during the last school year.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching with well-chosen activities promotes good learning and experience for the pupils. Curriculum provision is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 – 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 - 6. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well and links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good and a strength of the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection although there are elements of weak teaching which cause the quality of learning to slip.
- Pupils' challenging behaviour is not always handled effectively in a minority of cases.
- Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics but are underdeveloped for other subjects.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (20%)	25 (54%)	10 (22%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0

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

12. The good quality of teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables the children to achieve well. Teachers and other adults have established a welcoming and secure environment where children are encouraged to learn alongside others. There are good classroom routines which emphasise sharing and taking turns as well as working together. The good classroom management and well-chosen activities ensure that children have a good balance between their own choice of activity and those with adult direction. These arrangements encourage the development of confidence as well as independence in the children. The teachers' assessment procedures are very good, drawing together the observations of all members of staff into a comprehensive and informative portfolio. Children who have learning difficulties are given carefully focused support. Children for whom English is an additional language are enabled to take a full part in activities through the very precise modelling of language by the teachers and other adults, and by working alongside other children.

13. In the rest of the school, the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science is good overall and is having a good impact on pupils' achievement. Teaching in all subjects has some good features. The planning for most lessons is detailed and provides a good basis from which to work. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, often shown through their clear explanations that engage children well. Pupils often achieve well because teachers ask searching questions that prompt them to explain their ideas and reasoning. This good emphasis follows on from the headteacher's introduction of thinking skills and philosophy as a way to help pupils become active learners. Teachers frequently adopt a very encouraging manner with the pupils so that they try hard to do their best. In several lessons, the teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject was a strong influence on the quality of the children's learning.
14. Teachers employ a good range of effective teaching methods. Their introductions to lessons usually involve well-presented and well-illustrated explanations. Several teachers are very imaginative in how they introduce new ideas. They give a good emphasis to a wide range of basic skills in all subjects, such as seeing pattern in mathematics or keeping a beat in music. Some questioning is very effective, as noted in a history lesson where the teacher's very skilful questioning and use of resources enabled all pupils to achieve well in their understanding of Tudor England. There is a good developing emphasis on applying skills across the curriculum, for example building an electrical circuit in design and technology. Teachers often provide a good level of challenge to make pupils think, for example in developing pupils' ideas on how forces affect movement in everyday situations.
15. In a few lessons the activities are not matched well to pupils' prior attainment and the pace of teaching is slow. For example, in an infant class, the range of reading ages of pupils in the class was not sufficiently planned for and the teacher's expectations of the pupils were too low. Similarly, in a Year 5 and 6 class, the expectations of the pupils during an ICT lesson were not high enough. Several pupils have challenging behaviour and on a few occasions this is not managed effectively, for example when the teacher found dealing with disruptive pupils very difficult without any other adult support in one lesson. There are a very few lessons where teachers do not have adequate subject knowledge so that pupils' learning is affected. These weaknesses point up the need for relevant further training to continue, matched to areas of weakness which the school's monitoring procedures are now able to identify.
16. The school analyses carefully the attainments of different groups of pupils in English and mathematics, using good whole-school procedures. Equivalent procedures are not yet established, however, to track pupils' attainments and progress in science, ICT, and the foundation subjects to ensure that planned work is matched appropriately to their ages and abilities in these subjects. Senior staff analyse the results of national tests carefully and use these well to direct teaching towards identified weaknesses. The quality of marking of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers generally have a good understanding of their pupils and take account of their observations in their interventions as well as to help with further planning. It was noted, for example, that some teachers adapted later lessons as a result of difficulties that the children experienced earlier.
17. Teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and who have special educational needs are good. Children are provided with good support from teachers and teaching assistants and are taught effectively both within the classroom and also in focussed support groups. As a result their achievement is good. However, in Years 3 - 6, when the specialist support for EAL is not available pupils new to the school sometimes experience difficulty through lack of individual attention.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences and opportunities, but is unsatisfactory overall for Years 3 – 6 because there are inherited gaps from the way it was planned previously. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although the curriculum is broad and balanced there are gaps in the curriculum for pupils in mixed age junior classes (Years 3 – 6).
- Senior management are open to new ideas and constantly seek ways to improve the curriculum further and to involve pupils more actively in their learning.
- Provision is very good for infant pupils who speak English as an additional language but the school finds difficulty in making sufficient provision for older pupils new to the school.
- Planning to use ICT resources in most subjects across the curriculum is effective.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities.

### **Commentary**

18. The school's new approach to planning and teaching the curriculum is increasing pupils' enthusiasm for learning. It caters for the interests, aptitudes and needs of most pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Lively discussions are stimulated through group activities which challenge pupils' thinking skills and through practical investigations, particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to discuss historical and geographical developments in their locality with local residents, underlining the value placed on links with the community. The curriculum is enriched well through visits to places of interest, visitors to the school and the varied extra-curricular activities.
19. In the Foundation Stage, good arrangements for shared planning, covering all areas of learning well, help to ensure a smooth transfer to Year 1. Children have good access to a rich and varied range of experiences in the Foundation Stage within a well-run environment. The school's approach to planning the curriculum ensures that links between subjects are planned in a more structured way. Moreover, gaps in pupils' experience and knowledge through previous difficulties in mixed-class subject planning are being addressed, often by the headteacher taking a group separately. The pupils are now more engaged in their learning and their understanding of ideas is more secure, for example by using the computer to carry out calculations linked with the idea of rationing in a history topic. The visual impact of computer programs used in most subjects enhances pupils' understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and assists their recall of previous learning. The computer suite is utilised well for lessons and enjoyed during lunchtimes by computer clubs. Visits to places of interest are planned well to enhance pupils' learning in science, history and geography.
20. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, but because of the previous lack of subject or topic tracking through the school and the way in which year groups are mixed, a significant minority of pupils has not been taught parts of the curriculum in the same way. For example, Year 6 pupils in the mixed Year 5 and 6 class experience a different curriculum from other Year 6 pupils. The school is addressing the inherited problem in several ways. There is now a whole-school curriculum map to help oversee pupils' progress through the subjects year by year. Teachers are avoiding repeating topics by planning to study a different aspect of the topic but with the appropriate learning objectives for the year. In addition the headteacher has taken on the task of teaching small groups of pupils who had missed earlier work, such as in science.
21. At the moment, the school has limited e-mail facilities to help extend pupils' understanding of communication. Information and communication technology (ICT) extends pupils' knowledge well in most subjects, but insufficient use is made of the suite for pupils to improve their writing skills or of the equipment for pupils to experience controlling devices or for monitoring the environment. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy are used effectively to develop pupils' learning in some other subjects.

22. Pupils who enter the school either during the Foundation Stage or in Year 1 achieve rapidly in literacy as a result of a very effective planned programme of intervention such as 'Talking Partners' and practical experiences. Diligent recording of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language is used well to monitor their achievement and build upon previous learning. They achieve less well in Year 3 when the curriculum content is more difficult to understand. During recent years pupils from several countries have entered the school during Years 5 and 6. Although the school is committed to doing as well it possibly can, the school has insufficient support staff or specifically designed visual resources to enable these pupils fully to understand what is being taught.
23. The school celebrates its cultural diversity and includes 'Family learning' as an important part of the curriculum. Community links such as those with Ipswich Town Football Club raise pupils' communication skills and offer pupils activities during the school holidays. There is a very good range of lunchtime and after school clubs attended well by boys and girls of all ages. Sporting competitions and local events and religious celebrations are used effectively to extend pupils' social skills and cultural development. Pupils' involvement with a county project has raised their understanding of the importance of different races living happily together in a community. Good opportunities to appreciate the richness of the diverse range of cultures represented in the school are provided in many subjects. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. The quality of accommodation is good overall and the quality and quantity of resources supports pupils' learning well.

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

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are good and creates a safe and secure environment in which their learning is enhanced. Members of staff know the pupils very well and have trusting relationships with the pupils. Pupils' ideas are listened to and reflected in the school improvement plan.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes good care of the pupils and ensures their physical well being.
- Guidance for the pupils is based on good monitoring procedures.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued well.
- The pupils have good trusting relationships with the adults.

### **Commentary**

24. The provision for the care, guidance and support of the pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Child protection procedures are fully in place and there is a designated member of staff. All members of staff are trained and aware of the correct procedures. There is a close relationship with outside agencies. The school is fully meeting its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.
25. All routine health and safety checks have been carried out to the agreed schedule. There is a proper number of staff trained in first aid procedures. Eight pupils across the school were asked about the correct procedures for evacuation in case of fire and all knew the proper drills and the reasons behind the regulations.
26. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. This ensures that the pupils receive good advice and guidance on how best to develop their talents and abilities. The school has undertaken an extensive programme of interviews with pupils to explore in depth their views and feelings on the education they are receiving. This information has been carefully analyzed and incorporated into the school development plan. The school council has recently been re-started, with a budget of £100, which is intended to enhance the pupils' involvement with the running of the school.

27. The induction of pupils into the nursery and reception classes is very good. There are home visits and where appropriate staff are accompanied by a person speaking the first language of the family. Families are encouraged to visit the school and in the reception class parents are encouraged to remain in the class for a short while at the start of the morning to help develop reading skills.
28. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Very efficient systems are in place for the early identification and assessment of pupils with possible learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils who are assessed as having special educational needs are provided with very effective individual education plans to aid their progress and achievement. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the academic progress and personal development of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Information about individual pupils is usually used effectively to produce individual education plans and pupil progress is monitored on a regular basis. The school works very well with outside agencies in order to best cater for the needs of this group of pupils and enhance their learning.

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

The partnership with the parents, with the local community and with other schools is good. This has a very positive impact on the achievements of the pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents have a positive view of the school and of the education their children receive.
- The school makes good efforts to involve all elements of the school's community.
- The school provides parents with good information on their children's development.

### **Commentary**

29. The links with the parents and the community have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school has developed a very open policy and this has improved relationships and helped the school develop.
30. The school has worked hard to develop links with the main ethnic groups in the school. This has helped considerably to integrate the whole school community and to widen the cultural understanding of all in the school community. A Friends of Handford Hall has been started in the last two years, taking over from the defunct Parents Association. A dedicated group of parents has worked hard to raise funds for the school and in this they have been supported by the great majority of parents. In the last school year a total of £1700 was raised to provide extra facilities for the pupils.
31. The information provided for the parents is good. Three meetings, with appointments, are arranged each year. Attendance is well over 80 per cent. The annual written reports to parents are very good. They give a clear indication of the levels reached in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and the descriptions of the pupil's achievements throughout the year are thorough. The school has a newsletter and it is easy to contact the teachers after school for an informal discussion.
32. The school has developed strong links with the community, for example with the Ipswich Football Club, the Ipswich Harriers and local old people's homes. Links with the local school pyramid and the High School have all been strengthened. The links with the community and with the other schools have all had the effect of broadening the pupils' education and experiences.
33. The quality of information produced by the school to inform and consult parents about the nature of individual pupils' special educational needs and about their identification, assessment



and progress is very good. The school ensures that parents are given opportunities to be involved in both drawing up individual education plans and also the review processes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has an excellent sense of purpose and commitment to providing high quality learning experiences for all pupils. The members of the governing body provide good strategic direction for school improvements.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and deputy have provided energetic and successful leadership to make the necessary improvements since the last inspection.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 coordinators are good so that pupils achieve well.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs is very good.
- The role of subject leaders is developing but requires further strengthening.
- There is a very good commitment to including all pupils in activities, although the low level of provision for pupils with English as an additional language in Years 3 - 6 causes some difficulties.

### **Commentary**

34. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection because the headteacher, supported very well by the deputy, has given a new sense of energy and direction. They have introduced an approach to learning that is already evident in its impact on pupils' achievement and standards. Following suitable discussions and training, the teachers are beginning to adapt their approach to discussion and questioning using thinking skills strategies, in order to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their work.
35. The headteacher has introduced good, basic procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. He, the deputy and subject co-ordinators make regular lesson observations, using these to confirm strengths and to make constructive comments on areas for improvement. There are now good arrangements to check teachers' lesson planning regularly. These ensure that the curriculum is carefully planned to the agreed schemes, although the problems of subject coverage in mixed age classes have not yet been fully resolved. The headteacher has also introduced a process of work scrutiny to check that pupils make steady progress through the school. This is having a positive impact by clarifying the expectations for different ages of pupils so that teaching is informed better. There are also better whole-school assessment procedures that help to track pupils and are effective in raising expectations. The arrangements for performance management are good, and individual targets are matched well to key targets in the school's improvement plan.
36. The leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are good and ensure pupils achieve well within a rich learning environment. Regular lesson observations and monitoring provide useful information which is used effectively to make improvements. The coordinators for Key Stages 1 and 2 have good procedures to oversee provision and are active in helping to improve provision in order to raise standards. Evidence for this is already showing at Year 2 with a trend in standards that is above the national trend.
37. The special educational needs coordinator fulfils her role very well. She has ensured that all statutory assessments are completed in accordance with the school's policy. She also ensures that effective systems have been set up to identify, assess, monitor and cater for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. As a result, the school has ensured that efficient systems are in place in all year groups to deliver a relevant curriculum to pupils needing extra support. There are good procedures to identify and monitor the needs of pupils with English as

an additional language. However, they achieve less well from Year 3 because the school has insufficient support staff or suitable resources to meet their needs.

38. The governors provide good strategic direction and are clear about their role in appointing staff who match their vision for the school. They ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements. They have effective ways to visit the school to be informed about the quality of provision and have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and governors have taken very positive steps to review all areas of the school's life and work, drawing upon many good sources of external advice to ensure that support and development are directed towards the most significant priorities. The school improvement plan demonstrates that the processes are thorough and that real progress is being made. Governors have appropriate ways to check the benefits of their spending decisions in light of pupils' learning. The governing body sets a prudent budget with clear educational priorities and standards in mind. Governors take good account of the principles of obtaining best value in their financial decisions. The carry forward figure in the table below is above that recommended because the school is holding insurance money appropriately that was given after a fire. Also, the roll is expected to fall next year and it is planned at this time to maintain staffing levels.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	845820
Total expenditure	786754
Expenditure per pupil	2840

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42817
Balance carried forward to the next	59066

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

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

The good provision noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. There are two classes in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the Nursery during the term after their third birthday and transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are going to be five. The good arrangements for shared planning, covering all areas of learning well, help to ensure a smooth transfer. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children and overall attainment is well below average, particularly in their speech and language skills. Around half the children entering the nursery are at an early stage of English acquisition and all members of staff are successful in adapting how they work with them. A few children are on course to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception but, overall, standards are below the expectation in all areas of learning. The good quality of teaching in both classes enables the children to achieve well. The leadership and management are good so that children have good access to a rich and varied range of experiences within a well-run environment. Regular lesson observations provide helpful evaluations which are used constructively to make further improvements. Induction arrangements and links with parents are very good, helping to match provision to the children's needs. While there is suitable access to the outside, particularly in the nursery, classroom organisation tends to limit the opportunities for pupils unnecessarily.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Teachers and other adults have warm and responsive relationships with the children.
- There are many good routines to encourage children to grow in self-confidence and take part in activities.
- While many children are likely to reach the expectation the overall standard is below average.

#### **Commentary**

39. Teachers and other adults have established a welcoming and secure environment where children are encouraged to learn alongside others. There are good classroom routines. This was noted, for example, when all adults in the nursery share books with children together or the good emphasis on sharing and taking turns during snack time. Children are often paired with a friend or placed in a group to help them form relationships with others and promote social development. In reception, good classroom management ensures children have a good balance between personal choice and adult directed tasks. These encourage a good level of independence so that children develop confidence in making sensible choices. Children who are identified as having special educational needs are given good support so that they make good progress. All children are fully included in the activities, which promotes good development in this aspect.
40. All adults help to create an atmosphere of interest and engagement with the activities so that pupils are keen to learn. For example, in reception, the class teacher worked with a group of children to match a toy with the initial letter sound. The children were keen to join in, showing a good sense of pleasure in their successes while at the same time waiting patiently to take their turn. Children at an early stage of English acquisition are helped to take a full part in activities because all adults are aware of their language needs. By the reception year, the majority of children has learnt to cooperate with others during group activities although a few children are self-centred in their behaviour and are lacking in confidence. The quality of teaching is good for this area of learning and, as a result, children achieve well, although attainment is likely to be below average overall by the end of reception.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff engage actively with children during well-chosen activities which encourage their speaking and listening skills.
- There is a good emphasis on early language and reading skills and all pupils achieve well.
- Children gain a love of stories and the characters through sharing books.
- By reception children have generally good opportunities to develop their writing skills.

### Commentary

41. There is a very good routine in the nursery after the children have been outside, for them to go into the group room to share books with an adult. This helps to instil in the children a love and appreciation of stories, and to learn many early reading skills associated with handling books. Teachers and other adults give a strong emphasis to language development through all activities. These are planned carefully to include all children and to take good account of their varied language needs. The good planning is linked firmly to relevant objectives for young children and is informed by the very good on-going assessments. In this way, the quality of teaching is good and focused well on each child's stage of development. For example, during an activity to make shortbreads, the teacher used very clear and precise language for children who were at an early stage of English acquisition. This enabled the children to relate the language directly to the activity.
42. The good early introduction in the nursery of letter sounds and reading skills is built upon well in reception. Here, for example, the teacher read a story about washing clothes and asked many good questions to help the children interpret the story. Many other activities were linked constructively to the story to extend and reinforce children's language and understanding. Several children have the skills to answer in complete sentences and to explain their ideas. In response to the question 'Why are they going outside?' some children could say 'To hang the washing up', but overall the children's speaking and listening skills are below average because around a half of the children are hesitant in their speech and tend to give single word comments.
43. There is good planning to promote children's learning across all aspects of language development through well-chosen activities although on a few occasions the level of discussion and questioning could be more extensive. Children have opportunities to build their phonic knowledge, for example, through a 'sound-bag' game. The class teacher modelled very well how to form the sound 'w' and to relate this to things in the bag, encouraging the children to enjoy the task by her lively interactions. Higher attaining children are encouraged to form their own developmental writing, for example in re-telling a story in their own words. Other children are introduced to letter formation and sounds through a good variety of activities, including modelling of writing by adults. A writing corner encourages children to write for their own purposes. There are examples of writing in three languages, which values those children with English as an additional language. All children are fully included in the activities. Children demonstrate good interest in books and language activities, generally talking spontaneously in groups. While a few higher attaining children are on course to exceed the expectation, standards overall are likely to be below average by the end of reception.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers offer a good variety of informal mathematical experiences as well as focused sessions with an adult.
- Some discussions during activities could be developed further to extend children's early mathematical ideas.

## Commentary

44. Teachers plan for a good range of interesting activities that include early mathematical ideas, such as counting, position and shape. All children are fully included in the activities, which are adapted to their needs. In the nursery, for example, children took turns to add a brick to their 'building' and were helped to talk about the shape of the bricks and the height of the towers. During sand and water play, children experienced how much water a container could hold. In a clothes shop, the adult helper encouraged children to pay for items and to receive change. During snack time children recognise how sharing pieces of fruit one-to-one means they all have the same amount.
45. In reception, children have many good opportunities to use mathematical ideas incidentally as well as during focused activities. Children half filled bowls with water, ready to wash some pieces of cloth. Other children threaded laces through boards taking account of position. Sand and water play and sharing out pieces of fruit at snack time offer children good opportunities to experience quantity and one-to-one matching. The class teacher had a plate of five currant buns which she used imaginatively to help children count up to five and down. Children achieve well through the Foundation Stage because good teaching and varied activities promote the ideas and early skills well. At times there is scope for bringing out mathematical ideas more, in a similar fashion to how language is generally used in a rich way to encourage talk. Several higher attaining children count reasonably confidently to ten, recognise simple shapes and have early ideas of quantity. Many children use several properties of shapes naturally to fit bricks or jig-saws together. Overall however, standards in mathematics are likely to be below the expectation by the end of reception.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a very good variety of activities.
- Teachers and other adults usually help the children to engage in the activities so that learning and achievement are good, although this is not fully consistent.

## Commentary

46. Teachers provide a wide range of well-planned activities that promote children's understanding of the world around them. There are good opportunities for imaginative play, for example, which encourage children to take on roles. They were seen sweeping up the dust in reception and learning to shop in the nursery as they learnt about the routines of housekeeping. Good opportunities for water and sand play are provided with frequent changes to the colour or properties of the water, for example, although at times adults do not intervene with the children to discuss ideas during these free-play times. There are suitable opportunities for children to use computers to develop mouse control skills and to understand how to enter commands. Many of the daily activities enable children to explore properties of materials. For example, how bricks and building kits fit, how paints blend to form other colours and, outside, the forces and controls needed to see how trikes and push-cars behave.

47. In the nursery, children have good opportunities to prepare food and to talk about the processes. In a session on making shortbread the children understood that milk added to the other ingredients made a soft dough when mixed in. Most children produced acceptable shortbreads but demonstrated low levels of skill and understanding during the activity. In reception, children applied themselves very well to the task of washing muddied pieces of cloth. They recognised that the cloths became cleaner but only a few could explain that the dirt had gone into the water. The class teacher included a good element of scientific enquiry by giving differing cleaning soaps to different groups of pupils. The children's knowledge was extended well by having the children hang the washing out to dry, to encourage thinking about where that water went. Overall, good teaching promotes good learning and achievement through a very good variety of imaginative activities. All children are fully included in the activities. While a few children are on course to exceed the expectation, standards are likely to be below average overall since so many children enter nursery with very limited experiences and several children in reception are still at an early stage of understanding. Good classroom organisation ensures children are usefully occupied and there are good assessment procedures. There is scope for introducing further sensitive interventions during some free-play activities in order to reinforce children's understanding, for example as to why moist sand will not pour out of a watering can.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan for a good range of activities indoors and outside.
- There are suitable resources for outdoor play although children's access to them tends to be limited because of timetabling arrangements.

### **Commentary**

48. Opportunities for children to develop their physical skills are better indoors than outdoors, although more variety is planned outside during warmer months than was seen during the inspection. Teaching and learning are good overall in this area because teachers provide a very wide range of activities indoors that help children to handle materials confidently and control how they use them. As a result, children achieve well. Children in the nursery have opportunities for outside play during arranged times that are planned into the day's organisation. During these times children explore how to use trikes and wheeled cars, several children showing good control and skill. Other activities such as climbing and playing with a ball are also provided, which extends their experiences and skill. Children in reception also have arranged times when they can play outside. Adults ensure that children's health and safety is monitored appropriately. Children also have opportunities to extend their physical skills in the school hall. The opportunity for more formal physical skills work in physical education sessions develops the ability to work on sport activities and develop skills such as throwing and catching, travelling and early ball skills.
49. A very wide range of indoor activities helps children develop their physical skills. In the nursery, several activities called for physical coordination and skill. Cooking activities, for example, required the ingredients to be stirred, painting involved controlling the brush and building materials needed to be fitted together. In reception, a similarly wide range of activities requires pupils' skills. Children designed and made bold umbrella pictures with raindrops, placing the raindrops effectively. Children are encouraged by the adults to develop their control while handling small equipment. During water play they learn to pour water. They make varied shapes with sand or playdough by moulding it with their hands. Several children demonstrate good developing control in their early writing and painting, making bold pictures to show hot days, cold or wet days. Pupils enter school with often little experience of using materials and making things, but are included well in activities so that they make good progress overall. By the end of reception their generally good experiences and development indicate that many

children are on course to meet or exceed the expectation and standards in this area will be close to the expectation overall.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make good provision for children's imaginative play, and teaching and learning are good.
- Good classroom organisation and resources encourage children to develop their creative skills.
- The teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to paint and use a range of modelling materials.
- The children have many opportunities to develop their imaginative play.

### **Commentary**

50. Teachers plan well for children's creative development in both the nursery and reception classes. They provide many good opportunities for creativity so that children achieve well and demonstrate good developing skill from nursery to reception. Children in the nursery experiment with paints and create many bold pictures, for example of warm or wet days. They use a variety of building materials to make their own designs and, under supervision, have the chance to develop their woodworking skills. In the reception class, children use colour and shape imaginatively. There are many opportunities to create lively collages. The higher attaining children, for example, made their own illustrated story books, retelling a traditional story in their own words. Children frequently have the opportunity to explore and adapt activities. For example, in reception, one child blew a large stack of bubbles because that day the water play had soap solution in it. Teachers provide many natural opportunities to sing songs and rhymes, which enhance their learning through number patterns or repeated phrases, so that children are soon familiar with them. Most children take great delight and show much pleasure in their work and are pleased to show it to others. By the end of reception, children's generally good experiences and development indicate that most are on course to meet or exceed the expectation and standards will be close to the expectation.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enter the school with well below average language skills and achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Standards are rising but are presently below the national average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Learning assistants and helpers are used effectively to support learning and pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good support they receive both within and outside the classroom.
- Pupils' progress is carefully monitored throughout the school.
- Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects.
- The achievement of pupils for whom English is not their home language is not consistent in all year groups.

#### Commentary

51. The school did very well in last year's national tests in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 even though results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were disappointing. Inspection evidence indicates that present standards in all areas of English - reading, writing and speaking and listening - are below the national average in Year 2. In Year 6 pupils attain average standards in reading but their written work and speaking and listening skills are still below those expected nationally. This represents an improvement in reading since the last inspection even though there are now more pupils requiring extra support to develop their language skills.
52. There are several reasons why the school has been able to maintain and in some ways improve standards. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and the progress of individual pupils is monitored regularly and recorded with care in all year groups. This has helped identify areas of concern in learning and also gaps in pupils' understanding and skill development. As a result, the school has correctly targeted reading and writing as areas of concern and has included these in planning initiatives with positive results evident in the improved quality of reading in Year 6. Teachers and learning assistants have had structured opportunities to develop their subject expertise through training and through exchanging information and ideas with other local schools. As a result the quality of teaching and learning has improved and this has made itself evident in better pupil achievement. Staff now work as an effective team and know their pupils' capabilities well.
53. Whilst improvement in standards of pupils' written work remains an ongoing concern, the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is also a priority as many pupils enter the school in all year groups with well below average language development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, and also pupils in the earlier stages of English language acquisition, find conversing with adults and groups of pupils difficult. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to help pupils to improve their vocabulary. They are encouraged to explain, describe, discuss and ask questions in lessons but often find this difficult. Even so, by Year 6 most pupils have developed the ability to speak with confidence and are able to enter into discussions. However a significant number of pupils has still not developed confidence in their ability to communicate verbally.
54. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning and achieve well because of very effective support from teachers and learning assistants. However, the achievement of pupils with English as an additional language varies in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the extra support they receive. The school is well aware of this and is planning to improve provision.



55. The quality of observed teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and was good overall. A feature of lessons was the detailed planning and the way in which teachers and learning assistants worked effectively as a team to include all pupils in lessons and used a variety of strategies in order to build up pupils' vocabulary and encourage them to join in class discussions. In a very well taught lesson to a mixed class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, teaching was enthusiastic, well paced and challenging and good use was made of the teaching assistant to aid the learning of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, all pupils achieved very well in building up both their thinking skills and also their speaking and listening skills. However, in lessons where teaching was less successful, pupils did not achieve well because activities were not well matched to abilities and the pace of learning was slow.
56. The subject is well resourced at all levels and subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has a sound idea of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. However the school's present two-year curriculum cycle results in pupils in mixed year group classes not always having the same equality of access to the English curriculum as pupils in single age classes. They often follow a completely different programme of study. This was evident from scrutinising pupils' work and from lesson observations and is a barrier to achievement.

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

57. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good overall. Literacy has been well developed through pupils using their writing skills to support work in other subjects. In history pupils write about how people lived in ancient Greece and the quality of life in Victorian Britain. In religious education they describe the importance of symbolism to different religions of the world. However, the use of ICT to develop literacy skills remains an area for ongoing development.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, and pupils achieve well overall.
- Teachers have high expectations of the children for their work and behaviour
- Standards are average by Year 2 and there are good examples of extension work.
- Standards are below average by Year 6, where pupils have underdeveloped numeracy skills.
- All pupils are included well in activities.

#### **Commentary**

58. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress from a background of generally below average mathematical skills and understanding from when they were in reception. They achieve well because teachers provide good explanations of the ideas using effective resources to illustrate the methods. Children with learning difficulties or those with English as an additional language achieve well because teachers and other adults are sensitive to their needs and give focused support. The pattern of results in the national tests for mathematics over the past few years shows continuing improvement at a rate faster than the national rate. Pupils' performance in the tests was above average in 2003, which indicates that teaching and provision are good.
59. By Year 2 most pupils have satisfactory numeracy skills. They count and order numbers accurately, skip counting in 2's or 5's confidently. Most pupils perform simple additions and subtractions correctly in their heads to 20, although several rely upon their fingers. The higher attaining pupils have good recall of early number bonds. Teachers often present a high level of

challenge. This was noted, for example, in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher's very good emphasis on thinking skills helped pupils to describe their car before sorting them into sets. The use of success criteria for their work assisted pupils in being aware of their own learning. In another class, pupils demonstrated developing recognition of shapes and their properties while the teacher slowly revealed a shape hidden under paper. Good practical activities promote pupils' achievement and are suited well to the learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language because they are visual. Pupils' previous work shows clear progression in the level of difficulty and subject coverage. Over time the pupils' work is challenging and that of the extension pupils is appropriately aimed at enabling them to exceed the expectation.

60. Standards are below average overall by the end of Year 6, although a few higher attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expectation. Evidence indicates that many pupils are not confident with mental calculation or manipulation with number and that pupils' numeracy skills are below average. Pupils fell behind by the equivalent of nearly one year in their performance in the 2003 national tests in mathematics compared with their performance when they were in Year 2. This is largely explained by the lack of direction and low expectations prevailing until recently. Current evidence shows a strong determination to improve. There is much very thorough teaching, for example in Year 6, that is giving a strong emphasis to the reinforcement of basic skills. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving.
61. By Year 6, the majority of pupils has a broad understanding of the different aspects of mathematics, although they make errors and cannot apply their skills correctly for particular questions. The teachers provide a good range of tasks across mathematical topics. In a good lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils were challenged to find the perimeter of a shape formed by two touching pentominoes. The teacher's good use of the interactive whiteboard to clarify the problem prepared pupils well and provided very clear images for the task. While many pupils were methodical in counting the sides, several were not accurate and did not fully understand perimeter. Pupils achieved well overall because they applied their skills. The overall pattern of results was not brought out, however, as to how the numbers vary with the position, pointing up the scope for further development in problem-solving. In a further good lesson in Year 6, most pupils understood how to draw a reflection in a line of symmetry because the teacher provided a good sequence of examples to illustrate the ideas. The support teacher for pupils with English as an additional language demonstrated the practical uses of these skills well by displaying an architect's plan of a building development where some houses were reflections or rotations of others. This reinforced pupils' learning well so that they applied their skills more confidently. The class teacher was highly skilled in her clear and precise questioning so that pupils were prompted to explain their answers, so understanding the ideas better. Pupils' previous work indicates that they are making satisfactory progress in skill and understanding across mathematical topics although standards are below average overall. The higher attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expectation and there is no significant variation in achievement by different groups of pupils.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers give good attention to building numeracy skills. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is expressed well through their questioning and interventions so that pupils generally achieve well. Teachers and support assistants have warm and responsive relationships that encourage pupils to try hard to succeed. All pupils receive encouraging support and are included well in activities, although for pupils with English as an additional language who are new to the school in Years 3 - 6 the lack of direct support sometimes means that pupils take longer to understand the task. Teachers use good behaviour strategies that are understood by the pupils, a few of whom display challenging behaviour and find it difficult to concentrate. Pupils' work is marked up to date and supports pupils' assessment. Some teachers use a very good procedure to assess pupils' progress by highlighting the key objective in their work when it is understood. This provides instant feedback for the pupils and enables teachers to track progress quickly. The subject leader has a very good understanding of the role and is providing very clear direction for improvement with challenging targets for standards.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

63. There are several good examples of the application of mathematics in other subjects although the school has not yet established a whole-school approach. Pupils make effective use of measurements in science and graph their results to represent their findings. In music, pupils recognise the rhythmical nature of phrases or the beat and in physical education pupils use space well and follow the rules for a rounders game. Work in design and technology and ICT often requires careful measurement or entering data into a spreadsheet. These examples reinforce pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- The pupils have many opportunities to investigate for themselves and this contributes to their understanding.
- How well pupils are doing is not tracked well enough by teachers.
- ICT is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning.

### Commentary

64. Clear direction by the subject co-ordinator has led to the emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities. This is a key factor in leading to higher standards. The good quality of the teaching also enables the significant number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs to achieve well. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 struggle to use specific words in their speaking and writing when they are not supported in lessons. With support they achieve better standards in interpreting words that are new to them that address abstract ideas. The subject leader provides good guidance on marking but this is not followed well enough by teachers to correct pupils' misconceptions or extend pupils' use of correct terms. Marking does not include small targets for pupils to work towards.
65. Samples of work seen show that by the end of Year 2, pupils have conducted experiments to find out, for example, how ice cubes melt and which materials are transparent, and have measured the stretchiness of fabrics. Pupils include descriptive vocabulary when they suggest reasons for what they think might happen and recognise the need for fair testing. Investigations continue in all year groups and by Year 6 pupils make effective use of measurements and ICT to graph their results to identify patterns. There are good examples of pupils who use their knowledge to explain cause and effect but many pupils find difficulty in using the correct scientific terms when writing explanations. Higher attaining pupils are now sufficiently challenged and they suggest how they could improve their tests, which represents an improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection.
66. Innovative teaching through first hand experience and effective use of support staff were evident. In a very good lesson in Year 2 pupils were encouraged by the adult in their group to use expressive language when observing changes in materials they had not met before. Good curriculum links were made with art and design for pupils to create patterned clay tiles and observe change after heating. Similarly, curriculum links between science and design and technology assisted pupils in one Year 4 class to laugh with delight after successfully solving problems in their circuit to transmit messages in Morse code. In a Year 6 lesson skilled questioning by the teacher challenged pupils' ideas on how forces affect movement in everyday situations, which helped pupils recall previous learning.

67. Teachers have begun to track pupils' enquiry skills to build on previous learning but the school is yet to develop a whole school system to identify pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding. The lack of planned progression and gaps in the curriculum exist because of the arrangement for mixed year groups. By following the Year 5 curriculum the level of challenge is too high for Year 4. Bi-lingual support is well managed to help pupils express their understanding where possible. Although the school makes good use of the computer for collecting data to understand changes and for revision, more use could be made of animated visual programs to introduce topics such as the heart pumping. Better use could be made of the school grounds for pupils to explore food chains.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good quality resources, including computers linked to the Internet, but pupils have limited access at present.
- The curriculum is not planned effectively for pupils to achieve well enough by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' progress is not monitored so that teachers are not sure how well pupils are doing.

### **Commentary**

68. Standards in ICT are average overall by the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve as expected. Pupils reach expected standards in how they research, present and organise information by combining pictures and text. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 demonstrated the skills to save and load files, and to import text and graphics from the Internet during a task to investigate features of myths and legends. The higher attaining pupils demonstrated good keyboard skills although some lower attaining pupils were slow. Pupils have learnt to select the most relevant ways of presenting numerical information. By Year 6 pupils are familiar with spreadsheets and have the skills to enter labels and data, and to put a formula into a cell to make a calculation. There are areas of weakness which are being addressed. Many pupils in Year 6 are unfamiliar with email as a form of communication since provision is currently limited. There were elements of weakness in the ICT curriculum at the time of the last inspection, which at that time were not addressed to enable the current Year 6 to gain the skills and reach the expected standard. The weakness related to planned progression in the curriculum for pupils to use a programming language to write and test instructions before moving on to control technology and the use of monitoring equipment to sense external change. Classes have had insufficient opportunity to extend the depth of their word processing skills for extended writing. Pupils in most year groups use data handling skills to record mathematical information such as pictograms, pie charts and block graphs well. Pupils' previous work indicates satisfactory achievement in the development of skills through the school.
69. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses. Teachers make effective use of computers to produce teaching and learning programs such as a presentation on Bangladesh and one on the locality of the school. However, the task provided for pupils in a mixed-age infant class was not adapted sufficiently for their reading ages and the teacher's expectations were unsatisfactory. In a mixed Years 5 and 6 class, the expectation of pupils during a task to draw a room plan was not high enough. All pupils have equal access to the suite and facilities through a planned timetable for all classes. Pupils with special needs or who speak English as an additional language are supported well when support is available. Classroom computers are used well to assist infant pupils who speak English as an additional language to read by labelling objects and beginning to create stories. Subject coverage and curriculum planning are satisfactory, and planned improvements are in hand. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily but a whole-school assessment system to provide an overview of standards in the school and to track pupils' progress has yet to be established.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Teachers identify opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need alongside increasing pupils' knowledge of another subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used spreadsheets to produce measurements in science, to calculate costs during World War 2 or to program cells to calculate area and perimeter of different rectangles in mathematics lessons. They used the internet to make posters that illustrate amenities in their own town or animals that live in the school grounds. They skilfully generated artistic repeating patterns or pictures in the style of Matisse. Pupils in one Year 4 class developed a database about the wives of Henry VIII; in Year 3 they word-processed alliteration poems and in Year 2 reported on a visit. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked at on-screen pictures by Anthony Frost to inform the style of their paintings.

## HUMANITIES

*Religious education was inspected individually and is reported in full below. Geography and history were sampled.*

71. Inspectors observed only one lesson in **geography** and one lesson in **history**. However, both subjects were sampled through an examination of pupils' work and also teachers' planning. This confirmed that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught in sufficient depth. There is every indication from the available evidence that standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, when they were judged to be broadly average in both Year 2 and Year 6.
72. In the observed **geography** lesson, to a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class, pupils were given opportunities to use a range of geographical evidence to review and reflect on their concepts of East Anglia. The introduction by the teacher was overlong but was linked effectively to pupils' previous learning and helped them to complete a range of graded tasks which were well matched to different abilities. As a result nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made at least satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of the features of the region although a small number for whom English was not their first language made only limited progress as they were given little extra support in the lesson. This affected their achievement.
73. In a very well taught **history** lesson to Year 4 pupils the teacher's very skilful questioning and excellent use of visiting adults, artefacts and resources enabled all pupils to make very good progress in building up their understanding of Tudor England and the reasons why Henry VIII's flagship, The Mary Rose, sank with nearly all sailors drowning. The lesson was exciting and pupils were keen and eager to learn from the outset. The whole experience was enhanced when pupils were able to investigate a very interesting range of artefacts brought by the visiting speaker. Looks of amazement were evident when a group of pupils examined wooden drinking cups and model cannons. The whole session was designed to make pupils think and learning was successfully linked to other curriculum areas such as drama, ICT, literacy and mathematics. As a result, all pupils enjoyed the lesson and achieved very well.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school encourage spiritual development in pupils through an ethos which encourages self-esteem and respect for the self and others, drawing well on children's own experiences.
- Work is linked well to the development of literacy skills.
- Knowledge of other faiths is promoted well through religious education.
- Pupils' challenging behaviour is not always handled effectively in a minority of cases.

## Commentary

74. Achievement in religious education is sound overall and standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The school places an effective emphasis on spiritual development and helping pupils to recognise the importance of their own cultures and backgrounds. This has a positive impact on learning and helps pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of the faiths of others.
75. The standard of teaching in one of the observed lessons was poor, mainly because the teacher found dealing with disruptive pupils very difficult without any other adult support. Teaching was judged satisfactory in another observed lesson. Evidence from pupils' written work across the year groups indicates that teaching and learning throughout the school are satisfactory overall. A notable strength is the way that the school draws upon the knowledge and understanding that the children bring as a resource for teaching and learning.
76. Pupils' attitudes towards religious education are satisfactory. Younger pupils learn about the importance of their families and about Christianity whilst older pupils study a variety of different faiths and the significance of religious festivals. They enhance their learning through visits to places of interest such as a Sikh temple and a Pentecostal church. These give pupils opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions as well as facts. It was apparent that Year 3 pupils were developing a good understanding of aspects of other cultures during a lesson on special ceremonies and occasions which featured good cross-curricular links to literacy and developing speaking and listening skills.
77. The coordinator leads and manages the subject well and monitors teachers' planning and occasionally observes teaching. This has enabled her to have a clear picture of standards across the school. She has ensured that resources for teaching all aspects of religious education are good. However the curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle to accommodate mixed-age classes and this leads to pupils in the same year group not always covering the same work. This affects their achievement. The coordinator is aware of these difficulties but, as this is a whole school issue, is not in a position to rectify this. Assessment procedures are presently in the developmental stage.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design and design and technology, music and physical education were all sampled.*

78. During the inspection there were no lessons timetabled for **art and design**. From evidence of pupils' work, they experiment with a variety of painting and printing and drawing techniques and materials in the style of different artists. There is little evidence of pupils using art and craft from different cultures and times and for three-dimensional work. The subject leader is keen to raise standards higher and shares ideas with other schools in the area.
79. From the two lessons seen in **design and technology** and the subject leaders' portfolio there has been an improvement in pupils' evaluations of their products since the last inspection. Teaching of the design process lacks focus on designing to meet a specific need and by Year 6 pupils designs do not indicate measurement or plans that indicate how the work will proceed.

The subject helps to reinforce pupils' knowledge in science. Both subjects meet statutory requirements.

80. Two lessons were observed in **music**. In Years 1 - 2 pupils have good opportunities to explore elements of music such as rhythm. This was shown to good effect in Year 1 where the teacher's lively presentation provided good motivation for the pupils to recognise the rhythms for well-known nursery rhymes. The children showed a very good level of thoughtfulness by ensuring that all their friends had a fair chance to use the instruments. The class teacher gave judicious praise and comment to children in her on-going assessments. In a further good lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher brought out well the dramatic nature of the moon landing and created a good atmosphere of space by playing excerpts of a composer in a modern style. This motivated pupils well to improve their own compositions so that by the end of the lesson many pupils showed musical appreciation that had been built up over time. The teacher's good subject knowledge was used to good effect in providing good opportunities for pupils to compose and evaluate their work so that their achievement was good. Overall, the indications are that pupils are on course to reach the expectation by Years 2 and 6. Good subject leadership provides a strong direction so that pupils have a good range of musical experience.
81. Three lessons were observed in **physical education**. The indications are that pupils are on course to reach the expected standard by the end of Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good. In Year 1, pupils took part enthusiastically, working well together to develop their skills supported by the good teaching, so that they achieved well. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 responded very well to the challenge of making up their own rounders game, which they then played with enthusiasm. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked hard at improving their gymnastic sequences, supported well by the teacher to provide constant practice. The subject leader takes an active role in promoting the subject, and provides good support to colleagues.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is central to the life and work of the school.
- Pupils are helped to be thoughtful about issues relevant to their lives.

### **Commentary**

82. Children are encouraged to be considerate and to think of others from when they first enter school. In the nursery and reception classes, the adults provide a high level of care that demonstrates the expected behaviour and relationships. Teachers follow a broadly based curriculum that provides good progression and coverage of related topics. In a Year 1 and 2 class, for example, the teacher helped pupils to recognise safe or unsafe situations by relating decisions to what would be safe for a doll. On finding a bottle with an unknown liquid in it, most pupils recognised they should not drink it. In Year 4, pupils discussed the concept of a stranger and understood that some strangers may be trusted. The teacher's good management of the pupils and thoughtful approach enabled the pupils to explore situations and to improve their understanding. Pupils in two classes had enjoyed a visit from a coastguard and the class teachers brought out the significance of the visit well in emphasising safety and how to avoid getting into difficulties. Pupils demonstrated good interest and answered well, showing that they understood the issues of safety.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and pupils are likely to reach the expected standard by the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers give good attention to the issues within the subject and as a result pupils achieve well in lessons. There is a well-structured scheme and

teachers make good use of visitors. The subject leader provides good support to colleagues. The good approach has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and on their learning.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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