

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODHALL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sudbury

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124560

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Sharp

Lead inspector: Mr Declan McCarthy

Dates of inspection: 4th - 6th May 2004

Inspection number: 258481

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	222
School address:	Mayflower Way Sudbury Suffolk
Postcode:	CO10 1ST
Telephone number:	(01787) 373 661
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Colin Murphy
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has 222 pupils on roll, aged three to nine. Thirty-two part-time children are in the Nursery and 44 full time children are in the Reception Year. The school draws its pupils from the local community. Although all groups are represented, a majority of pupils come from relatively disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage and a few pupils are from other backgrounds, including Chinese and Bangladeshi. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language; their home language is Bangladeshi. The levels of knowledge and understanding of children when they arrive at school are below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average but above average for Suffolk. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is above average, although the numbers of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the year is broadly average. The school has gained two Schools Achievement Awards, Investors in People Status and the Healthy Schools Initiative. The school has also developed Family Learning Programmes, after-hours childcare provision and a breakfast club.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23886	Declan McCarthy	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector	
8845	Hazel Sumner	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with very good features. These include the very good leadership of the headteacher who has established a very welcoming and caring ethos within the whole school community; strong teamwork among staff; very good links with parents, the community and other schools; and very good arrangements for the care and support of pupils. Teaching is good and this has led to good learning and achievement. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good; they are particularly good in English.
- Good leadership and management has resulted in good improvements since the last inspection.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal development and high quality care, support and guidance have resulted in pupils' very good moral and social development, very positive attitudes to learning and very good relationships with others.
- There is insufficient provision for multicultural development, which limits the opportunities to prepare for life in our multicultural society.
- Very good links with parents, the community and other schools ensure that all pupils are included in all that the school has to offer.
- There are very good support arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils; opportunities for enriching pupils' learning are very good.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in June 1998. The key issues from the last inspection have been well addressed. Standards are steadily rising due to improvements in teaching, learning and very good improvement in assessment. There have been good improvements in the curriculum, with very good arrangements for care and much stronger links with parents for the benefit of pupils.

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	E	C	B
writing	E	E	B	A
mathematics	E	D	D	C

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.

Pupils' achievements are good. The 2003 National Curriculum test results in Year 2 were average in reading, above average in writing and below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were well below average. However, pupils achieved well given that this year group had a high number of pupils with special educational needs and very few higher attainers. The school is performing above the national trend over time and this is confirmed by the granting of a Schools Achievement Award to the school for two years in succession. Pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching above average standards in reading, mathematics, science and in information and communication technology (ICT). Overall, pupils' achievements are good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are also achieving well as they reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. The achievements of children in the Foundation Stage are good as most children are on course to meet the goals expected of them by the time they leave Reception.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**. Pupils' attitudes are very good, they have very good relationships with others and they behave well throughout the school. Provision for personal development is also very good: **pupils' moral and social development** is **very good** and **their spiritual and cultural development** is **good**. However, there are limited opportunities to promote their multicultural development. Attendance is satisfactory overall despite the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are **good** overall with a high proportion of very good teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils; they maintain very good relationships in lessons, make very good use of support staff and set high expectations for learning and behaviour. As a result, pupils' learning is good and they achieve well. Assessment is good and well used to inform planning.

The curriculum is **good** with very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers and a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school has rightly identified the need to further develop the religious education curriculum. The school provides very good quality care for its pupils with very good collaboration and partnership with parents and local schools. There are very good links with parents, local schools and the community, which enhance pupils' learning and promote high achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. She has been instrumental in developing a very welcoming ethos in the school where individuals are valued. She receives very good support from the deputy headteacher. As a result, staff are very well motivated and teamwork is strong. Most subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in monitoring and developing their subjects, although new co-ordinators have yet to fully develop their role. Management is good overall and the headteacher's management is very good, particularly the use of performance data to raise standards. The governing body is very supportive of the school, has a good understanding of the school's strengths and is effective in evaluating the school's work through supportive visits. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and support the school strongly. Pupils are very happy and proud of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to use the good procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance, working closely with the parents of the few pupils whose attendance is poor in order to improve their attendance.
- To further develop religious education so that it does not duplicate work in PSHE lessons.
- To further develop provision for multicultural education to prepare pupils for life within our British multicultural society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall achievement is good. Pupils' attainments on entry are well below expected levels. By Year 2 and the end of Year 4 standards are broadly average as a result of good teaching and learning. There have been very good improvements in most subjects since the previous inspection, which have resulted in higher standards, particularly in reading and writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were well above average overall, compared to those in similar schools; and standards in writing were above average, which represents very good achievement in literacy.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are achieving well, given their low attainment on entry to the school, so that by the time they leave the Reception most are on course to achieve the national goals expected of them in all areas of learning.
- Pupils are achieving well throughout the school, as a result of good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning also ensure that all pupils achieve well, including higher attainers, those identified with special educational needs and the few who are at an early stage of learning English.
- There has been a steady rise in standards over time, as exemplified by two national achievement awards.

Commentary

1. The 2003 national test results show that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading were average, standards in writing were above the national average and standards in mathematics were below the national average. However compared to the results in schools nationally with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. This represents good achievement overall. Teacher assessment in science showed that standards were well below the national average. However the school has worked hard to raise science results with improved teaching and learning, improved assessment and improvements in curriculum planning. As a result, standards are now broadly in line with the national average in science. Standards in mathematics are also now better than the 2003 results because all staff have benefited from training and support in teaching numeracy, resulting in the improvements seen in teaching and learning during the inspection. The table below shows that standards for Year 2 pupils in 2003 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved over the 2002 results, with the most notable improvement being in literacy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are also achieving well and reaching satisfactory standards overall in English, mathematics and science, which is also confirmed by the school's own analysis of pupils' performance in the optional national tests. Standards in ICT are broadly average throughout the school and pupils' achievements are good, given their limited prior experience of using computers. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils are achieving well in these subjects. Given the low attainment of children on entry to the Nursery, pupils' achievements in Years 1-4 are good.
2. Children in the Nursery and Reception are achieving well in all areas of learning, but particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their development of communication, language and literacy. Many of them enter the school with low levels of literacy and of personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and support staff work hard to develop these skills within the first few weeks, so that children quickly become familiar

with their routines and respond well in lessons. The rapid progress children make in these areas was confirmed by parents and in lessons seen during the inspection.

3. Achievement is good throughout the school because teachers have high expectations for learning, make good use of assessment to move the learning of all groups of pupils forward and match work precisely to individual needs. The rise in standards and the good achievement of pupils are due to the good improvements in the quality of teaching and the high proportion of very good teaching seen during the inspection. Very good improvements in assessment and its use to plan for the next stages of learning, to match work closely to pupils' different levels of attainment and to set individual and group targets have also led to rising standards and higher achievement. For example, pupils who are struggling to reach a higher level are quickly identified and receive additional effective support through the school's intervention programmes to improve their levels. Higher attainers are also identified more quickly and more opportunities are provided to extend their learning. For example, pupils identified as gifted and talented in mathematics attend the local middle school for two sessions per week and work at the higher National Curriculum levels compared to the national average for their age group, alongside older pupils.
4. Very good opportunities for enriching learning and good use of resources, particularly ICT, to support teaching and learning have had a positive impact on standards. Family learning programmes in literacy and ICT have enabled parents to help their children more effectively in these subjects. Focused activity days, such as the School Grounds day, have extended learning and helped to raise achievement in a range of subjects such as literacy, mathematics, science and art. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have benefited from activity sessions involving their parents. A good example of such a project was seen during the inspection when parents helped their children with activities involving forces in science, which led to the children's deeper understanding of pushing and pulling.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.5 (12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Standards have been steadily rising over the last five years at a rate above the national trend. The school has gained two national achievement awards for the steady rise in standards overall since the last inspection. The school is making very good use of performance data to raise standards and maintain an upward trend. As a result, there are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls and higher attainers and gifted and talented pupils achieve as well as other groups of pupils. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and pupils also feel that they are making good progress in school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes and enjoy coming to school. Their social and moral development is very good and, as a result, behaviour in and around school is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour in the classroom help them to achieve well.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. This is the result of the very caring ethos of the school and the very good example set by the staff.

- Pupils are very confident and very keen to take responsibility because they are given many opportunities to do so.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is very good, but there is limited provision for spiritual development in assemblies and not enough is done to promote pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.8%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	0.7
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.

- Attendance rates, overall, are satisfactory, being just below the national average. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive on time. The school promotes and monitors attendance well but currently does not have an attendance policy. It is aware of the pupils who are most likely to be absent and is working closely with the parents of these pupils in order to improve their attendance.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to learning in lessons. They listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This is the result of good teaching where teachers maintain a high level of interest and set appropriately challenging tasks which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well.
- Standards of behaviour are very good in the classroom, in assembly, the dining room and the playground, where pupils play harmoniously together. All pupils discuss and agree class rules and are fully aware of the high standards expected and insisted upon by all staff. The very caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen and both parents and pupils confirmed that bullying does not occur. They also confirmed that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and efficiently. There has been one exclusion in the past year and the inspectors found that the exclusion process had been used as a necessary strategy for the sake of the whole school community.
- Pupils are encouraged to become independent and willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. Responsibilities range from acting as monitors and being 'Woodhall Friends' (older pupils who help the younger ones) to being class representatives on the school council. Pupils take their responsibilities of living in a community seriously and achieve well, showing good levels of maturity as they move through the school.
- Pupils play harmoniously together and work very well together in groups. For example, in a Year 3-4 numeracy lesson, pupils collaborated well in pairs and small groups, showing consideration towards others. They showed respect for the feelings of others and enjoyed their activities. Staff give a very positive lead in engendering good relationships, for example, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity as well as by acting as good role models. The pupils are very proud when they become 'Superkids' or are awarded the 'blue certificates' for doing something really worthwhile.
- Overall, provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good with a strong emphasis on their moral and social development. The very good ethos of the school helps to promote spiritual development and subjects such as personal, social and health education and music make a good contribution. However, there is a lack of opportunities in assemblies for pupils to reflect and marvel, for example, at the wonders of the living world. Also, while pupils have good opportunities to understand their own culture and that

of people in far off lands, not enough is done to promote their understanding of the rich diversity of contemporary British society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. A rich curriculum and good teaching and learning impact positively on pupils' achievements. Pupils are very well cared for, there are good community links and a very good partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is due to good leadership and management, and a strong commitment by staff to improve their practice. Parents and pupils affirmed the strengths of teaching in their questionnaires and at the parents' meeting.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good staff training and development have led to improved teaching throughout the school.
- Teachers set high expectations for learning throughout the school and this results in good learning and achievement.
- Good use of assessment has led to a closer match of tasks to different levels of attainment.
- Very good management of learning and behaviour has a positive impact on pupils' achievements, their enthusiasm for learning and very good behaviour.
- Very good teamwork with support staff promotes the achievement of lower attainers.
- Very good use of resources, particularly the use of ICT, promotes learning and achievement well.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching is good overall. Very good leadership and management have ensured that teaching is regularly monitored and effective action is taken to improve any identified weaknesses. Teaching in the Nursery and in Year 2 is very good. The teaching of reading, mathematics and ICT is also very good because teachers make good use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to support pupils' learning and they are much more confident and skilled in using computers as a result of improved training. Teachers also provide regular opportunities for reading, for using and applying mathematics and for using ICT as part of their learning routines both within discrete ICT lessons and across subjects. As a result, the learning of reading, mathematics and ICT is very good and pupils' achievements are very good throughout the school. The teaching of writing and science is consistently good and sometimes very good. The major factors in this are the good opportunities provided to develop pupils' writing and the use of practical and investigative approaches in science. Teachers of these subjects also have good subject knowledge and set high expectations for learning. Teaching in other subjects is at least satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. For example, very good lessons were seen in physical education and good lessons were seen in art, music and geography.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	7	15	5	0	0	0

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

13. All teachers maintain very good relationships with pupils, resulting in pupils showing respect, following instructions and listening carefully in lessons. Pupils also enjoy their lessons and acknowledge that teachers help them to learn new things. Teachers also manage pupils' learning and behaviour well. Because of this, very few incidents of disruption occur in lessons and, when they do, such incidents are swiftly and effectively dealt with.
14. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge well to ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning by matching tasks closely to their particular needs. Very good support from learning assistants enables pupils with special educational needs to keep up with their peers. As a result, they make good and often very good progress towards their targets. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported by their friends when working in groups. Their individual education plans have well thought out targets, which are used very effectively to guide teachers' lesson planning.
15. There has been very good improvement in assessment since the last inspection. At that time it was underdeveloped but now assessment is good. Teachers now use assessment consistently well in lessons and in planning the next stage of pupils' learning. Baseline assessments are fully in place for children in the Nursery and in the Reception classes. The information from these is used effectively to plan the next stage of their learning. Clear learning objectives are set at the beginning of lessons for all pupils and the outcomes are reviewed with them during the concluding sessions. As a result, pupils know how well they have done and what they must do to improve. Teachers also set short-term individual and group targets for pupils to achieve, based on their prior learning. Good use is also made of test results to inform planning, set individual targets and establish new priorities for school improvement. The school also involves pupils more closely than previously in monitoring their own progress and this was evident in some lessons seen.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of visits and visitors and support for learning is very good. Extra-curricular activities provide very good enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources are good overall and are used very effectively to enhance the provision for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good curriculum and places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment.
- Inclusion is very good.
- Accommodation is very good and resources are good.
- There are very good links with subjects.
- Preparation for later stages of education is very good.
- The provision for religious education is less well developed.

Commentary

16. The school has made good progress in developing the curriculum areas identified in the previous inspection report. Support for pupils with special educational needs and for more able pupils is now very good. There has been extensive enrichment of the curriculum and, together with extra-curricular activities, this has improved from satisfactory to very good. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies are used very effectively to teach English and mathematics and the school follows national guidelines for most subject areas.
17. Strengths of the curriculum include English, mathematics and science. Provision in English and mathematics is enhanced for all pupils through a very well considered and delivered

support programme. Religious education is less well developed because teaching topics overlap with PSHE. Pupils' work showed that too little religious education is being taught.

18. Opportunities to attend extra-curricular clubs and activities are very good. All clubs are very well attended and teaching and learning in the clubs are very good. During one after-school session pupils were observed taking part in a wide range of activities, including cricket, needlework, drama, cycling proficiency, gardening in the green club and art. Pupils also benefit from focus learning days such as 'The school grounds day', which made use of the school grounds to develop a wide range of subjects such as art, mathematics, science and literacy and the 'Body day', where pupils were engaged in activities based on the human body. The quality of planning, linking different subject areas of the curriculum, is very good during these days. For example, pupils observe and paint worm studies and use the electronic microscope to observe leaves and vegetation.
19. Pupils are very well prepared for moving onto the middle school. There are very good links between the schools and more able pupils visit the middle school for mathematics lessons. There are regular visits by both the pupils and staff. The school makes very good provision to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity, have equal access to the opportunities provided. Inclusion is a high priority within the school and all abilities are challenged and supported to ensure that they achieve well. The curriculum is very well planned and work is appropriately well matched to lower attaining pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils. Provision for those with English as a second language reflects the good provision for all pupils.
20. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Provision is strengthened by the very good links with literacy. The school has worked hard to improve the provision for PSHE. It is now time tabled and pupils also take part in circle time, when they have an opportunity to develop their social skills and improve their speaking and listening.
21. Participation in sport and arts activities is good. End of term productions and the art club enhance this area of learning. For example, the school performance of Snow White and the seven dwarfs shows pupils have acquired good skills in performance, drama and singing.
22. The resources and accommodation provided are very good. The school library is an attractive and well-used resource. Resources for most subjects are good and easily accessible. The classrooms are a good size and provide an attractive learning environment. Displays throughout the school are good and contribute to the very good ethos of the school. The school and grounds are very clean and well cared for, contributing to the quality of the accommodation. Very good use is made of the school grounds. The wildlife pond is a very good resource for promoting scientific learning. Pupils observe a range of wildlife that inhabits the pond, such as dragonflies and water beetles and they have very good opportunities to go pond dipping in the summer with their teacher. The pond is a very good resource that is enriching learning in science and personal development. The outdoor area has been very well developed with adventure playground equipment. There is very good outdoor provision for reception pupils and the Nursery is purpose built, offering very good accommodation.
23. There are excellent opportunities for Foundation Stage children to experience a range of science activities. Parents accompany their children in a variety of science based activities, exploring pushing and pulling activities and exploring why the balloon filled with water sinks and the one with air in it floats.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and guidance of pupils are very good and support pupils' learning very well. Health and safety procedures are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel very secure and well cared for in school and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- They achieve well because their progress is closely monitored.
- The school seeks the views of the pupils and acts on them when appropriate.
- Children in the Nursery are introduced to school life well.

Commentary

24. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues, using the expertise of the governing body. Pupils' health and safe living are well promoted through the personal, social and health education programme. First aid provision is very good due to all members of staff receiving appropriate training. Child protection procedures are very good and there is very good liaison with other agencies.
25. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils say that the staff are 'very nice and very kind' and parents describe the school as 'a very caring school'. Very good assessment procedures ensure that teachers track the progress and personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, very well and this contributes to the standards attained.
26. Induction arrangements are good and ensure that children settle happily into the Nursery and Reception. They include several opportunities to visit the school. Similarly, pupils are well prepared for transfer to the middle school. Pupils who start school at times other than the beginning of the school year are well looked after and are made to feel welcome.
27. The school council was introduced in September with two elected members from each class. They meet regularly and understand their role of representing the opinions of their classmates. They take their responsibilities seriously and are currently exploring ways in which to improve the toilets. The headteacher and staff listen to their views and act upon them whenever possible.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community and other schools are also very good and make an important contribution to the pupils' personal and academic development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost every parent is very supportive of the school.
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- The very good contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home makes a positive contribution to their achievement.
- The very good links with the community and other schools help to enrich the curriculum and ensure that pupils transfer happily to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

28. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel very comfortable about approaching it and are very happy with the procedures to deal with any concerns or complaints. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible and they appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities. They make a very good contribution to their children's learning by

providing very good help in the classrooms by, for example, regularly hearing the children read. They also help on educational visits. Parents and governors have been very active recently in organising the wildlife pond area. They are also very involved in 'special focus days' when they are invited into the school to work with the children on special projects. At the recent 'forces day' for the younger children, almost every parent was able to attend to support their children with their learning. Parents also raise significant funds through the 'Friends of Woodhall School'.

29. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and frequent other correspondence. They are also well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and good annual reports. Parents are welcome to discuss their children at any time. There is a computer club which parents can attend with their child and the local education authority organises parent partnership courses to explain the curriculum. The monthly forums when parents can meet the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and, usually, a governor to discuss items of interest, such as the curriculum, are appreciated by parents. These forums are also useful for the headteacher for finding out the views of the parents, which are acted upon whenever possible.
30. The very good links with the community include involvement in the Rotary Club primary schools' carol concert and the mayor's Christmas party for the elderly. Local community groups are invited to perform at the summer fete and the grandparents of the older children are invited in for harvest tea. Sudbury Symphony Orchestra uses the school for rehearsals. The school also makes good use of the community and surrounding countryside as an educational resource. For example, they visit Needham Lake, Hedingham Castle, Colchester Castle and Bury St Edmunds.
31. The very good links with the local middle schools include Year 4 pupils attending masterclasses for mathematics and pupils attending the annual science fair at the middle school. There is regular liaison between the two schools to discuss the curriculum and the smooth transfer of pupils. There are good mechanisms in place to help pupils to move on to the next stage in their education.
32. The establishment of very good links with the parents, local schools and the community is good improvement since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good and represent good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership and receives very good support from the deputy head. Subject leaders also provide good support to the headteacher but new co-ordinators have yet to fully develop their monitoring role. Governance is good with very good features. The school is well managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher have resulted in strong teamwork among staff, improved learning opportunities for pupils and good achievement.
- The deputy headteacher provides very good support for the headteacher.
- Subject co-ordinators have developed their subjects well and most have monitored teaching and learning effectively.
- Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school strongly.
- Performance management arrangements and school self-evaluation are very good, these have led to continuing improvements in provision and pupils' achievements.
- Financial management and day-to-day management of the school are good.

Commentary

33. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The headteacher motivates staff very effectively and has developed strong teamwork and very good professional support for all staff by ensuring that well-chosen opportunities for their professional development are provided. Parents have described the school as very well led and the headteacher enjoys the support of the whole school community. The strong teamwork amongst staff is a significant aid to learning and achievement. The headteacher has established a very good ethos for learning and achievement by setting high expectations for pupils and involving parents more actively in the work of the school. The majority of parents believe that there is now a more welcoming and friendly atmosphere in the school. The headteacher has implemented very successful family learning partnerships in literacy and ICT and has introduced activity days to enrich pupils' learning. This has led to the very good involvement of parents in their children's learning. A very good example of this was seen during the science activity afternoon held in the Nursery and Reception classes during the inspection when nearly all parents became involved in their children's learning about forces.
34. The headteacher receives very good support from the deputy headteacher, who also enjoys the full confidence and respect of staff, governors and parents. He shares the same drive and vision for improvement as the headteacher. Furthermore, in his role as special educational co-ordinator, he has developed very effective support provision for pupils with special educational needs, which ensures that they achieve as well as other pupils.
35. Subject leadership is good overall. All subject leaders have developed a clear vision for improving their subject, which is reflected in their subject action plans. They have an enthusiasm for their subjects and motivate their colleagues with new ideas for improving teaching and learning. More established subject leaders have improved provision in their subjects through formal monitoring of teaching and learning and the tracking of pupils' progress to set further targets for improvement. However, new subject co-ordinators have yet to fully develop this aspect of their role.
36. Very good features of school governance include the governors' thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their regular links with subject leaders. Governors visit the school informally and are actively involved in the life of the school. For example, some governors lead an assembly, organize lunchtime and after school clubs and actively participate in school trips. Governors visit classrooms informally but there are currently no planned formal visits for monitoring the school's work. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively and holds the school to account for its work.
37. The school is managed well. The senior management team thoroughly review and evaluate every aspect of the school's work very effectively to bring about improvements and set new priorities for development. This has been most effective and has led to good overall improvement since the last inspection. Monitoring is more systematic than at the time of the previous inspection and the school has effectively used information from test results to raise standards steadily from year to year and to improve provision further. Performance management arrangements are very good and are clearly linked to school priorities for development and staff training. There are very good induction arrangements for all new staff. Outcomes of monitoring are used to establish new targets for improvement with very good training for the staff. Significant barriers to achievement, such as the relatively high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and low attainment on entry, are very effectively minimized through the setting of high expectations for learning in lessons and the very good improvements in assessment since the last inspection which now ensures that pupils' work is matched closely to their individual needs.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	607,370
Total expenditure	576,741
Expenditure per pupil	2,194

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,629
Balance carried forward to the next	18,830

38. Financial management is good. Governors carefully monitor income and expenditure with good support from the school's finance officer. The school makes good use of its resources, particularly ICT, to support school administration and funding for pupils with special educational needs is used well to support their learning and achievement. The budget is closely monitored and the school applies the principles of best value well in its spending decisions. The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis so that parents now feel more comfortable in approaching the school than at the last inspection.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Nursery and in Reception classes is **good**.

39. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. There are good links between the Nursery and Reception classes. Even though the classrooms are separated, staff frequently meet as a team to co-ordinate the various aspects of the provision. Most children have attended one of the number of playgroups in the local area before joining the Nursery as rising four year olds, but the quality and extent of information on their prior attainments are patchy. To overcome this problem, the Nursery teacher uses a range of simple tests to establish each child's attainment on entry. Increasingly, the children's attainment is below average for the age group, particularly in language, number, knowledge of the wider world and the finer motor skills needed for handling small equipment. After three terms of half-day attendance, children move into full-time attendance in a Reception class where summer-born children may spend one term only before moving into the main school. The large majority of children achieve well during their time in Foundation Stage classes. By the time they leave the Reception Year, nearly all children are expected to attain the early learning goals.
40. The school encourages close relationships with parents. Pre-entry meetings, a Foundation Stage brochure and good opportunities for ongoing discussions with staff, provide the foundation for this. These links are supplemented by end of topic open afternoons during which parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning through play activities. One such occasion was observed during the inspection. It focused on children's learning about 'forces' and was very well attended. Besides strengthening ties with parents, the school hopes to encourage parents to engage in similar learning activities with their children at home. Most already cooperate well in the home-school reading arrangements.
41. Accommodation and learning resources for the Foundation Stage are very good. Teaching is at least good, often very good. It successfully encourages children's positive attitudes towards learning. Children's eager involvement in their learning activities is well supported by skilled and highly committed teaching assistants. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to include appropriate and motivating learning experiences linked by termly topics. Supervised, child-initiated learning opportunities are enriched by the very good range of learning activities provided and appropriate time is also given to adult leadership of group-based and whole class learning. Assessment arrangements are thorough. Each adult keeps a journal of notes about the responses of individual children. These are supplemented by incidental assessments of specific aspects of each child's development, with final recording of achievements being entered in each child's Foundation Stage profile. There is also ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the provision, which is enhanced by the professional development opportunities for staff, who sometimes visit other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in this area of learning.
- Learning activities are well planned to provide support for children's personal development.

Commentary

42. Pre-school experiences contribute to children's personal confidence, enabling the majority to settle quite quickly into their new learning environment. Some Nursery children lack social skills, however, and have to learn how to treat other children. Staff are very alert to early deficiencies in social behaviour and are quick to intervene where necessary. Their firm but quiet words in response combine with continuous modelling of good social skills, providing very effective examples of how to mix with others. Children's self-chosen activities offer everyday opportunities for them to refine their social skills as they learn to play alongside and eventually to cooperate with other children in role-play activities, for example. They share and take turns in play situations and guided group experiences. Children learn to make friends and, by the time they are in the Reception class, most are well able to play and work together. They can also follow classroom routines, though some find it difficult to concentrate for more than short periods in the whole class learning situations which prepare them for lessons in Year 1. Most children have learned to act independently on occasion. They also respond well to opportunities to carry responsibilities, such as helping to clear up after lessons. Children with persistent difficulties are soon identified and provided with additional support in line with their needs.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Though listening skills are broadly satisfactory, speaking skills are limited by weaknesses of vocabulary.
- Children show an interest in books and are achieving well in reading.
- Well planned learning opportunities lead to good achievement overall.

Commentary

43. A good mix of child initiated play, supervised group activities and whole class teaching contributes well to children's good achievements. Initial assessments point to limited speaking skills. Though these develop from isolated words and phrases to simple conversations in play environments, participation in rhymes and in answers to teachers' questioning, many children find it difficult to express themselves clearly because of limited vocabulary. Listening skills are more advanced, though a significant minority of Reception children find it difficult to listen for any length of time. Children are usually attentive to stories, however and learn to chant the key phrases in them. They show a quite surprising degree of fascination in books and their reading skills develop well. Home-school reading records show that parents are providing their children with good support. Children's reading is much helped by good teaching which includes fun approaches to the recognition of frequently used words and a motivating method of teaching letter sounds. Progress in writing is generally good. It is well supported by the stimulating writing corners, where children develop their emergent writing skills in the context of play, by guidance from the teacher and by the encouraging marking of children's efforts. The majority of children can write words legibly by the end of the Reception Year, some achieving well written short sentences and forming letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement in mathematics is good.

- Teaching is at least good and sometimes very good.

Commentary

44. Most children enter the Nursery with below average mathematical awareness. The Nursery has a good variety of mathematically stimulating displays and small equipment to support children's learning of small number sequences and variations in quantities and shapes. Following time in the Reception classes, the majority of children can name basic shapes, sequence numbers to 25 and carry out additions and subtractions to nine, moving well towards the formal recording of their calculations. They can carry out investigations of weight comparisons, for instance, which support their emerging mathematical vocabulary. They develop a clear understanding of the one-to-one match between single items and single units of measurement. Higher attaining children move from addition towards an elementary understanding of multiplication. The teaching of mathematics in the Foundation Stage is based on high expectations of the children. It is successful in raising children's awareness and understanding of numbers, shapes, patterns and measurement comparisons to a level which puts the majority of children on track to meet the early learning goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-planned learning opportunities linked to science.
- Good arrangements for the development of elementary aspects of ICT.

Commentary

45. With the exception of a lesson in the computer suite, no teaching in this area of learning was observed, but a survey of Reception children's topic books and examination of curriculum planning indicated that provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Learning in science is especially strong. Children classify materials into shiny/not shiny and record their findings. They explore sources of light and record learning about the senses. An "All about Me" topic led to individual health education booklets being produced. There has been a substantial focus on 'forces' which children shared with their parents during an open afternoon. Children have a weekly opportunity to work in the school's new computer suite and make frequent use of the computer and other electronic equipment in the classroom. Aspects of geography and history are included in the planning. Religious education focuses on family links and religious celebrations, including Diwali.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement in physical development is good.
- Outdoor facilities provide well for physical activities.

Commentary

46. Overall provision appropriately includes gymnastics, dance, games and elementary athletics. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching in this area of learning, but good lesson planning was noted in a briefly sampled Nursery lesson and children were observed making significant and largely effective efforts at ball control, though their finer motor

skills are often underdeveloped on entry to the school. Observations of children engaging in outdoor play activities indicated that the majority manage their larger movements well. They show coordination and balance and an awareness of space, as well as immense pleasure in physical activity. Their physical development benefits from weekly lessons in the school hall and daily access to the very good outdoor facilities which are very well equipped. Children's understanding of the importance of regular exercise for health is reinforced in their science-based topic work

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of creative opportunities is provided.
- Children's creative skills are generally good.

Commentary

47. The daily provision for child-initiated learning activities provides a wide range of opportunities for creativity to which the children respond with enthusiasm. Most children are always eager to experiment. Resources include a range of role-play stimuli, including home corners with prams and cookers and a big bus complete with a booking office and phones. Children dress-up and act out story lines, they play with dolls' houses and construction kits and run toy cars on carpet roads. They make various models out of junk materials, shape play dough into gingerbread men and sand into environments for exotic plastic animals. Painting opportunities are effectively used, as is the computer for abstract pattern making. The regular music lessons include singing, listening to music and the playing of untuned percussion instruments. As a result they make good progress in developing their creativity and in using their imaginations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning over time is very good and expectations are consistently high throughout the school.
- Assessment and the use of assessment are very good.
- Literacy is used very well across the curriculum.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

48. In the national tests for 2003 standards by the age of seven were in line with the national average for reading and above the national average for writing. When compared to results in similar schools they were above average for reading and well above average for writing. Pupils enter the school with poor language skills and consequently their achievement is very good. The large group of pupils with special educational needs and the one pupil with English as a second language achieve as well as other pupils. The trend over the last four years shows continual improvement each year. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is very successful in implementing procedures to raise standards, ensuring that all pupils achieve well

in literacy and exceed their targets. The school is on course to achieve similar results again this year. Since the last inspection improvement has been very good in reading and writing especially for the older Year 3 and 4 pupils.

49. The substantial majority of pupils are confident speakers and listen attentively because teachers involve them well in classroom discussions. Teachers often encourage pupils to discuss information and ideas with a partner; this good practice is consistently developed throughout the school. Year 4 pupils explain clearly to visitors how to locate a book in the library. A video extract showed how confident older pupils were in speaking and performing in the end of term drama production. Performance skills are very well developed for their age. Pupils are encouraged to develop their communication skills and performance skills in the drama club.
50. All pupils have a positive attitude to books and read confidently. Inspection evidence found standards in reading to be average but the skilful way reading is taught contributes significantly to the rising trend in pupils' achievement. Strategies to develop reading skills are very well developed and all pupils confidently tackle difficult words. More able readers in Year 2 identify a range of reading material they like to read. The very good progress is consistent throughout the school. The daily reading session together with very good quality support in lessons and withdrawal groups ensures very good progress. All pupils in Year 4 enjoy reading. More able pupils describe their favourite reading material as Harry Potter and identify JK Rowling as their favourite author. Pupils are able to identify aspects in the style of the writing that they like, such as the good use of adjectives. The attractive library is well stocked with a good range of books and is well used by all classes.
51. Attainment in writing and presentation is average throughout the school. Pupils are constantly challenged to use their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum and this contributes to the very good progress they make in their writing skills. Lessons are well planned and the pace of working is very good; pupils are constantly challenged in the quality of work they produce. A Year 1 pupil used description well when challenged to write a poster for a lost stone: he wrote, 'My stone is the shape of a triangle. It is quite bumpy. My stone's colour is grey. It has one island of white. My stone is smooth on the other side.' A Year 2 pupil enjoyed describing his shell: 'My shell is round like a spiral, it is smooth and it has got ridges. It is white on the outside and pink around the edges. It is spiky and a bit rough. There are two black scratches and green and red spots. It is bumpy and wonderful. It is a little bit chipped.' Teachers constantly challenge pupils to make their writing more interesting and to use their imagination. The skill of handwriting is very well developed and the presentation of work is good because expectation and challenge are made clear.
52. The quality of teaching and learning over time is very good. Expectations are high and lessons are fun and enjoyable. Pupils work at a very good pace and are able to work with good levels of concentration on independent tasks. Excellent teaching in a Years 1/2 class enabled all pupils to make very good progress in their ability to observe and describe a tray of different stones and shells. Very good teaching in small support groups ensures that all pupils make commendable progress in their learning. Very clear guidelines combined with patient and encouraging methods ensure that pupils develop confidence to tackle difficult words and develop their thinking skills. They are encouraged to identify why they find things difficult and learn to apply strategies to help remedy this. Assessment is very well developed and teachers can identify the progress individual pupils make over time. All pupils have individual targets.
53. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable and has a clear view of the strengths of the school. His high aspirations and meticulous analysis of procedures and outcomes contribute to the very good achievement and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Very good use is made of literacy across the curriculum. Every opportunity is seized to use literacy to enhance learning in all subject areas. Pupils' work around the school indicates very effective use of literacy for all subject areas of the curriculum. The quality of written work in other subject areas is very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been steadily rising since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievements are good because teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Focused activity days enrich pupils' numeracy skills.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning in lessons and try their best.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

55. Trends over the last three years indicate that standards are rising at a rate faster than the national trend. In the 2003 national tests, Year 2 pupils reached standards that were below average but a high proportion of pupils were identified with special educational needs with few higher attaining pupils. The standards reached represent good achievement. Furthermore the school exceeded its targets for the proportion of pupils expected to reach average and above average levels. Currently, standards in Year 2 and in Year 4 are broadly average and pupils' achievement is very good, given their low attainment on admission to the school and the high proportion of pupils identified with special education needs in this group. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' progress was judged to be average. The school has introduced very effective measures to ensure the steady rise in standards year-on-year, so that more pupils are expected to gain higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. For example, higher attaining pupils benefit from attendance at mathematics masterclasses in the middle school and pupils who are 'borderline' participate in additional learning programmes. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and the few at an early stage of learning English, achieve equally well.
56. By Year 2, pupils develop their understanding of numbers to 100 and they add and subtract single digits from two digit numbers mentally with increasing accuracy. Pupils also recognize simple fractions, they know the simple properties of common flat and solid shapes and they plot simple bar graphs to record data accurately. Pupils are also using mathematics effectively as they develop their mathematical language. They learn to tell the time and handle money up to the value of £1.00. They all know their two, five and ten times tables and are developing their skills in using these for multiplication, for example, by counting forwards and backwards in twos and tens. Higher attaining pupils measure length and weight in standard measures and interpret data on graphs accurately. Lower attainers add and subtract to 20, using a number line confidently to count on from a given number. By Year 4, pupils build on their earlier skills and have a good understanding of place value to 1,000, adding and subtracting three digit numbers confidently. They choose the correct number operations in solving everyday mathematical problems and develop their skills of mental mathematics. Higher attainers calculate fractions of numbers to 1,000 add positive and negative numbers accurately and demonstrate a good understanding of place value to three decimal places.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result pupils' achievements are also very good. In lessons seen teaching was at least good and often very good because all teachers set high expectations for learning. Teachers make very good use of assessment in lessons by setting very clear learning objectives at the beginning of lessons and then checking that pupils are on course to achieve them. The close monitoring of pupils' progress is used well to plan for

the next stage of learning. This ensures that support for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and the learning of higher attaining pupils is also challenged and extended. The use of final plenary sessions is very effective in involving pupils in assessing what they have achieved and what they need to do to move their learning forward. This represents excellent improvement since the last inspection when teachers' use of assessment was underdeveloped. Teachers also make very good use of resources in lessons, focusing on practical investigative approaches so that pupils are motivated to succeed, remain focused and learn how to apply their knowledge to everyday problems. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to develop quick recall of number facts and they develop pupils' use of computer software to produce reflective symmetry. Literacy is very well promoted in mathematics lessons to develop pupils' use of the language of mathematics and further their understanding of new mathematical ideas. For example, in one lesson Years 1 and 2 pupils recited a rhyme about odd and even numbers so that they clearly understood the differences between them. In another lesson, the teacher challenged pupils in Years 3 and 4 to identify the properties of triangles, carefully explaining such terms as 'equilateral' and 'right-angled' so that pupils accurately identified different triangles.

58. Teachers maintain very good relationships with pupils and manage behaviour very effectively. As a result, pupils show enthusiasm for learning, show respect toward others and behave very well in lessons. Pupils' personal development is very well promoted in lessons as teachers provide very good opportunities for them to work in pairs and small groups. As a result, they collaborate well in group work, learning to take turns, to value one another's ideas and to share equipment.
59. The use of focused activity days such as the School Grounds Day has been very effective in extending pupils' numeracy skills. For example, some pupils looked at leaf patterns and investigated the surface area of different leaves. Another group found out the age of some trees using simple arithmetic, while others calculated the height of chosen trees.
60. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the numeracy consultant and provided effective training for all staff to improve their practice. She works very effectively with the numeracy governor to evaluate and develop the subject and monitors teaching and learning through lesson observations; teachers' planning is scrutinised regularly to ensure continual effectiveness. Information is then used very effectively to identify priorities for the further development of the subject and in planning for the next stage of pupils' learning, such as extending the learning of higher attainers and lower attainers through special enrichment and intervention programmes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Mathematical skills are effectively promoted in other subjects. For example, in art, pupils draw patterns of shapes, in science they measure and then record their findings from investigations on graphs, and in history they develop their understanding of the passage of time.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils are attaining standards expected for their age with some exceeding them.
- Pupils are achieving well as learning opportunities include an increasing emphasis on investigations and experiments.
- Teaching is at least good, sometimes very good, generating high levels of interest amongst pupils.

- The leadership and management of science are very good, enhancing the quality of the provision.

Commentary

62. The school is in the process of raising the quality of its provision in science and this is having a positive influence on pupils' attainment. Though standards were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, they have dropped in recent years. As recently as 2003, teacher assessments of attainment at the end of Year 2 indicated that too few pupils were achieving or exceeding the nationally expected level for their age. This placed the school well below the national average because too few pupils were achieving above the required standard in comparison with results in schools nationally. Teachers' assessments also revealed weaknesses in particular areas of learning. Knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things and of physical processes were both relatively weak. Emphasis on both is now increasing, as is the use of the enquiry methods which motivate learning and strengthen understanding in science.
63. Teaching of all age groups is now at least good and often very good. Learning experiences in Years 1 and 2 include exploration of the senses and investigation of the effects of friction and gravity, as the pupils compare the effects of different slopes and surfaces on the movement of toy cars. In a very good lesson on the comparison of the strengths of different types of paper to support a varied range of heavy objects, pupils kept systematic records of results and showed a significant level of awareness of the critical importance of 'fair testing'. Pupils acquire an appropriate knowledge of the human body and benefit from the element of health education linked to it. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 go on to cover topics ranging from plant life and pond studies to electricity and key features of the universe. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive, but pupils are also required to assess their own work, which is usually well presented.
64. The subject benefits from a well-informed, dynamic and committed coordinator. The school has achieved a broad and balanced 'rolling' curriculum for science. This provides for the mixed age classes without duplication of learning. Criteria for the assessment of pupils' attainment are well matched to this curriculum. Good use is made of fieldwork in the school grounds and links with other subjects are strongly encouraged. For instance, the water cycle has been used as an inspiration for poetry in an English lesson. Variety in leaf shapes and wild life have provided inspiration for a large and colourful embroidered wall hanging linked to learning in design and technology. This particular activity has required pupils to research the details of plants and insects. The co-ordinator has introduced motivating enrichment activities to support and enhance pupils' recall of previous learning, especially as they prepare to move on to the middle school at the end of Year 4. Parental involvement is encouraged through stimulating, science experiences at the school. These have included 'Health and Hygiene', 'School Grounds' and 'Senses Exploration' days.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching is resulting in good achievement by the great majority of pupils.
- Standards are now in line with national expectations, though higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged to exceed them.
- Much improved ICT facilities are contributing to a rise in attainment throughout the school.
- There is very good provision for the assessment of pupils' progress.
- Leadership and management of ICT are very good, resulting in an ongoing momentum of improving standards.

Commentary

65. The school makes best use of its leading ICT experts within the school to ensure good achievement in pupils' basic knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject. It is these teachers who are exploiting the new ICT suite facilities to the advantage of all pupils in the school. This well-informed, good quality teaching, engenders pupils' good responses to learning opportunities which are frequently linked to their work in other subjects. The enrichment of vocabulary in a poetry exercise designed to develop skill in the use of arrow keys to insert new words is one such example. Year 2 pupils' production of very effective artwork inspired by observations of the natural world is another. Skills are further enhanced by their application in a range of subjects within classrooms across the school. ICT lessons themselves are well planned, with carefully sequenced learning activities and good organisation. Teaching assistants provide good support for slower learners, who also benefit from simpler assignments or pairing with higher attaining pupils so that limitations in reading skills, for instance, have a reduced impact on their progress in ICT. There is a tendency, however, for this arrangement to interfere with suitably challenging provision for the higher attainers themselves, reducing their own achievements relative to their age.
66. Standards of attainment in Year 2 and Year 4 are now satisfactory overall, a clear improvement on those reported at the time of the last inspection. They are helped by the early introduction of Nursery and Reception children to the much improved facilities, though pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 did not have this advantage. Equipment currently includes an interactive whiteboard, a set of laptops and an electronic microscope for work in science. They are a significant causal factor in the raising of attainment. The school has plans for further improvements in hardware and software resources, including whiteboards for all classrooms.
67. The improvements in provision for ICT are the result of the enthusiasm of the strongly committed and well-informed leadership of the subject co-ordinator. This has led to good subject planning at all levels and very good arrangements for the detailed assessment of the achievements of each pupil. Provision for pupils' development in ICT is significantly enriched by after school computer clubs, one of which is attended by parents. The school is well aware of the need for ongoing professional training for teachers in this fast-developing subject and good arrangements are in place for the coordinator's own updating and support of colleagues. Forward planning includes the continuation of the monitoring of teaching, the provision of a laptop for each teacher and the setting up of a school web-site.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good and is developing further with improvements in resources. Pupils apply and develop their ICT skills in subjects such as English, where ICT is used for word processing and redrafting. In art, pupils use the digital camera and geometric and flood tools to create their own pictures; in geography they log on to the Internet to access information. The use of ICT in mathematics and science also supports teaching and learning in these subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected individually and is reported on in full below. There was not enough evidence to report fully on geography and history because not enough teaching was seen. However, work was sampled in both subjects.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is linked with PSHE and this results in unnecessary duplication in lesson content.
- Standards are below average and pupils do not achieve as well in religious education as in other subjects in the curriculum.
- There are good links with the local church and church personnel.

Commentary

69. Provision for religious education is satisfactory but it is not as good as in other subjects of the curriculum where provision is good and sometimes very good. The school has linked PSHE to religious education but the main emphasis has been on PSHE and consequently religious education is less well developed than other subject areas. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus. There has been no improvement in standards since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average.
70. Lesson observation, scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils indicate that standards are below what would be expected for pupils of this age. Achievement is satisfactory considering the low attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Inspection evidence indicates that religious education has a low status compared to other subjects.
71. Work in religious education is superficial and lacks the depth and quality of work in other subjects because it is mixed in with PSHE. Pupils' work shows reference to a range of faiths such as Judaism, Christianity, Sikhism and the Hindu religion. Year 4 pupils write about Guru Nanuk, founder of the Sikh religion, but the quantity and quality of the work are not as good as in other subjects. Average pupils in Year 2 have some knowledge of the story of Moses and used drama to act out the story of events in his life. Pupils have limited recall of what has been covered in Christianity or Judaism. A significant number of pupils were unable to explain the significance of Easter for Christians. A more able Year 4 pupil talked about spring and new growth but did not recall the death of Jesus on the cross.
72. Teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall but was not as good as in other subjects because the work was not as challenging and a lot of time was spent colouring pictures and drawing.
73. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard, developing a good selection of resources and artefacts to support teaching and learning. Visits are well used; for example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit the local church and this trip is well linked to geography. The governor for religious education makes a good contribution to learning and frequently leads assemblies and initiates work in other religions.
74. No judgement can be made about provision in **geography** as only one lesson was observed. Teaching and learning in this lesson were good. Observations suggest that geography has a good high profile in the school and indicate good provision. Many classrooms contain attractive geography displays. Pupils have good opportunities to develop knowledge of their local area and the wider world. Geographical skills are well developed. Year 2 pupils draw plans of their classroom, the playground and the school field, identifying the main features using a key. Years 1 and 2 pupils draw plans for a zoo and are challenged to identify facilities such as the car park and toilets. Visits enhance learning and are used very well. Years 1 and 2 pupils visit a local church, a small school and a local village. Pupils use their art and literacy skills well, recording information and drawing features of each location to produce an information booklet. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use their ICT skills well to discover information about their topic on Africa. Pupils use literacy skills well writing questions about life in Africa. The very good links with art are maintained as pupils progress through the school. Years 3 and 4 pupils produced attractive pastel drawings of an African landscape, using an African artist as a stimulus for their work.

75. No lessons were observed in **history** during the inspection as the current focus was geography; consequently no judgement can be made about provision. Displays of history around the school suggest that history is well covered within the curriculum. Very good links with literacy and art were evident from the work sampled and very good use is made of visits. Year 2 pupils write about the old and new houses they see during their walk in the local area. Pupils write about this, referring to the dates 1892 and 1891. Historical evidence such as photographs, books and artefacts are well used to help pupils understand the importance of identifying sources of evidence. Year 4 pupils are challenged to use sources of evidence to identify the changes that have taken place in the local Sudbury area. Literacy skills enhance learning about history; for example, Year 4 pupils write about 'A day in the life of a potter,' when studying ancient Greece. One pupil wrote, 'My slave turns the wheel and I shape the clay into a pot and hollow it out'. Pupils make attractive plates and vases using ancient Greek ones as a stimulus. Geography skills are used well when pupils draw a plan of the Greek city and identify the main features such as the market and sports area. Pupils write about the origin of the Olympic Games.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects individually, because not enough teaching was seen or there was not enough evidence to judge achievement overall. However, work was sampled in art, design and technology, music and physical education.

76. Two good lessons were seen in **art and design**, where pupils' achievements were good. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils produced attractive collages of houses in Cavendish using a variety of materials such as corrugated cardboard, different papers, straw and plastic. The teacher and support assistant worked effectively with pupils to develop their ability to plan and to achieve effects of different types of roof, doors and windows. In the other lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a computer art programme to replicate realistic African landscapes and sunsets in the style of Tony Hudson. The teacher made good use of the software package to develop pupils' techniques of smudging and shading, constantly checking their work and encouraging them to improve. Pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school and very good use is made of activity days such as the 'School Grounds Day' to promote art and design, which represents good improvement since the last inspection. For example, some pupils hunted for different colours in the school environment and collected pieces from nature to replicate the colour spectrum. Another group of pupils looked closely at trees and produced pastel drawings of the bark. Other pupils produced observational drawings of nature using paint, for example, serrations in leaves and horse chestnuts. Pupils also created weaving patterns using different natural materials such as foliage and twigs. The subject co-ordinator is developing art and design appropriately by establishing an action plan and she now rightly intends to further develop methods of assessment and to monitor teaching and learning in the near future.
77. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on pupils' attainment and achievement in **design and technology** or on the overall quality of teaching and learning, but a scrutiny of planning indicated that provision is in line with National Curriculum requirements. Pupils use a variety of materials, starting with construction kits in the early stages and moving on to produce items such as textile-based pictures, photo frames, simple lever mechanisms to produce movement and puppets of various kinds. In the only lesson seen, Years 1 and 2 pupils showed enjoyment and care in their work as they learned to manipulate paper in preparation for the making of paper plate puppets. A wall display of the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed well planned provision for a food technology project in which the pupils had completed the cycle of designing products which meet a purpose, researching individual preferences, producing the product – which in this case took the form of a 'healthy rice salad' – and evaluating pupils' responses to the results to inform any further such provision. This learning activity was informed by pupils' scientific knowledge of the need for healthy eating. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection, including revised planning of the

curriculum to enhance links between design and technology and other subjects. Planning indicates that other aspects of science, especially pupils' understanding of forces such as electricity, are sometimes reinforced by being applied in design and technology assignments. There is now greater emphasis on pupils' evaluation of their own work. The curriculum is also enriched by special focus days in the subject. Future plans for subject development include further professional training for teachers and a review of the effectiveness of assessment procedures.

78. The teaching of **music** is carried out by a specialist teacher with very good subject knowledge. As a result attainment is in line with expectations and pupils' achieve well in lessons. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson pupils' achievements were good. They listened to three tracks of mediaeval music played on wind instruments and then played the recorder to a musical accompaniment in a similar style. The teacher checked that they were holding the recorder properly in order to play *C, G, D* and *A* accurately. All pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn the recorder for one term with good opportunities to develop their skills further in the recorder club. Pupils show great enthusiasm for singing and all join in the singing during assemblies. Music learning is enriched during whole school singing sessions, through the very good use of musical instruments and audio tapes. For example, in one session seen, the teacher played Mozart's *Panis Angelicus* on the clarinet, after which the pupils applauded enthusiastically to show their appreciation. Pupils then sang *Happy Birthday* together in celebration of pupils' birthdays during the term. The session contributed very effectively to pupils' personal development as they sang songs of kindness and forgiveness with feeling as well as a Caribbean calypso song. Pupils sang these songs with expression, keeping good time and singing in tune. Live performances by pupils for parents and the community and visiting guest players also enrich pupils' learning. The school maintains a good range of resources such as musical CDs and a variety of musical instruments to support teaching and learning. The subject leader has improved the use of assessment by developing good assessment systems such as assessed recordings of pupils' work and assessment sheets to track attainment and progress.
79. Two lessons were seen in **physical education**. In a very well planned lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher provided very good opportunities for pupils to warm up before challenging them to send and retrieve a ball accurately by throwing, bouncing and rolling. Activities were delivered at a brisk pace so that pupils worked energetically and enjoyed the lesson. Pupils' skills were developed very well as they controlled the ball in a variety of ways. In another very good lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 exercised vigorously, maximizing the use of available space and they were encouraged to stretched and wind down at the end of the lesson balancing on the A-frame. Evidence from pupils' records shows that standards in swimming are good with many pupils gaining certificates for their achievements. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with more effective planning, through the development of a new scheme of work and the curriculum now provides very good opportunities for enrichment. There are more physical activities at playtimes, lunchtimes and after school clubs. An African dance workshop is shortly due to take place and pupils have already taken part in the *Jump Rope for Heart* event organized by the British Heart Foundation. Pupils engage in sponsored walks around the school grounds and older pupils visit Sudbury Cricket Club for a special open day. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has developed resources, assessment methods and improved the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. During the inspection, two circle time lessons and various assemblies were seen. A meeting was also held with the school council, discussions were held with pupils and staff and the planning file was scrutinized. In one circle time lesson, pupils were encouraged to discuss feelings and practised using kind words to make others feel better. In another lesson, pupils developed a good understanding of the importance of respect for the environment through exploring ideas of living responsibly in a community, together. Both lessons promoted care and consideration for others effectively; pupils showed respect for others' opinions and listened

carefully throughout the lessons. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in assemblies where they are rewarded for kindness and good behaviour. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) permeates all aspects of the life of the school. For example, pupils take part in charitable fund-raising where they learn to be kind to others less fortunate than themselves and participate in the school council, which encourages responsibility and involvement in decision making.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
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).