

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GREGORY C of E VC SCHOOL

Sudbury

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124757

Headteacher: Mr Russell Clark

Lead inspector: Mr Terry Mortimer

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 260580

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	226.5
School address:	Church Street Sudbury
Postcode:	CO10 2BJ
Telephone number:	01787 372418
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Appropriate authority:	LEA
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sue Stinson
Date of previous inspection:	14 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Gregory Primary School is an average sized primary school situated in a residential area of mixed housing close to the centre of Sudbury in Suffolk for pupils aged four to nine years. Since the last inspection the school has roughly remained the same size. Eleven per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. There are 226 pupils on roll with similar numbers of boys and girls accommodated in seven classes, including 25 pupils based in the two area support centres (ASC) at the school. Ninety nine per cent of pupils are of white UK heritage. Others are of Asian heritage. Just under one per cent of pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average. 11 per cent of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is well above average. The school caters well for the socially deprived pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry is very wide ranging but well average for the majority.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18849	Terry Mortimer	Lead inspector	Mathematics
12289	Sue Burgess	Lay inspector	
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20815	Pat English	Team inspector	Foundation stage English Art Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The agreed focus for the inspection was inclusion of all pupils in English, mathematics and science, including the support given to the pupils of the Area Support Centre (ASC) and standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT). The results show **this is a good school that is very inclusive**, giving a **good** standard of education. Leadership and management are **good**; teaching is **good** with a **satisfactory** curriculum and the school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Improving standards in English, mathematics and science in the past year.
- The improved provision, teaching and standards in ICT is a strength of the school.
- Foundation Stage provision including teaching is good.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Curriculum development, especially planning, is very good.
- The attitudes of the pupils to school, each other and their good behaviour are major contributions to their learning.
- The good links that the school has with its parents and other schools creates a positive ethos along with its very good support, advice, and help it gives to the pupils.
- The leadership the headteacher is very good and has been a catalyst in the improvement over the past year.
- The leadership of the other key staff is good and makes a positive contribution to the good leadership, and effective management of the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is very good.
- The total provision of teaching, support and care for the pupils in the ASC is very good.
- Standards in writing are below expectations.
- Standards in the independent use of 'Using and Applying' aspect of mathematics are improving.
- A good marking policy has been introduced but it is inconsistent in practice, affecting ongoing assessment.

Improvement since the last inspection is **good**. As a result of very good leadership and management, standards are rising. There is very good curriculum development planning and systems for monitoring, the school's ethos has significantly improved and it is a pleasure to be in the school. Information technology, provision and standards have risen significantly. There is now regular monitoring of teaching, which has improved teaching. The school is well placed to continue its improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	D	D	D	D
Writing	E	E	D	E
Mathematics	D	E	C	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*

The above table gives the results for the pupils who were in Year 2 in July 2003 including the pupils who attend the ASC. The analysis of those results shows an overall improvement over those in 2002.

Inspection evidence shows that for pupils in the present cohort, achievement is **satisfactory**. Children start in the nursery with a very wide range of standards which are, however, **lower than is expected** for this age group. Achievement is **good** through the Foundation Stage, and by the end of reception most children attain the expected goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development and in mathematical development. By the end of Year 2 standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are **below average, but rising**. When compared to attainment at five, however, **achievement is satisfactory although some pupils have good achievement**. By the time pupils leave Year 4, standards are **average**. Standards in all other subjects are **satisfactory**. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve **as well** as other pupils because of the very good levels of support they receive. Pupils in the ASC also achieve as well as other pupils. Boys and girls attain similarly.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. The vast majority of pupils have **good** attitudes to school, and this is reflected in the overall standard of behaviour in school which is **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**, and punctuality is **satisfactory**. Standards in ICT are rising and are now good, and there are many opportunities for pupils to improve their use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. **The quality of teaching is good overall** and the range of learning opportunities throughout the school is **good**. Assessment procedures in the core subjects are **good**. This is reflected in pupils' learning and **achieving well**. Teaching is good in mathematics, science and in ICT and satisfactory in English, with some good teaching evident. There is very **good** provision for pupils with special educational needs especially in the ASC. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory. The curriculum is **satisfactory overall**, though planning is very good. Shortcomings in the curriculum are opportunities to use and apply mathematics independently. The school cares for its pupils well and keeps them safe at all times.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The Headteacher has been in post only 12 months and his leadership and vision is very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, key teachers and governors lead and manage the school well by inspiring, motivating and enabling the staff. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have **positive** views of the school and how its links into the community. Pupils really like the school and talk enthusiastically about their teachers and the activities they do in class.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise the standards in English, mathematics, science in the school, particularly writing.
- Improving standards in the pupils' independent use of the 'Using and Applying' aspect of mathematics across the curriculum.
- Expedite the plans to develop creativity in the curriculum as identified in the school development plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment which are just below average. Achievement across the school is **satisfactory** and standards in the core subjects are generally **average** by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, except in English where standards are below. Standards are satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress in their learning. Standards in national tests are affected by the standards attained by the pupils in the ASC. The school includes two ASCs, one for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the other for pupils in Years 3 and 4 (25 out of a school population of 226). The ASC is reported on separately in this report.

Throughout the other sections of the report the judgements refer to the main school only, that is, excluding the ASC unless expressly stated.

In reporting the results below of the 2003 national assessments it should be born in mind that the school is complex and the inspection found that standards are improving.

The complexities are:

- All published results, including those reported below, include pupils in the ASC all of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need.
- When pupils in the unit are removed from the statistics the number of pupils with special educational needs is 23 and is just about average.
- In both Year 2 and Year 4, 30 per cent of each year group have special education needs.
- The attainment on entry to the reception classes is below expectation but varies significantly from year to year particularly in communication, language and literacy which are consistently below expectations.

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage, and although some children do not attain the levels expected for children starting school in Year 1 they show vast improvement compared to their attainment on entry and are ready to start learning in Year 1. In Years 1 and 2 achievement is satisfactory because pupils consolidate their learning and are now attaining just below average standards in reading, well below in writing, and average in mathematics and science. Achievement is also satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 as inspection shows that standards in English are below average but mathematics and science are now average. This achievement is a result of the good quality teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make a good start to their learning within school because of good provision in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning.
- Pupils build effectively on their skills, knowledge and understanding through the school.
- High expectations, generally, and the pupils' positive attitudes to work all promote standards in English, mathematics and science which are rising, particularly during the past year.
- Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily although there is evidence of good achievement in all Years 1 to 4 where the teaching is consistently good.
- No differences are noted between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Those pupils who have special educational needs, use English as an additional language also achieve well because they are very quickly identified and receive specialist support.
- There are no differences noted between the achievement of boys and girls.
- Achievement of pupils in ICT is very good throughout the school.

- Achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. This is because not enough use is made of cross curricular literacy skills to develop subject knowledge in these other areas of the curriculum.
- Standards in writing, are well below expectations in comparison to similar schools.
- Standards in the 'Using and Applying' aspect of mathematics independently by pupils are below expectations though improving.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (14.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.9 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.3 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points score at the age end of Year 2 is 15. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

1. Attainment on entry into school is very variable, but is generally below that expected for this age group. Pupils' attainment at the end of reception generally meet the expected levels in all areas of learning by the start of compulsory schooling. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection.
2. The results of the 2003 national assessment tests for pupils in Year 2 showed that pupils achieved below the national average in reading, writing, and average in mathematics. When compared to those in similar schools the results were average in mathematics, below average in reading and well below average in writing. These results include the ASC pupils. Without the ASC pupils the results show that the pupils achieved average results in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The trends for results in Year 2 are positive.
3. The results of the optional tests and, inspection evidence agrees, show that pupils in Year 4 achieve in line with those pupils of that age nationally except in English. The trend in the school results remains below the national trend, although showing improvement.
4. The standard in English at Year 4 is below the National Curriculum expectations for pupils of this age. It is to be noted that in each of the current year groups, 2 and 4, approximately one third of the pupils have some degree of learning difficulty and this, statistically, has a negative impact on overall standards. However inspection evidence does show that for those pupils who do not have a significant learning difficulty, standards in writing are not high enough. The school is systematically increasing the number of opportunities to use and apply different forms of writing across the whole curriculum.
5. In mathematics, 'Number', 'Shape, 'Space and Measures', and 'Data Handling' standards meet expectations but not the 'Using and Applying' aspect of mathematics independently by pupils. The school recognises this and as with writing in English, is identifying where cross-curricular links can be made with other subjects such as geography and science, to promote and extend opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall but do not make the progress expected in 'Using and Applying' mathematics largely due to a lack of planned opportunities.

6. Pupils standards at Year 2 in the 'Life Processes and Living Things', 'Materials and Their Properties' and 'Physical Processes' in science are in line with expectations but pupils' ability to carry out investigations in science are at the early stages, because of their immaturity in the ability to raise questions, plan and carry out an investigation independently of the teacher. However, this aspect of science is being developed to bring it into line with the rest of the areas and procedures have now been put in place. It is too soon to make a judgement on the impact of this input. Overall, pupil achievement is satisfactory in science and with the high expectations put on them by the teachers many opportunities to develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills systematically are taken. Pupils show the independence expected in these skills by the end of Year 4.
7. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used well in English, mathematics and science but are not developed sufficiently well in other subjects across the curriculum. This limits the achievement made in all other subjects, where standards are judged to be satisfactory.
8. Standards in ICT are rising, and now competence is very good at the end of year 4. There are some good opportunities made for pupils to improve their use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum. Standards in geography, history, and physical education are generally in line with national expectations. No judgement on standards was possible during the inspection regarding design and technology, art and design, or music. Standards in religious education are generally in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
9. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. They are suitably challenged with individual education plans clearly indicating appropriate targets. Consequently, they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils who use English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

The following tables compare attainment now with that at the time of the last inspection and comment on the reasons for change.

Attainment in the Foundation Stage

	Attainment in the 1999 Inspection	Current attainment judgements for Inspection in 2003	achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
Personal Social and Emotional Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is good.	Children are provided with interesting opportunities and induction. They are encouraged to be independent, choosing activities and developing as individuals.
Communication Language and Literacy	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Achievement is good.	A significant number of children have weak speaking skills, but they are taught well. Effective use is made of direct teaching activities. They are given many opportunities to share their ideas and news with an adult.
Mathematical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is good.	A practical approach is effectively used. The curriculum is clearer now and this explains the apparent lack of difference between inspections.
Knowledge and Understanding of the world	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Achievement is good.	Good use is made of quality resources. The recommended curriculum has more to cover now. Good teaching develops skills consistently.
Creative Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is good because the children start school with attainment that is below the expected levels in this area of learning.	The children make good progress from a low entry point because the quality of teaching is good.
Physical Development	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is good.	Opportunities within other areas of learning are rarely overlooked. Appropriate use is made of direct teaching of techniques.

Attainment at the age of seven

	Attainment in the 1999 Inspection	Current attainment judgements for Inspection in 2003	Pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
Reading	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory.	Previous inspection only made it close to the average. Pupils make satisfactory progress, coming from a low start, because they are taught well.
Writing	Slightly above satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory.	Pupils make satisfactory progress, coming from a low start. School is increasing opportunities for pupils to achieve higher standards.
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory.	The more capable pupils are attaining the higher levels because teachers identified this as an area to develop.
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory.	Teaching in science is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Very good links with other schools. Enrichment of the science curriculum. Pupils are now systematically taught scientific skills.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory	Good	Achievement is good because the requirements are now much higher than at the time of the last inspection.	Pupils make satisfactory progress because the resources they have are good and teachers develop skills systematically.
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory	Pupils make satisfactory progress but do not use their literacy skills enough to develop their knowledge of this subject.

Attainment at the age of nine

	Attainment in the 1999 Inspection Report	Current attainment judgements for Inspection in 2003	Pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
English	Just above satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Achievement is good.	Pupils maintain the good progress made in Years 1 and 2 because the school continues to motivate pupils and challenge them successfully.
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is good.	
Science	Broadly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Pupils achieve well in subject knowledge, good understanding of the investigative aspects of science.	Pupils make good progress in the development of their knowledge base. Teachers and pupils take full advantage of the school site and the locality to increase their skills, knowledge and understanding.
Information and communication technology	Good	Well above expectations	Achievement is good.	Pupils make very good progress because of the good teaching and good resources. Use across the curriculum is developing.
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Achievement is satisfactory.	Pupils make satisfactory progress, but do not use their literacy skills to develop their knowledge further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their personal development is also **good**, with provision for social and moral development as particularly strong features. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence is **very well promoted**, particularly in the two ASCs. Attendance and punctuality are both **satisfactory**. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

This reflects the views of many parents and those expressed in the previous inspection report. This quality of provision makes a major contribution to the good personal development of all pupils and subsequently to their attainment and achievement overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' positive attitudes to their work and to school in general.
- High standards of behaviour.
- The school's success in promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Provision for moral and social development are good.
- Good provision is made for the development of relationships.
- Whole-school guidance to promote spiritual and cultural development across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Scheme of work for personal and social education is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.3	School data :	0.0
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.

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like coming to school and this was confirmed when inspectors talked to pupils during the inspection. In general, pupils are interested in their work and try hard to complete what they have been asked to do. Their response is very positive in lessons where teachers inspire pupils' interest and enthusiasm. For instance, a Year 3/4 history class worked enthusiastically in pairs to prepare a presentation on the Romans in Britain and a Year 1 class was completely transfixed by the creation of a "dark den" to explore the use of torches. "That was fantastic!", one girl said as she emerged. Pupils are polite and confident with adults and are happy to talk about their work. Two pupils, for instance, were eager to show inspectors a 'K'nex' model balloon they had made and were delighted that it was on display in the library.
11. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities offered to them, such as door monitors when the whole school is on the move to and from assembly, distributing milk and delivering registers. Members of the newly formed school council are enthusiastic about their roles and pleased that some of their ideas have already been implemented.
12. Behaviour in class, in assemblies, at lunchtime and around the school is good. Pupils get on well together with no sign of bullying or racism. Teachers and support staff work well as a team to provide good role models and bring out the best in pupils. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and good between pupils themselves. All adults consistently expect pupils to respect a clear code of conduct and to show consideration for others. As a result, pupils have a clear idea of right and wrong and of how they are expected to behave. Detailed support

systems are in place for pupils with identified behavioural difficulties. There was one fixed-term exclusion last year.

13. Teachers and support staff work very effectively throughout the school, but especially in the two ASCs, to boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence. As a result, they are well-motivated to make good progress.
14. A high priority is placed on moral development. A whole-school policy for behaviour ensures that rules are practicable, rewards and sanctions are appropriate and teaching and support staff have a consistent approach and equally high expectations. The understanding of right and wrong, honesty and fairness are effectively cultivated by using direct teaching opportunities, and through the consistently positive personal example of all staff. Pupils are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and their positive behaviour is always acknowledged.
15. All members of staff show considerable respect for pupils and provide good role models in demonstrating social conventions and how relationships are initiated and sustained. These features and the sensitive use of opportunities for direct teaching make a significant contribution to the development of social skills and the good relationships throughout school. The understanding of responsibility is fostered well through helping with class and school routines, membership of school council and involvement in fund raising projects for local and national charities. The opportunities for pupils to represent their school on educational visits and to welcome visitors to the school effectively support social development and responsibility. However there is inconsistent timetabled provision for the development of personal and social education. This has a limiting effect on the systematic development made as pupils move through the school.
16. There is currently no whole-school policy and guidance on what constitutes good provision for spiritual and cultural development and how best to achieve it across the curriculum. This has a limiting effect on the quality of planning for improvement in these areas.
17. Attendance is satisfactory and is broadly in line with that of similar schools. There is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual to school but a few are regularly late. The school has an efficient system in place for following up any unexplained absence on the first day of non-attendance.

Exclusions

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	200	1	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education, teaching is **good** overall and pupils learn **effectively**. Assessment procedures are **adequate** but inconsistent. The quality of assessment of pupils' work, responding to individual needs is **good** overall. The school provides **good** care of its pupils, creates a very positive ethos, is inclusive and has **good** links with the parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is **good** in mathematics and science and satisfactory with good elements in English. The majority of teaching in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Pupils' **good** achievement is largely as a result of the good teaching and pupils learn **well**. The quality of **assessment** of pupils' work in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is **good** but has some inconsistency at present.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Lessons are well planned.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed.
- Pupils are well encouraged and involved in their learning.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils learn effectively because all teaching is satisfactory and often good.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good.
- The teaching made for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Marking is not consistently rigorous or helpful to pupils.
- Pupils do not always understand how they can improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2%)	7 (14%)	19 (39%)	22 (45%)	0 (0%)	0 (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. Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

18. **Teachers have good subject knowledge.** In the lessons where teaching is very good and excellent, the good subject knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The tasks set are at just the right level for the varying abilities of the pupils. During the course of these lessons teachers correctly identify when to introduce extra challenge for the more able pupils and additional support for the less able. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is improving. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and the provision of small group work in English are proof of this. In many lessons teachers give clear explanations and speak clearly. However, they do not always allow pupils time to repeat key phrases and sentences so that they can improve their spoken English.
19. **Lessons are well planned** and learning objectives are made very clear to pupils in all lessons. Preparation for lessons is detailed and pupils benefit from a variety of activities. Time limits are often set which ensures a brisk pace to learning and a chance to participate in class, group and individual learning. Teachers generally plan effectively and they are clear what they want each group of pupils in the class to learn. The planning allows pupils to learn sequences of new ideas in a logical order.
20. **Teaching assistants are well deployed.** Teachers ensure assistants are fully briefed in the planning for lessons. Teaching assistants record their work for each lesson including adding comments where work was successful and where not. This enables all pupils including those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language to benefit from their support towards individual targets. It also gives good daily assessment that helps meet the pupils' needs.

21. **Pupils are well involved in their learning.** All pupils have many good opportunities to engage in discussions and take part in investigations, which enhance their knowledge and understanding. Relationships are good between adults and pupils who are encouraged to take a very active part in learning. Pupils are confident, willing and eager to do so. They work well in groups and independently. Many instances were observed where the use of revision questions, the good match of work to pupils' abilities, use of practical activities and a sense of immersion in learning were present. These good features helped pupils learn about perimeters in mathematics in Year 4 and in another lesson to recognise words and read them successfully.
22. **Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.** The school has a very positive ethos to which all adhere. Pupils know what is expected of them and are prepared to help each other. Teachers are firm but fair. In all lessons there is a strong emphasis on self-discipline and levels of concentration are good.
23. **Promotion of equality of opportunity.** Equal opportunities are promoted well in school. Each pupil's special educational needs are now assessed effectively and pupils with similar needs are placed in groups for extra attention. In one lesson a small group of pupils were learning about sentences. The teacher spent a considerable amount of time emphasising aspects of personal organisation so that pupils knew what they had to do in class and what had to be taken home for completion there. This was a very good aspect to the lesson because some pupils have difficulty organising themselves.
24. **Assessment** procedures were a concern at the time of the **previous inspection**. These are now good in English, mathematics and science, where assessment helps teachers to plan effectively for the next stage in pupils' learning. Assessment of other subjects is underdeveloped. National and optional test results are carefully analysed. This enables pupils to receive targeted support in investigations in science and mathematics and writing skills in English. Support for all pupils including those with learning and physical difficulties and for those who do not have English as their mother tongue is having a positive effect and standards are rising.
25. **The marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently rigorous or consistently carried out.** It does not provide pupils with the necessary guidance as to how they might work towards new targets. Whilst the procedures are in place the consistency is variable. Consequently pupils do not always understand what they have to do to improve. The school has identified this as a target for completion in this year.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Learning experiences are planned well to ensure they take place progressively. Opportunities for enriching the curriculum are **satisfactory** overall. The **good** accommodation has a positive impact and makes teaching and learning easier. The provision of learning resources available to teachers and pupils makes a positive contribution to achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very effectively to include all its pupils.
- Many improvements have been made to the curriculum since the present headteacher arrived.
- Currently, there are few opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning experiences outside the school day.
- The accommodation and learning resources are good.
- Very good liaison with partner schools ensures a smooth transition to the next phase of education.

Commentary

26. The inclusion of all pupils in the learning opportunities it provides is a strength of the school. It makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially those attending the two ASCs. Much time and effort go into ensuring that the varying needs of individuals are met. All members of staff show great commitment to ensuring the optimum involvement of pupils attending the two specialist centres and as a result they are fully integrated into the life of the school. The provision made in the ASCs is evaluated in detail in another part of the report. [See Page 22]. The quality of the targets set in pupils' individual education plans contributes strongly to their good levels of achievement. The provision of an appropriate curriculum and the integration of ASC pupils is a strength of the school.
27. Since the present headteacher was appointed the quality of curricular planning has improved considerably and weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Very effective arrangements for monitoring teachers' plans have resulted in learning experiences being provided sequentially and the Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum being covered much more effectively. In addition, the weakness in lack of clarity in planning for lessons has been remedied successfully. The guidance teachers get in deciding the kinds of experiences that pupils should have is now much better, with excellent use made of digital cameras to illustrate possible activities in a subject such as design and technology. The headteacher has made good use of the performance management process to ensure that policies to guide planning in the different subjects have been reviewed effectively by the co-ordinators. Each class has time allocated each week to allow the teacher to use the timetable more flexibly and creatively. As result of these improvements the revised curriculum is poised to make a much greater contribution to the standards that pupils attain.
28. The period following the arrival of the present headteacher has been one of considerable change. Teachers have worked very hard to move the school forward. A decision was taken to try to ease the pressure on the staff by removing the expectation that they run after school clubs. As a result, the excellent provision of extra-curricular activities noted in the last report is no longer made. There is currently limited opportunity for pupils to join 'clubs'. However, working with other local schools, St Gregory has negotiated a 12 million pounds package to ensure that a wide range of sports activities will soon be available to its pupils.
29. The bright modern building provides good accommodation which helps considerably in ensuring that the curriculum is taught effectively. The provision of many activity areas supports well the staff's efforts to teach practical subjects such as art and design and technology. It also allows groups to be formed from within each class for a variety of teaching purposes. The school manages this well. The design of the building has its faults, including a lack of storage areas for teachers and the need for people to pass through some classrooms to reach some parts of the building. The range and quality of equipment and materials available for teaching purposes is good and enhances the progress that pupils make. The effect of this good provision is felt in most subjects, including ICT.
30. The school liaises very well with other local schools. The schools to which most of the children transfer at the end of Year 4 hold regular meetings with the primary and first schools sending pupils to it. This co-operation results in many mutual benefits, but the most important in terms of the pupils' academic progress through Years 4 to 5, is the close collaboration about the curriculum. Some of the arrangements in place for science teaching illustrate this point well. For example, at the end of Year 4 pupils begin a topic which they continue in their new school in Year 5. The receiving middle school sends exercise books to the primary/first school which they continue to use after they have transferred. A common form of self –assessment by pupils is also used in both the primary/first and receiving schools. These very effective procedures help pupils to settle in quickly and reduce the chances of ground being lost.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It offers them **very good** support, advice and guidance. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school has recently been taken more into account and is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an attractive and secure learning environment in which pupils feel safe and confident.
- There are well-established systems of support, advice and guidance.
- Induction and transfer arrangements are very good.

Commentary

31. Health, safety and security are given a high priority by the school. The vigilance of the staff and the good level of supervision throughout the day ensure that pupils are well looked after. The attractive and interesting grounds are kept tidy and litter-free and pupils clearly enjoy the amount of space they have.
32. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place. Both the headteacher and the designated governor have had a recent training update. Pupils are confident they would know who to go to with a problem or concern and staff organise valuable extra support for pupils who need it. In addition to the specialised work within the ASCs, some pupils are offered extra support in literacy, mathematics and social skills. Growing awareness of conversational and social skills is promoted very effectively in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere in which pupils can enjoy success they may not experience in mainstream classes or out on the playground. At lunchtime, two members of staff run a play club for pupils who find activities on the main playground too boisterous. In this way, pupils are effectively encouraged to share, take turns and improve their social skills while they enjoy themselves. The level of care and support is good in 'mainstream' classes and very good in the ASCs.
33. Staff work well as a team and know their pupils well. Pupils are helped to have a clear understanding of how they are progressing by the display of personal targets in some classrooms, most prominently as individual arrows aimed at a bullseye or as Roman soldiers marching along Hadrian's wall. The achievements and personal development of pupils are monitored each term so that targets can be reviewed as necessary. The Tree of Achievement in the hall makes a very striking display for the 'leaves' awarded to pupils for good attitudes and behaviour.
34. Induction procedures are well managed. Each class within the school spends a day with their teacher for the following year so that they have the chance to get to know each other. Children from the nursery regularly enjoy time in the reception class before they formally join the school so that when they do they meet familiar staff and routines.
35. The newly-established school council gives pupils the opportunity to express their views and to learn to respect other people's beliefs and opinions. Several interesting ideas on how to improve school life and the immediate environment have already emerged from council meetings and pupils are looking forward to seeing some of these implemented. Opportunities for class discussion and the exchange of ideas through circle time or similar arrangements are, as yet, formally limited to 30 minutes per week. There are, however, plans to expand these opportunities when personal, social and health education has been more fully developed as part of the timetable.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **good** links between the school, parents and other schools. There are also **good** links with the local community and pupils **greatly benefit** from this involvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are supportive of the work of the school.
- A significant minority do not feel well informed about their child's progress.
- There is a strong partnership between home and school which makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Transfer is smooth to other schools.
- Good links with the local community broaden pupils' experiences.

Commentary

36. The positive views of the great majority of parents reflect a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. Almost all parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns. Almost as many were confident that the school is well led and managed, that staff expect hard work from pupils and that teaching is good. However, a significant minority of replies indicated that some parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress. Parents support their pupils well overall, with 85 – 90 per cent attending reviews. The relationship of staff with parents is good overall, and very good in the ASCs.
37. Inspectors support parents' positive views and find that in fact the school has good arrangements for keeping parents informed. Annual reports clearly indicate pupils' attainment and progress and contain comments on personal development, as well as space for the pupil's views on how the year has gone. There is an opportunity to discuss progress at consultation evenings each term. Advance information on what is to be taught is sent home, as well as general newsletters. Events such as a reading workshop are well supported.
38. The headteacher makes a point of being available, whatever the weather, to talk to parents informally outside the school at the beginning and end of the day. There are plans to conduct a survey of parents' views every two years. As a result of an initial survey when the current headteacher first arrived, a popular decision was taken to change sports day arrangements to a more traditional format. The very active Friends of St Gregory organise a range of social and fund-raising events which are well supported by parents. Over £4000 was raised last year, enabling the purchase of such items as a new sound system for the hall, physical education equipment and classroom overhead projectors.
39. Transition arrangements are well organised from Year 4 to middle school. Pupils take part in Transition Day, held for the whole of Sudbury each July, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
40. Links with the community are good and are particularly strong with local churches, whose representatives take assemblies on a regular basis. The school makes good use of the local area to enhance the curriculum with recent visits, for example, to Cambridge Museum, Felixstowe, Colchester Castle Museum and Hedingham Castle.
41. A good number of parents, grandparents, governors and friends of the school all volunteer to help in various ways, such as with reading, assemblies, after school activities, or out on school trips. These links with the wider world all help to broaden pupils' experience of life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governing body has a **satisfactory** grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is beginning to take a more pro-active role in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school.

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership with a clarity of vision, a clear sense of purpose and appropriately high aspirations. Other key staff share a common purpose and make a **good** contribution to the school's goals and values. The effectiveness of management overall is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher.
- Strategic planning which clearly reflects the school's ambitions and goals and involves all staff and governors.
- The commitment of the whole-school staff to inclusion and equality and concern for the needs of individuals.
- The very good systems for monitoring and developing the curriculum.
- For the governing body to further develop its role in helping shape the vision and direction of the school.

Commentary

42. The governing body, after a number of years when it received limited information about the school's budget and, as a result, had only a restricted role in shaping the vision and direction of the school, has now, under the leadership of the new headteacher, begun to develop a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It ensures all statutory duties are fulfilled appropriately and are now acting as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher and senior staff effectively.
43. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. He has a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school and, in a relatively short period as headteacher, has succeeded in creating an effective team who work together well and inspire, motivate and support fellow staff and pupils. All school staff and governors are now closely involved in the school's development planning and the resulting school improvement plan, which clearly reflects the school's ambitions and goals, is monitored very closely. Curriculum leadership by the headteacher is very successful and has been particularly successful in empowering subject-leaders with the result that the quality of leadership and commitment of subject leaders and other key staff is good.
44. The leadership and management of the overall provision for special educational needs is very good, resulting in very strong teamwork among the adults concerned. Systems of administration are very good overall. The views of parents and pupils about progress are not always noted/recorded. All managers are now responsible for undertaking an annual review of their subject and senior management constantly monitor performance data, review emerging patterns and take effective action. The headteacher and all staff have a very clear commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity for all pupils and provide very good role models for pupils. Target-setting and the monitoring of achievement are now established for individual pupils and policies for behaviour, planning and assessment are reflected clearly and consistently across the work of the whole school. The school's performance management systems are well-managed and effective in providing support and in bringing about improvement and staff new to the school speak positively about the good level of support they have received.
45. The school's systems and approaches to financial management are good. Inspection findings confirm that essential management functions are covered well and are not unduly bureaucratic, allowing teachers to get on with their job of teaching the pupils. Well-organised and well-monitored accounting systems help the school achieve key educational priorities, such as the installation of a new 'ICT suite' and training for the new ICT resources for staff. The headteacher and governing body are aware of the "best value" principles of challenge, comparison, consultation and competition, although, to date, their application in decision-making has been largely informal. The school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	685,855
Total expenditure	646,652
Expenditure per pupil	2,607

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	77,905
Balance carried forward to the next	19,065

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of - The work of the Special Educational Needs Unit

The provision made in the two ASCs is **very good**. Pupils, mainly with moderate learning difficulties, are taught in two classes, one for those aged five and six and the other for those from Years 3 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The curriculum is of high quality.
- The inclusion of pupils attending the centres is a strength of the school.
- Strong teamwork.
- Very good guidance and monitoring of individual pupils.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are very good overall, resulting in pupils making very good progress. Pupils attending the centres achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment, as they did at the time of the last inspection. The strong features of lessons include:

ASC 1

47. Very good pace results in pupils engaging with tasks very well; lively approaches* to learning make it fun, and the teacher's excellent knowledge of individuals is used to develop separate expectations for each pupil in the groups she teaches.

ASC 2

48. Clever questioning of pupils enhances learning; very good knowledge of research** informs the teaching; good demands made on pupils promote self-reliance.

*In an excellent science lesson, opportunities for pupils to enter the 'dark den' and shine their torches on the ceiling resulted in very high levels of interest. The impact on pupils can be judged from the comment made by one emerging from the den: "That was too fantastic!"

** Research undertaken at a Midlands university which suggests that a focus on oral methods of teaching yields better results is being applied in lessons.

49. The attention paid to providing each pupil with the right mixture of support centre-based work and integration with the majority of pupils of their own age considerably enhances the academic and personal development of those attending the centre and enriches the experience of all. The teachers of the centres collaborate very well with their teacher colleagues to tailor each pupil's timetable to achieve the optimum progress. The flexible use of very good assessment procedures and the very detailed, small-step targets identified in individual education plans help considerably in making decisions about the best form of provision and the next step in learning.

50. The commitment of the whole-school community to the involvement of the pupils of the ASCs continues to be a strength of the school's work. The centre's pupils register with their peers and attend assemblies with them. They are included in as many aspects of school life as possible,

including educational trips, Christmas productions and sports day. They join their peers on the playground and additional help is employed at lunchtimes to help things run smoothly.

51. The capacity of the strong team working in the support centres to collaborate and co-operate has a very beneficial effect on the provision. The teachers plan and work closely with their assistants, ensuring that the pupils' learning needs are understood and served well. The very clear team spirit arises from a very strong commitment to doing the best for all the pupils, and is supported well by a system which involves the assistants working in both centres. This also provides security and continuity of support for the pupils when they leave one class for the other.
52. Everyone works hard to encourage, care for and nurture each pupil. Outside agencies are involved very effectively in making appropriate provision and the members of staff ensure that they have the information they need to understand and cater well for the varied and sometimes complex needs of each pupil. The adults involved with the pupils relate very well to them - several hugs were given and received during the inspection. Detailed records of progress inform teaching well, although these are sometimes not dated.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of provision is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Curriculum planning is clearly informed by detailed assessment at all levels.
- The achievement made by children from entry is good.
- The facilities for outdoor activities are unsatisfactory for children in reception.

Commentary

53. The co-ordinator has developed a very effective team approach. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of the nationally agreed curriculum and the Stepping Stones to be achieved prior to attaining the Early Learning Goals. There is a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality provision and how best to achieve it.
54. Children enter nursery showing the full range of stages of development and, overall, just below age-related expectations. The detailed assessments made on entry and continued throughout the nursery and reception classes enable the planning of learning experiences at all levels to meet the particular needs of all children. This makes a significant contribution to the good achievement of all children and their readiness to manage the work of the National Curriculum by the time they enter Year1.
55. Teaching is judged to be good in each area of learning except physical development where there is insufficient evidence to support an overall judgement. This quality of teaching is characterised by the setting of clear learning objectives for each session which are known to all staff. The learning environment is organised to provide a range of purposeful activities to support a good balance of teacher directed and self chosen tasks to which children can return to explore or to practise learned skills as they need.
56. The school has planned a secure out door area with appropriate equipment for purposeful vigorous activity of reception class children. However the project is not yet completed and currently, this has a limiting effect on the quality of provision for vigorous physical and creative development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction procedures are in place.
- There is a clear commitment to developing positive attitudes to learning.
- Regular, practical links between the nursery and reception class.

Commentary

57. A high priority is placed on development in this area. The well organised induction procedures and links with parents in the early days ensure that children enter with a good measure of confidence. The wide range of purposeful activities using attractive resources and well-judged teacher intervention encourages children to collaborate, sustain interest for an appropriate time

and to develop positive attitudes to learning. A consistently calm and positive approach is used when encouraging the development of social conventions and establishing acceptable behaviour. Regular exchange visits between nursery and reception make a considerable contribution to the development of understanding of the special nature of belonging to a larger group and ease of transfer.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Language development permeates all areas of learning.
- Effective use is made of direct teaching activities.

Commentary

58. Achievement over time is good. All staff consistently use a varied range of vocabulary to increase the bank of words children use and understand. Appropriate grammar and the structures of spoken language are consistently used to encourage children to use them when sharing ideas and expressing needs and feelings. Adults acknowledge what children say so that they feel valued and confidence in learning is promoted. Direct teaching is effectively used to introduce children to the organisation of books, letter shapes and sounds and to using a pencil effectively. As a result a nursery child seeks out an adult to 'read' with her and a reception child writes an invitation to a friend for a party on 'chusday'. Children in reception are on target to attain the agreed Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A practical approach is effectively used.
- A good balance of direct teaching and independent activities across the curriculum develops and consolidates understanding.

Commentary

59. Achievement in learning sessions is good. Children's progress owes much to the range of practical experiences to which they can return to explore and reinforce their learning. Children are encouraged to use mathematical knowledge and skills in all activities. Nursery children enthusiastically count who is present together. They count coins when buying a birthday card for 'Chocolate Dog'. Reception children, when sharing out fruit for snack, recognise 'first, second and third choice' and if one of the pieces of fruit is cut in two then the total number goes up by one more.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of quality resources.
- The balance of directed and independent activities is effectively planned.

Commentary

60. A suitable range of topics is planned through which children can investigate and observe for themselves. Nursery children record their own family history in photographs, explore a bath of jelly and use lego and small-world toys to illustrate what they know about the world. Reception children expose themselves to real darkness in a specially darkened tent and bake buns for their snack time. In such purposeful activities adults use questioning well to assess understanding and move learning on.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities within other areas of learning are rarely overlooked.
- Appropriate use is made of direct teaching of techniques.
- Facilities for outdoor activities for reception class are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

61. Daily opportunities to handle pencils, scissors and manage small construction equipment are integrated in many activities so that children receive well-judged intervention and opportunities to practise to improve control strategies. The lack of an appropriately equipped outdoor area for, vigorous imaginative activity has a limiting effect on the development in this area for reception children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of resources and opportunities for role-play.
- Good opportunities to explore a range of media.
- Purposeful activities are often linked to other areas of learning.

Commentary

62. Although a significant minority of children's experience on entry is below expectations most respond well to the range of opportunities. The good accommodation and good quality resources support role play activities well. Adult input is very effective in encouraging children with limited experience to extend and sustain involvement in such imaginative activity as being characters in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' or cooking dinner in the house-corner. Children experience significant pleasure in exploring effects from using paint. Where teachers and support staff intervene to promote skills and techniques children are enabled to make good progress and enjoy success when, cutting and sticking to make a present for Chocolate Dog or making his birthday cake using dough. Where creative activities are linked to other areas of learning as, for instance, reception children's paintings of apples and collage about noises, children have a practical way of recording what they know and understand and learning is reinforced.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of the subject is good.
- The National Literacy Strategy is effectively adapted to meet the needs of the school.
- Support for pupils with identified special educational needs is very good.
- Overall standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are below expectations.
- Opportunities to independently use learned literacy skills are often overlooked.
- Marking does not consistently inform pupils how to improve.

Commentary

63. Through an effective programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and pupil's day-to-day work and the analysis of test results the co-ordinator has a useful body of information on which to evaluate the strengths of the provision for this subject and to identify areas for development. The school development plan demonstrates that the co-ordinator is actively seeking to raise standards and the school is well placed to improve the provision for this subject and subsequently the levels of achievement for all pupils.
64. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with such a significantly wide range of ability has been effectively developed by well-judged adaptation of the advice of the National Literacy Strategy. This enables all pupils to systematically build up vocabulary and knowledge of sounds and strategies for reading and writing as they move through the school. This is particularly so for pupils with identified special educational needs. These pupils are supported very effectively through the ASCs and achieve well in relation to individual education plans. Support staff, working within classes or in withdrawn groups, provide sensitive and apt input to enable pupils, not in the ASCs, achieve well in relation to their prior learning.
65. Standards overall at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading and writing when compared with the current national test standards. Similarly the standard at Year 4 is below the National Curriculum expectations for pupils of this age. It is to be noted that in each of these current year groups approximately one third of the pupils have some degree of learning difficulty and this, statistically, has a negative impact on overall standards. However inspection evidence does show that for those pupils who do not have a significant learning difficulty, standards in writing are not high enough. Throughout the school pupils practise spellings, grammar and punctuation in specific exercises but too often these are not remembered in subsequent work. For example at Year 2 often upper case letters appear in the middle of words and at Year 4 simple sentences are carelessly punctuated. There are examples of using opportunities to practise learned literacy skills in activities related to other subjects such as writing a report on a science activity but the good practice of extended, independent writing is not used enough.
66. The development of handwriting and presentational skills is unsatisfactory across the school. In Years 1 and 2 formations of letters, size and spacing are not consistently improving. In Years 3 and 4 the development of a joined script is protracted and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Teachers provide good models to show how to hold the attention of a listener when reading or how to develop report writing but few model good handwriting and presentational techniques when writing comments in pupils' books or on the board. The coordinator has identified these areas for development in the current action plan.
67. Teachers consistently mark pupils' written work and regularly include appreciative comments. However, the good practice of making notes to identify specific ways in which all pupils can improve their work is not consistent across the school. Similarly, reading records that do not indicate what pupils need to focus on to improve have the same limiting effect on planning to accelerate progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

There are examples of using opportunities to practise learned literacy skills in activities related to other subjects such as writing a report on a science activity but the good practice of extended, independent writing is not used enough.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very strong and capable coordinator with very good strategic leadership and good management.
- Good quality teaching.
- The thorough assessment policy, practice and tracking procedures.
- Good support for all pupils.
- The thorough planning of lessons and units of work.
- Teachers' strategies for engaging the interest of all pupils.
- Good use of teaching assistants.
- Not enough independent use and application of mathematics in problem solving.
- The good marking systems are not used consistently by all staff, thus pupils' knowledge of their own progress and how to improve have not yet had time to have an effect.

Commentary

68. The school makes effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to guide teachers' planning and inform teaching. Strong subject leadership has made teachers more confident. Teachers are beginning to teach mathematics with understanding, because they have received training and support.
69. Teaching in mathematics is judged good overall, including taking into account work seen. Teaching in lessons is satisfactory with just 50 per cent of the teaching good or better and 50 per cent satisfactory. The overall judgement reflects the progress being made by the pupils. Pupils' learning also reflects the positive teaching. Lessons seen were of variable quality, ranging from satisfactory to good. In the better lessons, teachers effectively used a range of ways to help pupils' understanding of new ideas. They, for example, used number sentences, teased out a way to solve a word problem and accurately demonstrated the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Their knowledge and understanding of aspects of mathematics is good and led to them asking questions that made pupils think hard. At times questions were well aimed towards individual pupils, reflecting teachers' good knowledge of what pupils already know, can do and understand. Pupils learned best when they were given practical opportunities and when they utilised exciting, purpose-made resources to aid their reasoning and calculations.
70. The school has been effective in raising standards and ensuring that all pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave at the end of Year 4. Pupils are well prepared for learning mathematics when they transfer to the middle school at Year 5. Since the previous inspection a focus on challenging the more able pupil has proved successful, resulting in more pupils reaching higher than expected levels for their age. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs well through intervention and modified programmes of work. Additional adults help to support small groups in lessons and use their skills well to further question, explain and maintain pupils' interest and concentration.
71. The less effective lessons were primarily when pupils were not asked often enough to explain their thinking. This limited the opportunities for teaching to find out where pupils were unclear and prevented learning through talk and shared reflection. On occasion, pupils were working

inaccurately and this went by unchallenged or unnoticed. Pupils were given too few chances to raise their own questions for consideration or to steer their own learning. They were always told what to do and how to do it.

72. Teachers are very supportive of all groups of pupils. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding is instrumental in challenging pupils. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson the use of good mathematical knowledge, in creating the link between perimeter and circumference ensured pupils were able to explain their mathematics thinking effectively. The pace of this lesson and the very good matching of challenge to the ability of the pupils ensured all were fully engaged and learned well. The strategies introduced to raise the attainment of more-capable pupils in Year 4 have had an impact on pupils of all ability levels.
73. Very good use is made of information gained from assessment of pupils' recent progress when planning lessons and setting targets for individual pupil improvement. The school has also developed the process of setting group targets in mathematics. The coordinator is looking at the achievement of the pupils in the 'middle' as well as the lower achieving groups as this is an issue. Pupils are now beginning to self evaluate and have begun looking at their own knowledge through teacher-led procedures so that they can monitor their own improvement. Teaching assistants are well briefed on the work in lessons and how they are to be involved in the learning.
74. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator is deeply committed to giving children ways to become lifelong learners in mathematics. Her own subject knowledge is very good. She is analytical with the information that she has, and has had limited opportunity to check and evaluate standards, through teaching and learning. The staff receive good quality guidance to improve teaching and learning, which helps the planning of strategies for engaging the interests and challenge for the pupils. There is a keen interest in the school to trial new ideas and approaches in order to raise achievement further. The way that improvements have been managed is a good model for other co-ordinators to use.
75. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in mathematics lessons as are the pupils with English as an additional language. At present the school has not yet identified its gifted and talented pupils in mathematics. This is a process to be carried out in the next term. The support staff are very effective in providing the support the pupils need to learn. Overall these pupils make good progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Standards across the curriculum have been well maintained since the last inspection. The quality of teaching remains strong and has been enhanced by the careful planning of lessons, which ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those who are gifted and talented, achieve well, and are able to use their skills in other areas such as science and design and technology.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Very good links with other schools.
- Enrichment of the science curriculum.
- Some elements of teaching need improvement.

Commentary

77. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are in line with those expected of their age group and most achieve satisfactorily. In Year 4 standards are at least in line with those expected and some aspects of their work are above average. This was broadly the case at the time of the last inspection. The good quality teaching and learning seen in lessons contributes strongly to pupils' achievements. The work of the subject co-ordinator has a positive impact on standards. The lack of challenge in some junior classes, identified in the last inspection report, was not evident during this inspection. Pupils in Year 2 use their senses successfully to investigate and begin to record information in tables. Most have a sound understanding of the characteristics of living things, recognising that all grow, reproduce, excrete, etc. Thanks to the good demands made by teachers, most pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of the investigative aspects of science. For example, in an experiment about which substances stick more to teeth, one pupil pointed out that to make the tests they did fairer, it would be advisable to use a machine to do the scrubbing in order to cut out human error. Their work on recording electrical circuits is above average. In a very good Year 3/4 lesson imaginative methods used by the teacher, including the convening of a 'science conference' hosted by two girls dressed in laboratory coats, led to very good learning.
78. Very productive links with the schools to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 4 help to prepare pupils for this move and ensure that learning is as continuous as possible. The very effective liaison between the staffs of the different schools includes visits from science teachers in the receiving schools to get to know the pupils in Year 4. Many local schools collaborate to put on a 'science fair' involving their pupils which provides a focus for part of their work and stimulates much interest. Local businesses sponsor the event, increasing its impact.
79. Teachers and pupils take full advantage of the school site and the locality to increase their skills, knowledge and understanding, especially of living things and life processes. The conservation area of the school grounds is used well at appropriate times of the year and pets such as guinea pigs are kept. The favourable location of the school is also exploited to good effect, with visits to the nearby water meadows. Visits to local businesses such as silk factories, farms and brickworks boost learning and reinforce pupils' good attitudes to science.
80. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some elements of teaching are in need of improvement. For example, too little marking of pupils' work indicates clearly what the pupil must do to make progress and not enough attention is paid to helping pupils to improve their writing skills. Inconsistency in the time and attention teachers of pupils of the same age in different classes give to science reduces equality of opportunity to learn for some. Sometimes teachers do not ask enough of pupils in terms of the ways in which they set out and present their work. This was reflected in one of the lessons observed, in which the teacher did not set any expectations of the standard of written work she wanted. These lapses result in the appearance of some pupils' work being unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The school makes **very good** provision for ICT and this constitutes a very significant improvement since the last OFSTED inspection, when provision for ICT was judged to be "unsatisfactory".

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 are above expectations and standards by Year 4 are well-above expectations and pupils achieve very well.
- The significant improvements in provision since the last OFSTED inspection.
- Very good co-ordination of the subject by the headteacher.
- Continued in-service training for teachers and support staff to further improve confidence among all staff.

Commentary

81. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good and ranged from good to satisfactory and is good overall. Most teachers demonstrate a good level of confidence and subject-knowledge, a product of recent intensive in-service training and support by the headteacher. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were confidently finding appropriate 'clip art' images to paste into a document, adding a border to their 'poster', resizing and repositioning images using 'handles' and modifying text confidently. The teacher made very good links to previous learning and motivated pupils very well; learning intentions and expectations of behaviour were made very clear and, as a result, the lesson was distinguished by the good attitudes of the pupils and the good pace throughout. Samples of the high quality of work undertaken recently by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils include 'multi-media' presentations more commonly expected of Year 6 pupils. For example, pupils have produced multi-media guides to Sudbury and an introduction to the life of the town's most famous resident, Thomas Gainsborough and used 'clip art animations' of fireworks in their word-processed poems about 'Fireworks'. Leadership and management of the subject is very good. In a short space of time since taking responsibility, the headteacher has designed and resourced an 'ICT Suite', personally undertaken training of all the teaching staff (and is about to undertake training for learning support assistants), ensured good cross-curricular use of ICT and overseen a significant and very impressive improvement in standards. Resources are good and are utilised well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

There is good cross-curricular use of ICT across the school.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

The school's provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic subject co-ordination.

Commentary

82. The school follows the Suffolk 'Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education', entitled 'Themes and Schemes', taught on a two-year 'rolling programme' of topics to take account of the school's mixed-age classes. Since only two lessons were observed during the inspection, one in the Infant department and one in the Junior department, it was not possible to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching in the subject. However, standards at the end of the Juniors at age 9, from evidence obtained from the one lesson observed, a scrutiny of work undertaken, and a discussion with pupils, are broadly in line with the expectations of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.

83. Each year, pupils throughout the school undertake work designed to develop their knowledge and understanding in the main attainment targets of the agreed syllabus. During the inspection, pupils in years 1 and 2 were considering the concept of 'Belonging' and were identifying different groups to which they and others belong and developing their understanding that everyone and every thing has a place. Pupils in years 3 and 4 were learning about rules that people of the Christian faith follow as part of their religion, relating religious ideas and stories – the story of 'The Good Samaritan' – to the world around them. Infant pupils study Judaism and Junior pupils, Islam, and pupils when interviewed demonstrate a satisfactory understanding and recollection of key facts of other key religions as well as Christianity.

84. The subject leader is enthusiastic about the subject and very supportive of colleagues. Although the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching in the subject, samples of work are collected on a termly basis and a portfolio of work has been developed. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject, including artefacts for the key religions studied, and these are well-utilised.

History and Geography

The school's provision for the "humanities" subjects of geography and history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject knowledge and the good role model provided by the humanities co-ordinator.

Commentary

85. Partly because of the way geography and history lessons are 'blocked', it was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons - one geography lesson, in the Years 1 and 2, and three history lessons, all in the Years 3 and 4. In history, teaching ranged from satisfactory to good and was good overall. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and, as a result, pupils apply themselves to their work with enthusiasm. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 history lesson where pupils were researching aspects of life in Roman Britain, following a visit to Colchester Museum. The teacher's good relationships, evident enthusiasm for the subject and good classroom management skills and questioning skills led to pupils responding confidently and responsibly and, as the lesson progressed, the good pace and the use of relevant resources led to good progress in learning. In the one geography lesson observed, pupils were recognising changes in their environment and beginning to understand how the weather influences their lives, considering 'the different kinds of things we do' when it is hot, wet or cold.
86. The leadership of the two humanities subjects, by one teacher, is good. There are whole-school schemes of work now in place for history and geography, based broadly on nationally - recommended schemes of work, organised on a two-year rolling programme to cater for the mixed-age classes and policies for both subjects have recently been re-written. Resources for both subjects are satisfactory and the co-ordinator is presently developing a portfolio of digital photographs of the local area which will be placed on the school's computer network as a useful resource for pupils and teachers to use in their local and historical studies.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

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

Only one lesson was observed in both art and music. It was however possible to talk with co-ordinators and teachers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective long and medium-term planning.
- Pupils have opportunities to work with artists and crafts people.
- Assessment strategies are not sufficiently developed.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

87. The recent adoption of a structured scheme of work that guides the systematic development of skills, techniques and experiences supports teachers' short-term planning well. There is a clear overall framework over a two year rolling programme ensuring good provision for pupils in mixed age classes.
88. Pupils of all ages have a range of opportunities to work on exciting projects with established artists and crafts people. For example, using natural materials the Green Lady was created and left to rest in the garden. Working with a visiting artist from Gainsborough House in Years 3 and 4 pupils developed exciting textured effects using techniques such as rubbings, wax-resist and collage.
89. There are no agreed strategies for teachers and pupils to track experiences and achievement over time. Similarly the lack of information from monitoring teaching limits the information on which the co-ordinator can effectively evaluate the strengths and identify the areas for improvement.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A supportive scheme of work is in place.
- Good use is made of opportunities to work with visiting musicians.
- The range of musical instruments is insufficient.

Commentary

90. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and has wisely introduced a structured scheme of work to better support a staff of teachers none of whom has expertise in the subject. This has raised the confidence of staff significantly and ensures the requirements of the National Curriculum can be met and standards in music are satisfactory.
91. The use of visiting musicians makes a significant contribution to the breadth of experience pupils have and their understanding of elements of rhythm, pulse and musical effects to be achieved. This was well illustrated in the lesson observed which followed a visit by a percussionist using African drums. The pupils' application to the tasks involved was very good and the pleasure from practising and performing matched exactly.
92. Resources are appropriately organised but the co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to augment the range and improve the quality of instruments.

Design and Technology

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too little evidence to make secure judgements about provision in design and technology. Only one lesson was seen.

Commentary

93. The scrutiny of teachers' planning and the limited amount of pupils' written work shows that appropriate tasks are planned and taught. In Year 1 pupils work with paper and cardboard using simple mechanisms such as levers. For example, they design and make 'crocodiles' with brass paper fasteners that allow the jaws to move. Pupils in Year 2 design a variety of sandwiches as

part of their work on healthy eating. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on getting pupils to evaluate their designs and products. The range of tools and materials contributes well overall to pupils' achievements. However, replacements are needed to construction kits, especially in the Year 3 and 4 classes. The work of the co-ordinator, notably her work alongside colleagues in their classrooms, is helping to raise standards.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear improvements since the last inspection.
- The new co-ordinator has made a good start.
- A lack of procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress.
- No extra-curricular activities at the moment.
- The resources for teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

94. The last inspection report identified a number of serious weaknesses in standards and the quality of education. These have been successfully addressed. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 now achieve appropriately and attain standards in line with those expected of their age group. This rise in standards has resulted from considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. At the time of the last inspection, there was evidence of poor and unsatisfactory teaching in the Years 3 and 4 part of the school. Five lessons were observed in the course of this inspection, taking in all the year groups, and all were of satisfactory quality. Nearly all the weaknesses of teaching have been eradicated. In the best practice seen, separate expectations are identified in lesson plans for pupils of different abilities to ensure that they are challenged appropriately.
95. The co-ordinator is new to the post and it is too early to judge the impact of her work on standards. However, she has a clear idea of how she intends to move the subject forward and improve pupils' achievement. She has already put plans in place to further improve teachers' confidence and their knowledge of the different aspects of teaching physical education. Her revision of the long and medium-term planning helps to ensure that learning is sequenced more effectively. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but this is about to change because physical education is the subject of a school-wide focus this academic year.
96. The co-ordinator is aware that the current lack of agreed procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress limits teachers' ability to plan effectively. Some teachers approach the task of assessing pupils' progress conscientiously, with one or two taking photographs to help themselves and their pupils to evaluate performance. However, arrangements are inconsistent, with information being gathered in a number of ways, but not used effectively to adapt planning.
97. The excellent provision for extra-curricular activities reported at the time of the last inspection has not been maintained. There are currently no opportunities for pupils to engage in sporting activities outside lesson hours. However, the school is in a transition phase in which the ground has been laid for good provision in the years ahead. In co-operation with other local schools, the school has made a bid to benefit from 12 million pounds worth of sports provision under a national initiative.
98. The good range and quality of equipment and other resources for teaching the different aspects of the subject enhance the quality of education. The co-ordinator has organised their storage well, ensuring that both teachers and pupils have ready access to them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, Social and Health Education

Provision in Personal, social and Health Education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Positive coordinator.
- Inclusion.

Commentary

99. A new subject coordinator has recently been appointed to give direction to the area of personal, social and health education which as yet lacks relevant policies or a clear scheme of work. However, an action plan has now been drawn up which includes the completion of a policies for sex and relationships awareness and on alcohol and drug misuse and the implementation of a revised race and equality policy. Longer-term aims include the establishment of a two-year rolling programme for the delivery of the subject and the eventual introduction of the “Learning Together” programme involving parents’ participation. At present, each class is allocated 30 minutes a week for personal, social and health education, with lessons based, over the year, on topics such as responsibility, relationships, personal safety, risk-taking and change.
100. The school is well placed to take advantage of the planned developments in personal, social and health education as staff are already fully committed to inclusion, sensitive to pupils as individuals and they demonstrate a thoughtful approach to questions of moral and social importance as they arise.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
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).