

INSPECTION REPORT

LAUREATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124545

Headteacher: Mrs O Millington

Lead inspector: Mrs R S Rodger

Dates of inspection: 10-12 December 2003

Inspection number: 256704

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	145
School address:	Exning Road Newmarket
Postcode:	CB8 OAN
Telephone number:	01638 663927
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Bright
Date of previous inspection:	5 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Laureate Community Primary School is situated in Newmarket in Suffolk. It is a first school with a 39 place Nursery. There are 145 pupils on roll, including 32 children attending the Nursery part time in the morning or the afternoon. The number on roll has fluctuated greatly in the past three years. Seventeen per cent of the pupils have parents who work at a nearby American airbase. The turnover of pupils in 2002-2003 was 25 per cent which is very high. It had been over 40 per cent in the previous two years. Pupils do not always stay in the school for all of their education and some American pupils start in the school, leave and return. The catchment area is very mixed socially and economically with a higher proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds than the nine per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals suggests. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number of Black American pupils, Black British, Asian and Chinese pupils. Seven per cent of the pupils are bilingual. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including two pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, (22 per cent) is above average. Most of these pupils have social emotional and behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. The school has received the Activemark for progress in physical activities, Investors in People, a Charter mark for football and an Achievement Award for good progress made in the national test results in 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10347	Mrs R S Rodger	Lead inspector	English History Geography English as an additional language Educational inclusion, including racial equality
11414	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	
30000	Mr J Tresadern	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs
23056	Mrs T Manzi	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Laureate Primary School is **effective** in most aspects of its work and is improving. Achievement throughout the school is **good**. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 4, standards are average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. They are below average in writing and information and communication technology. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Leadership and management are good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- this is a very inclusive school; pupils with special educational needs and the American pupils who spend a short time in the school achieve well;
- provision in the Nursery is very good;
- standards in art and design and design and technology are above average;
- leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good;
- governance of the school is very good;
- teaching throughout the school is good, it is very good in the Nursery and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the work of the school;
- the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of out of school activities, especially sporting activities;
- individual pupils are very well supported and included in all aspects of the school's work
- standards in writing are too low;
- standards in information and communication technology are below average;
- assessment information is used inconsistently throughout the school;
- some parents feel that they are not welcome by the school.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Most of the weaknesses have been dealt with well. Standards in speaking and listening have improved. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. Pupils achieve as well as they are capable. This is a more effective school than it was.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The table shows that the 2003 national test results were average in reading and writing compared to all schools and above average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools standards were average in reading, well below average in writing and above average in mathematics. In the past three years standards achieved in the national tests and assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and in the teacher assessments of science have improved at a rate above the national trend. Achievement throughout the school is good. Comparison of one group of pupils with another is an unreliable indicator of achievement as the school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs unequally distributed across the school. This partly explains why the standards in the current Year 4 are lower than they have been in the past. Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science are generally satisfactory. They are below

average in writing, information and communication technology. Achievement in the Nursery is good overall, as a result of very good teaching. It is good in reading, mathematics and science throughout the school. Standards in art and design and design and technology are above average, as a result of the high priority given to improving provision and the very good impact of the co-ordinator. Standards in information and communication technology are below average because pupils have only recently had sufficient access to computers in the new suite. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good quality support they receive. Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils express very favourable comments about school and they enjoy coming. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**; they are very good in the Nursery and good in English in Years 1 and 2 and in science throughout the school. Assessment arrangements are in need of some improvement to achieve consistency which has already been identified by the school as an area for improvement. The curriculum is good and is very effectively enriched by a wide range of out of school clubs and sports. There are good links with the community. Pupils are very well cared for and very good support is provided for pupils who are new to the school and have experienced difficulties in other schools. Teaching assistants are effective in their support of pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. Leadership by the headteacher and members of the senior management team is good. The school gives a high priority to the care and welfare of its pupils and has worked hard to improve achievement in recent years. The governance of the school is very good. Several governors play a key role in different aspects of the school's work, such as leading sports clubs. They have a clear vision for the direction the school needs to take and use their knowledge of the local community effectively to gather support for the school. Curriculum co-ordinators make a good contribution to the development of their subjects, especially in art and design and design and technology.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school's work. There is a very good dialogue between home and school through the home- school link book. The negative views expressed by some parents at the pre-inspection meeting are not supported by the inspection team although it is clear that the school needs to balance its concern about the welfare of pupils with accessibility for parents who want to make contact to discuss their concerns. Pupils' views are canvassed and acted upon by the school. They are very happy with what the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the standards in writing throughout the school*
- raise standards in information and communication technology*
- achieve more consistency in the use of assessment information*
- improve the views of some parents about the school.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- remedy the omissions in the reports to parents about National Curriculum levels.

*These are priorities in the school's improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement throughout the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage, speaking and listening, and science and in reading in Years 1 and 2.
- Standards in writing and information and communication technology are not high enough
- Standards are above average in art and design and design and technology.
- Pupils in Year 3 achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Standards have improved in speaking and listening, mathematics and science since the previous inspection.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Almost a quarter of the pupils from the Nursery to Year 2 are American. There is a high turnover of pupils who may only stay in the school for two years and some leave and return to the school at a later date due to their parents' postings. Nevertheless, in the past three years, standards achieved in the national tests and assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have improved at a rate above the national trend. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, apart from aspects of writing and information and communication technology. Comparison of one group of pupils with another is an unreliable indicator of achievement as the school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs unequally distributed across the school. The current Year 2 and Year 4 classes have one third of pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with challenging behaviour. Resources in the form of additional teaching assistants has been a high priority in recent years to go some way towards providing the additional support required for pupils who are new to the school and also for those who have learning difficulties.
2. Standards are below what is typical when the children start in the Nursery in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and creative development. They are above average in physical development. By the time they start in Year 1, the children are likely to have achieved the early learning goals in all areas of learning as a result of very good teaching.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.2 (15.5)	15.7(15.8)
Writing	13.3 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.0 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table shows that in the national test results last year, pupils' attainment improved in reading and mathematics compared to the previous year and was above national averages in mathematics and average in reading. Standards in writing were below the national average and not as good as the previous year.

4. Leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher with the support of the senior management team have ensured that practical steps have been taken to improve standards throughout the school, especially in writing. National test data, assessments completed for the local authority and other tests taken by the pupils have been analysed to identify areas for improvement. Members of staff know pupils very well and have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching throughout the school. The headteacher has a regular teaching commitment and there has been good support provided by the local authority to support improvements to the quality of teaching where it was weak. All of these actions have contributed significantly to improved achievement in the past three years.
5. Standards in writing are not high enough throughout the school. There is some evidence of improvement, although pupils in Year 2 are unlikely to achieve as well as their counterparts in similar schools in this year's national tests. This is partly the result of too many innovations and insufficient attention to basic teaching strategies. Where teaching is good, as in Year 3, and there is a good focus on how pupils learn to write and progress is good. For example, poetry writing completed over a few days showed effectively how the teaching developed an understanding of powerful verbs. Pupils confidently wrote the following phrases, "Smoke flowing in the air" and "The wind brushing my face".
6. Standards in speaking and listening have improved since the last inspection as a result of training for the staff. This has led to the introduction of several effective strategies in lessons to promote worthwhile talk. Teachers are effective at asking open questions that encourage pupils to respond and to providing time for the pupils to talk to each other about their work. The foundations of high quality talk are very effectively laid in the planned role play in the Nursery.
7. Standards in mathematics are improving. They are generally satisfactory. Standards and achievement in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. This is largely the result of a lack of resources until the very recent opening of the computer suite in school.
8. Boys generally achieve better than girls in the national tests as a result of the priority given to the previous underachievement of boys through the introduction of achievement certificates and early intervention strategies. The school is currently exploring more interactive methods of learning to motivate girls and to encourage them to participate in lessons

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The provision for their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved compared to last year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
- Social development is good and pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the impact of their actions on others.
- Pupils are well aware of their own and other cultural traditions through a rich provision of learning experiences.

Commentary

9. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes towards all aspects of school life through the encouragement of teachers and the caring and inclusive ethos of the school. They participate well in lessons, in the various clubs provided and in out of school activities. They are responsible in the way they treat resources and many pupils are eager and confident in responding to questions in lessons and in whole school assemblies. Pupils are keen to contribute and enjoy learning.

10. Pupils behave well as a result of the school's high expectations of pupils' conduct and the effective procedures to promote good relationships including racial harmony and the prevention of bullying. These procedures involve a clearly understood system of rewards and consequences, the careful monitoring of events and prompt action where necessary to encourage pupils to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. The school has no excluded pupils.

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	111	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

11. The self-knowledge and spiritual awareness of the pupils is effectively fostered in assemblies and in lessons. Assemblies offer clear opportunities for reflection through prayer and by encouraging the pupils to think about their relationships to the world about them, for example by reflecting on their security within the settings of their families and their school classes.
12. The efforts of the school to enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong are effective. This is achieved by everyone being clear about what they should do and why, through class discussions, reinforcement in circle time and personal, health and social education, and by challenging the pupils to consider and offer ways of improving the school through their behaviour.
13. Pupils' social skills are well developed through activities, both in and out of school. For example, caring for one another is a key theme within personal, social and health education. Practical opportunities are taken to encourage caring for one another, such as shared reading where older pupils help younger ones. Pupils also learn to consider people outside the school by visits to the elderly and by fund raising in support of charities. In lessons, pupils demonstrate concern for one another's rights and needs by sharing equipment well in science and helping each other to organise their work.
14. The cultural development of pupils is well promoted in relation to both their own and other cultural traditions. Pupils participate in music, drama and sports with other schools and they attend drama productions. They engage with and learn about local business and their sporting skills are enhanced through links with Cambridge United football club and Newmarket rugby club. Pupils also learn about the music, art, festivals and dress of different cultures through lessons, assemblies and special events.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	1.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teaching in the Nursery is consistently very good. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good in Years 1 and 2. It is good in mathematics and science in Years 3 and 4. The curriculum is good and very effectively enhanced by a range of out-of-school and lunchtime activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Nursery is very good.
- Very good use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Planning is thorough and well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Plenary sessions are used well to check what pupils have learned.
- Marking is thorough but does not make sufficient reference to individual learning targets.
- Pupils are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Assessment data is not used to track the rate of progress of individual pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (22%)	17(46%)	12 (32%)	0	0	0

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

15. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching in the Nursery is very good. Bilingual pupils are well integrated and speak English fluently as a result of the very good emphasis given to promoting speaking and listening skills. Adults in the Nursery provide good role models for the children. Relationships are very good and members of staff are efficiently deployed and provide an effective balance between giving the children independence and extending their learning when necessary. They are especially effective when it comes to supporting those children who have problems learning to speak correctly. Parent helpers are used to good effect and are provided with very detailed instructions so they know what to do.
16. Teaching assistants are used very well throughout the school and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. They encourage pupils with special educational needs to join in with others and to contribute to whole class sessions. Work is appropriately matched to their

needs and generally well linked to what the rest of the class are doing. For example, in Year 3, pupils were provided with a writing frame to help guide their poetry writing. Deployment is effective and in most classes the assistants are provided with very detailed planning. They are trained to support the work they are doing.

17. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure good learning experiences for pupils when they are working with the whole class and in withdrawal groups. For example, a teaching assistant was effective in working with a group of three, Year 1 pupils. She made good use of well prepared resources and of effective strategies for teaching phonics to enthuse the pupils, helping them to be successful in sounding individual letters and in reading high frequency words. Detailed reports by teaching assistants help teachers to maintain a good knowledge of the pupils' attainments. Teaching relates well to clear and specific targets set out in the pupils' individual education plans which are reviewed with the pupils with the result that they know what they need to do to improve. The pupils' work is monitored well and detailed records of attainment are kept. There is, however, no system in place for tracking the rate of progress of individual pupils.
18. Good attention is given to planning work, especially in English. Generally, all pupils complete the same work, but it is very carefully structured so that there is either adult support or guidance for the less able pupils and sometimes extension work for the more able pupils. Teachers are adept at asking the most appropriate questions to check pupils' understanding, especially to those pupils who are relatively new to the school and have fewer prior experiences on which to draw.
19. There is good use of the short recapitulation session at the end of English and mathematics lessons to review what the pupils have learned. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the pupils responded very enthusiastically as they shared their understanding of how to follow a route and to explain their difficulties. Time was given to enable them to reconstruct the task which helped to consolidate their learning and achieve well as a result. In a Year 3 English plenary session, the pupils recalled their understanding and misconceptions about verb tenses and, because of the clear explanation provided by the teacher, understood more fully as a result.
20. The marking of pupils' work is consistently detailed and informative. Comments are constructive and challenging and good attention is given to improving the presentation of work. In some classes, pupils take responsibility for assessing their own work. This is not typical throughout the school and has already been identified as an area for development. In some classes, pupils have individual writing targets identified on their place mats and in their books. Assessment arrangements in the Foundation Stage are very detailed.
21. The introduction of methods to encourage pupils to talk about what they have learned is helping to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their learning. They are becoming more independent, especially in the Nursery. Pupils regularly talk in pairs about their understanding of a new idea before asking questions. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

The curriculum

There is a good curriculum in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum planning ensures good balance, breadth and relevance.
- Very good opportunities for sport are offered.
- Governors understand and fulfil their curriculum responsibilities well.
- There is a good range of clubs, visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is not well enough planned.

- All children have equal access to the curriculum.
- Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is broad, meets statutory requirements and is accessible to all children. The issue raised during the last inspection about increasing pupils' independence and choices has been met. Pupils are encouraged to work together in order to tackle problems, especially in the best mathematics lessons. The curriculum has been re-designed to allow teachers to plan together, to ensure progress and to help children build upon what they have learned before. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to offer a wide range of interesting and relevant activities.
23. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Arrangements for starting school in the Foundation Stage are very good and preparations for starting the main school are good with visits and shared activities. Near the end of Year 4 pupils are well prepared to start their next school with visits from teachers and a school transfer book. This enables the new teachers to know and meet their new pupils' needs.
24. The pupils benefit from a wide range of activities offered after school. Sports education is very good; the pupils have won many awards. Several governors use their expertise to enrich the curriculum, especially in sport. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and the arts' curriculum has also been developed. The curriculum is enriched by the Friday afternoon 'Together Time' when pupils choose from a good range of activities such as drama and environmental studies. Groups of children of all ages enjoy working together on their particular interests.
25. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory. Accommodation for the youngest children in the Nursery is very good. The school is inventive in enabling children of all ages to mix and the Nursery's very good practice to be shared by the rest of the school. Classes are small and the room for staff is inadequate. Teachers are well trained and resources are satisfactory, especially the new computer suite which is used by all classes to help them 'catch up' on attainment in information and communication technology.
26. Each autumn term there is a mixed age, Reception and Year 1 class. This class is within the main school but has no covered area to enable planned outdoor activities to take place all year round. However, good use is made of the nearby art area. The teacher of this class plans work with the Nursery teacher and overall provision for the mixed age class is satisfactory, although, at times, the needs of the youngest children to learn through outdoor play are not met well.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' welfare, safety, health and well-being are a high priority and are provided for very well. The school gives very good support and guidance to its pupils and is gradually beginning to involve them through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Commitment to the pupils' all-round welfare.
- Thoroughness of procedures.
- Teachers' good support for their pupils.
- Good induction arrangements for pupils joining the Nursery and the school.

Commentary

27. The very good quality and thoroughness of its provision in this area is a major strength of the school. The two areas of minor weakness identified in the last inspection report have been resolved. All members of staff now have up-to-date training in child protection matters, and risk assessments are carried out for a wide range of activities.
28. Pupils are cared for and protected very well. Health and safety matters are rightly prioritised, using an external consultant, and risk assessments are undertaken for school activities. Members of staff are trained appropriately, incidents are logged and investigated and first aid provision is in place. The headteacher also prioritises pupils' all-round welfare by encouraging healthy living through enjoyment of exercise and encouragement to eat sensibly. Personal, social and health education helps pupils see their responsibility to take care of themselves
29. Pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance because teachers know their pupils well and provide them with termly targets both for academic and personal development. Almost all pupils are confident that they have a trusted adult they could go to in school for advice or guidance.
30. There are good induction arrangements for pupils joining the Nursery. Parents of the American children are very appreciative of the support given to their children when they join the school part way through the school year.
31. The school is starting to involve pupils in its work, and they have been consulted over playground rules. When the school's own questionnaire was analysed, it identified "bullying" as an issue, which the school has followed through. As a result, there is now no bullying in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents are supportive of the school's work. Good quality dialogue between school and at home encourages them to be involved in supporting their child's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good dialogue between home and school through the home-school link book.
- Parents receive good quality written information.
- School makes good use of local schools to extend the experiences of pupils.
- The school office needs to balance its care for security with accessibility for parents who want to make contact.

Commentary

32. Parents are supportive of the school's work although a few parents at the pre-inspection meeting had negative views about the school's approachability, which were a surprise to the staff. Inspection evidence and analysis of the pre-inspection questionnaires cannot support these negative views, although it is clear the school office needs to balance its concern for security with accessibility for parents who want to make contact.
33. Almost half the parents returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, and its results were very similar to the school's own recent questionnaire. Over ninety-five per cent say that their child likes school, the teaching is good, and staff expect their child to work hard and do their best and also encourage them to become mature and independent. Parents feel well informed about how their child is getting on, and members of staff explain how they can support with work at home. The school provides a good range of activities which their child finds enjoyable

and arrangements when they started school are good. This is a picture of strong parental support.

34. Parents continue to receive good quality written information from the school. Monthly newsletters are very good, written in an accessible style, and with content which is relevant and interesting. The school reported the outcomes of its own questionnaire to parents, and has acted on the decisions of the majority, for example the colour of polo shirts for physical education and to investigate anxieties about bullying. Teachers prepare well for the three parents' consultation meetings, so that they can talk about the pupils' current targets, and enlist parental support.
35. The end of year written reports are good because they are clearly written without educational jargon and with a clear evaluation of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, the latter turned into targets for improvement. However, they do not give parents information about how their child is getting on in relation to National Curriculum expectations.
36. Home-school links books are very good because they result in a genuine dialogue between parent and teacher. Parents have details of what is to be studied that term, and homework to be completed, with guidance on how to help. The majority of parents take advantage of these, and as a result their children benefit academically. Parents are welcomed into school to help, and during the inspection a group were busy supporting pairs of Nursery pupils in the computer suite. Parents value the after-school club and support parent- teacher association events.
37. There are close supportive links with local stables and the American Air Force base, local business, and leaders from the community. The school's continues to participate in sporting and musical events through the local pyramid of schools and this helps support pupils' personal development. Transfer arrangements are good but the headteacher wants even closer links with the middle schools to which the pupils proceed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership by the headteacher is good. She is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. A recently formed senior management team effectively supports her. Governors have a very good strategic overview of the school. The chair is very effectively involved in supporting out of school activities and ensuring that all statutory procedures are met. Management of the school is good. All those involved in the school work hard to ensure it is inclusive and welcoming to pupils at all times.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff have a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school.
- The governors are very supportive and work successfully with the headteacher to create a clear vision and direction for the school.
- Performance management is robust and is contributing well to the overall improvements to the school.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurately reflects the current state of the school.
- Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- The school has been very effectively supported by the local authority in its efforts to improve standards.

Commentary

38. The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. There is a systematic programme for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Weaknesses in the teaching have been identified and largely eradicated through training and support. There is a high level of professionalism evident throughout the school and in the support provided for the headteacher who is very receptive to new ideas and is keen to innovate. However, this enthusiasm must keep key priorities to the forefront of developments and she must avoid taking on too many new initiatives.
39. The chair of governors has a very good working relationship with the headteacher. She knows the community well and brings this expertise wisely to her role as chair of governors. Several governors have key roles in the school. The finance governor for example, has a good understanding of the finances and produces regular reports to the governing body. Governors are kept very well briefed by the headteacher's termly report which is very thorough and appraises governors well of their statutory roles regarding punctuality, attendance, behaviour, complaints and racial incidents, A termly report on the progress of the school improvement plan also helps to keep the governors well-informed. Their overall impact on the work of the school is very good. They have set the headteacher robust and measurable performance management targets for the current year. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
40. The leadership of those subjects identified for improvement is good. It has been particularly good in art and design and design and technology and has had a good impact on raising standards in the subjects. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and talented and has put a lot of support and resources in place to raise the profile of the subject throughout the school.
41. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator focuses her efforts on the details of day-to-day management, undertaking administration, scrutinising pupils' work, and preparing individual education plans in consultation with teachers, teaching assistants and special agency personnel where appropriate. She is well supported by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher who monitor teaching and make arrangements for staff development through regular meetings involving the co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants and through courses. Members of staff work very well in developing relationships with parents, who praise the school for its support.
42. Financial management of the school is good. The governors apply best value principles appropriately. They compare their expenditure against that of other schools and manage the budget with a good degree of prudence. This has enabled the school to have a good supply of additional teaching assistants. The relatively high level of under-spend in the budget has largely been resolved by equipping the new computer suite. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
43. The support of the local authority has been of particular value to the school. For example, the guidance and resources available for assessing and monitoring reading and writing are of a high quality. Staff work hard and provide effectively for the wide range of pupils attending the school. Although not a barrier to achievement, the high pupil mobility means that comparisons year by year are an inaccurate measure of the school's progress and therefore could portray a potentially misleading picture to the community served by the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	400,499
Total expenditure	408,609
Expenditure per pupil	2,375

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,000
Balance carried forward to the next	23,890

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Nursery is very good; in the Foundation Stage overall, it is **good** and has improved since the last inspection. Children are prepared well for their transfer to Year 1. Parents are involved very well so that they help their children at home and volunteer to help in school. Children enter the Nursery on a part time basis when they are three years old. They move into the Reception class as they near their fifth birthday. During the inspection there was a mixed age Reception and Year 1 class. This happens each autumn term and makes it challenging for the class teacher and her assistant to teach appropriately to both age groups. At times, the needs of the youngest children are not met effectively. There are sufficient adults working with these younger children and the good team spirit results in a good working environment for the children. The buildings and resources are good including a covered area for the Nursery. Reception children have access to this once per week but on other days, planned outside play and learning are limited. They do, however, use a large indoor art area. Overall, there are good relationships with children and their parents, work is varied and interesting and the children are given a good start to school. Children achieve well because the teaching is good overall and it is often very good in the Nursery. Children with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of good teaching and the high expectations set by staff.
- There are very good relationships with parents and children so that the children are happy and parents help them at school and at home.
- Routines are set and understood, work is interesting so that the children are encouraged to learn and work together.
- Adults are good role models, showing care so that children know how to behave.

Commentary

44. When children start school at three years of age their development in this area of learning is below expectations. In the Nursery, they develop very well as all the adults involved set consistently good role models, develop very good relationships with parents and provide a welcoming atmosphere. The children feel secure, understand and follow routines and settle down to work quickly. They are keen to learn and concentrate upon the activities set. They make good progress. Many are confident and keen to move to their new class as they know their new teacher and classmates well. Both morning and afternoon sessions in the Nursery are equally effective.
45. In the mixed age Reception class, the children are well behaved and settled as a result of the very good introduction into school. Children from the Reception class visit the Nursery weekly so that they benefit from its facilities. The mixed age class has the benefit of Year 1 pupils setting a good example and helping the younger children in their work. Overall achievement in this area of the curriculum is good.

COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers plan a good range of activities.
- Teacher assistants are used very well to support language development.
- The teachers' reading of stories, and their links with the parents, helps children enjoy books and make good progress.

Commentary

46. When children start school the majority have below average skills in communication, particularly in hearing the sounds in words and in early writing. Due to good language teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes the children are likely to meet expectations by the time they start Year 1. Children make good progress due to the good opportunities given for them to talk and listen. In the Nursery, this is made particularly interesting when rehearsing the 'Nativity Play.' The older children remember their lines, wait their turn and speak out well. Very good relationships mean that the children are confident to talk as all adults are interested in what they have to say. In both Foundation Stage classes, writing materials are always available and the teachers set a good example by modelling writing. Both teachers read stories well so that the children are interested, pay attention and answer questions well. Parents are given very good help in assisting their children and, as a result, the children's reading skills are improving well. They change library books weekly; this variety maintains the children's interest and the good home- school reading diaries keep teachers and parents in touch.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities so that children are interested and achieve well.
- Good planning and teaching both by the teachers and their assistants.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good. Children start school with mathematical skills which are below expectations and start Year 1 with average knowledge and skills. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. For example, in the Nursery children build towers to see which is shorter and taller and how many more bricks are needed to make 10. In the Reception class children use their mathematical skills when making and cooking their 'Christmas tree biscuits.' They match colours for their decorations with reasonable accuracy. The teaching assistant works well with this group of children. Overall, activities are well planned and relevant to young children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for this area of the curriculum is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good cross-curricular links.
- Very good use is made of parent helpers.

- There is beginning to be good use of the new computer suite.
- Teaching and the work of teaching assistants are good.

Commentary

48. The children make satisfactory progress in this area and are working at levels expected for their age. This is due to the good and often very good teaching in the Nursery which encourages children to think and to question. They correctly describe the desert as 'hot in the day and cold at night.' In the Reception class the children were well taught by the teaching assistant who helped them plan and make Christmas tree biscuits and match their decoration to their design. The teacher and teaching assistant vary their work so that both the younger and the older children receive the same amount of attention. Both classes are now making good use of the computer suite.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outside lessons are planned to link with several areas of the curriculum in the Nursery.

Commentary

49. Children start school with physical skills which are above average and due to good teaching and good use of the school's facilities they start Year 1 with good skills. Teachers plan well to develop children's skills in class, in the hall and outside. No full hall sessions were observed during the inspection but Nursery children were noted to hop and skip and throw a beanbag accurately over an obstacle. In class, the children's cutting and sticking skills are good when making Christmas cards. In the Reception class, children effectively use the hall as well as the outdoor environment. Children's improved writing skills show that their pencil control is increasing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision overall is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The display of children's work is good.
- Children enjoy a good range of art, music and role play activities.
- Sometimes, in the mixed age class, role play activities are not well supervised.

Commentary

50. Children start school with skills which are below expectations. Achievement is good, and children start Year 1 with average skills. This is due to good teaching with opportunities planned to use a wide range of materials linking to several areas of the curriculum. For instance, in the Nursery the children first paint an apple tree and then add a specific number of fruits to make their mathematics work interesting. Both the Nursery and Reception children have created a good Nativity display showing their skills in printing, painting and three-dimensional work to make sheep.
51. Too few lessons were observed in music to make a judgement about the quality of teaching but the children know a range of carols and know that you need quiet music for a baby. 'No,

it's too loud' one child said. The tape recorder is used effectively to show them how to improve and play to an audience.

52. In the Nursery, the role play area is attractive and the costumes provided help children identify with the Christmas theme. However, occasionally the youngest children's free play in the mixed age Reception class is not well supervised so that children do not take full advantage of the facilities provided for them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Standards in writing are unsatisfactory in Years 2 and 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those new to the school are well supported and achieve well.
- Standards in speaking and listening have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

53. As stated earlier, it is unreliable to compare one year group of pupils with another due to high mobility caused by the fluctuating numbers of children of American air force families attending the school. Achievement is good throughout the school as a result of the enthusiasm of the pupils, generally good teaching and the good rate of progress that is made in speaking and listening and reading. Achievement in writing is satisfactory overall as the pupils in Years 2 and 4 achieve as well as they are capable. Standards are generally satisfactory in writing in Years 1 and 3.
54. Where teaching is good in Years 1, 2, and 3, pupils achieve particularly well. Homework is given regularly and parents are given the learning objectives to enable them to help their child. Teaching is frequently very challenging. Pupils are encouraged to explain answers to questions as result of the probing questions that check pupils' understanding. In Year 2, time targets were set to encourage the pupils to complete their writing; outline plans were provided to help pupils understand how to structure their story; and the tasks were carefully chosen to enable all pupils to succeed. Standards in writing are below average in Years 2 and Year 4, although there are indications that in Years 1 and 3 standards are closer to national expectations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1, for example, confidently wrote a list of instructions making use of capital letters and full stops and were able to spell most words correctly. Expectations are sometimes too low in Year 4 where pupils complete too many worksheets and there are too few opportunities for them to write independently.
55. Standards in reading are generally satisfactory. Pupils choose from a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books to read at home. They each have a book for guided reading to use in school. The recording of their progress and the identification of what they are expected to learn is inconsistent. The school appropriately uses the very informative guided reading assessments produced by the local authority, which provide a good means to measure progress and to identify targets for improvement. Older pupils have a more limited knowledge of favourite authors than is typical for their age group.
56. Teaching assistants have a valuable role to play in the good support they provide for pupils with special educational needs. They work effectively with small groups of pupils and support their progress in learning how to spell and sound out new words. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and know to take turns in conversations. Several of the American pupils are particularly articulate and readily offer their views in whole class discussions. Standards in speaking and listening have improved since the last inspection, as a result of the encouragement given to pupils in lessons to work in pairs and to contribute well in whole class discussions.

57. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is aware that there are issues with the quality of writing throughout the school and is now tackling this after a period of priority being given to improving reading. The training for staff is in its early stages and so far has consisted of some levelling of work using useful guidance from the local authority. The additional, national support strategies for Year 1 pupils are in use and having a good impact. There are no plans to look at how writing can be applied in other subjects or any checking of the teaching of writing to show recently appointed staff how to improve their practice.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. There are currently too few planned opportunities to use other subjects as a vehicle for developing literacy skills particularly those for writing.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement across the school is good.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants give very good support.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

59. Pupils' attainment is average when they join Year 1 and they make good progress through Years 1 and 2. Achievement is good, resulting in above average standards in the 2003 national tests. Standards in lessons in Years 2 and 4 are generally satisfactory, but pupils achieve as well as they are capable. Year 4 pupils achieved well in Year 3 which has helped to help to improve on their below average national test results at the end of Year 2. They make good progress overall as their teaching effectively takes into account the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
60. Teaching is good overall. It is sometimes very good for Year 3 pupils where they are challenged to explain their method of working out their answers. The pace of the lessons is fast and the work is varied and interesting. Teacher assistants are well prepared and make a very good contribution to keeping all pupils involved. In less successful lessons, the work set is not always helpful for those having difficulties. Generally, lesson planning is good and helps pupils build upon their prior learning. There is some use of new technology to create bar charts.
61. The school has identified that the main area of weakness in the most recent national tests was in shape and measurement. The curriculum has been modified so that this aspect of the subject is covered in more depth. The school's assessment system is not sufficiently clear to enable teachers to plan work to improve pupils' skills and to meet their particular needs.
62. The subject leader leads by example, has trained other staff and keeps a good overview of the school's provision. Sufficient time is given for her to monitor standards and the quality of teaching throughout the school. As a result, standards rose last year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. This is being developed. Currently there are good links with design and technology where pupils measure accurately to make their picture frames.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and provides pupils with tasks that engage them and motivate them to learn.
- There is insufficient match of tasks to the varied needs of the pupils.
- Assessment data is not used to track the progress of individual pupils.
- The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and has contributed to rising standards in recent years.

Commentary

64. Standards are average and the same as those found at the time of the last inspection in Years 2 and 4. In the 2003 teacher assessments, however, Year 2 pupils attained well above the national average, with all pupils reaching the nationally expected level, and above average for pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Current standards are the result of variations in the compositions of the year groups and the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory.
65. Teachers plan their lessons well and they motivate their pupils by involving them in practical activities that teach them to undertake scientific enquiries into life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. For example, pupils learning to construct electrical circuits worked enthusiastically in groups and co-operated well to explore which assemblies would and would not work, leading to a good understanding of the principles involved. In the lessons seen good use was made of teaching assistants who worked knowledgeably to promote effective learning.
66. While pupils are challenged well in oral work, the tasks set sometimes have insufficient opportunities built into them to match the needs of all pupils. For example, all pupils sometimes work on the same tasks, limiting the opportunities for challenging the learning of higher attaining pupils and hindering the clear access of lower attaining pupils to the core learning ideas.
67. Pupils' work is monitored well and detailed records of attainment are kept. There is, however, no system currently in place for tracking the progress of individual pupils.
68. Good management of the subject has helped to raise standards in recent years. The subject leader supports teachers well by providing good medium term plans, by providing feedback to teachers following monitoring of teaching and by monitoring pupils' work alongside class teachers. She brings experience and ideas into the school by attending regular meetings with science co-ordinators from other schools. The professional development of teachers is carefully monitored and she is reviewing on-line training as an innovative contribution to subject expertise. The use of information and communication technology has been identified as an area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Until recently pupils have had insufficient access to computers and as a result standards are below national expectations.
- The hard work of the co-ordinator has been a key factor in establishing a good hardware resource base with the setting up of the new computer suite, giving pupils the opportunity to gain adequate experience in the subject.
- There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to undertake the full range of her management duties.

Commentary

69. Achievement and standards are below national expectations in both Year 2 and 4 and are the same as those found at the time of the last inspection. Until the weeks immediately preceding the inspection, the hardware provision for teaching the subject was inadequate. This has hindered the development of pupils' computer skills. For example the pupils in Year 4 lack experience in sending and receiving e-mails.
70. The co-ordinator has had overall responsibility for establishing the new computer suite and has focused her efforts on its completion. The facility is now functioning and is a significant improvement on that available previously, permitting whole class groups to use the computers at the same time. Pupils also have access to computers in their classrooms, enabling them to use and develop their skills as part of their other subject lessons as needed. Hardware provision is now adequate for the school to give all pupils' sufficient opportunities to enhance their achievement in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Teachers make use of the subject in several subjects such as mathematics, English, history and geography. The co-ordinator is aware, however, that there is no current overview of planning to secure the use and practice of information and communication technology skills in all subjects and that this is an area for development.

HUMANITIES

72. Work was sampled in **history, geography and religious education**, with only one lesson seen in history and one in religious education. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There is every indication from pupils' work that standards are broadly average.
73. In **religious education**, the evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and teachers planning shows that standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection and are satisfactory in Years 2 and 4 at the levels expected in the Suffolk agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. In the lesson, seen the teacher made effective use of resources and activities to promote good learning about the Christmas story. The teaching assistant contributed very well to the lesson, holding the pupils enthralled with her collections of nativity figures. In response to the stimulating ideas given, groups of pupils acted out the Christmas story in a variety of ways. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator had only been in post for a few weeks at the time of the inspection but already has a clear understanding of the key areas for development. These include the system for assessment, the enrichment of the book resource base on Christianity,

greater use of information and communication technology and further professional development for teaching staff.

74. Teaching in the Year 3 **history** lesson observed was good. Pupils learned about significant dates as they studied the life of the Beatles. A good range of resources including, photographs and artefacts were used to depict life at the relevant time. Visits to sites of historical interest help pupils to understand what life was like in the past. Most work in geography was displayed around the school. Good links with information and communication technology were made as pupils recorded in graphical form the features spotted on a walk in the local environment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Only one lesson each was seen in **art and design, design and technology, music** and **physical education**. It is not possible therefore to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work, spoke to pupils about what they had learned in design and technology and looked at pupils' work displayed around the school in art and design.
76. Pupils' attainment in **art and design** and in **design and technology** is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was good. Displays, and the range of work on display, substantiate this judgement. A good range of media is used in art and design, such as printing and drawing. Good links are made with other subjects such as science for the design of houses and cards which light up using batteries. The two year curriculum cycle enables the pupils to make good progress especially in their printing skills. Sketch books also show good progress and that pupils experiment and develop their skills. However, these books show that pupils rarely write evaluations or suggestions for improving their work. They suggest improvements in lessons but do not write these down. The school recognises that this is an area for improvement which can help enhance the pupils' literacy skills. The coordinator for both subjects is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable as she has undertaken extra training. She has helped train her colleagues.
77. No judgement is possible on standards in **physical education** but good medium term plans support the development of pupils' skills in all aspects of the subject including dance, games, gymnastics, athletics and swimming. Provision is enriched by the school's participation in a wide variety of physical education activities both during and out of school time. Awards have been gained in cross-country running, by achieving Charter School status from the football association and an Activemark from Sport England. Support from Newmarket rugby club also enriches the opportunities for pupils to undertake physical activities in addition to those offered by the sports club and through the links with other schools in the local area. In a very good dance lesson, effective use was made of well-chosen music and very clear guidance to challenge and encourage the pupils. This helped the pupils to achieve a very good level of response in which they co-operated well to develop a sequence of movements that expressed the music rhythms through their dance routines. The subject is well managed by a well-qualified co-ordinator. Resources are good and the co-ordinator has clear ideas about areas for improvement such as updating the expertise of teaching staff in some aspects of the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. This is given a high priority throughout the school. All classes, apart from the Nursery, have a timetabled time to discuss matters of personal and social interest. An afternoon each week is used for 'Together Time'. This is to bring all the community together and to help accommodate the high pupil turnover by enabling new pupils to get to know pupils in different classes. A range of clubs are offered to the pupils who choose which one to join and attend for the term. Clubs include sign language, gardening, co-operative games, drama and a games club. During the inspection, a rugby training session took place in the hall. All staff are involved

in the 'Together Time' including support staff, governors and a grandparent.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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