

INSPECTION REPORT

**HARTEST CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Hartest, Bury St Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124701

Headteacher: Mrs C P Easting

Lead inspector: Ms M J Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 26–28 January and 5 February 2004

Inspection number: 264005

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	56
School address:	The Row Hartest Bury St Edmunds Suffolk
Postcode:	IP29 4DL
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pat Cawson
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a very small rural school for pupils aged four to nine. There are currently 56 boys and girls on roll. Of the 17 children in the reception class, 13 attend full time and the rest are part time; children attend school full time in the term when they reach the age of five. The village has a static population and the school roll has declined since the last inspection as pupils have moved on to the next stage of education. This trend is beginning to be reversed through the school receiving more applications for places from outside the catchment area: currently over two thirds of pupils are in Years 1 and 2. A rise in numbers is anticipated, largely as a result of the school's very close relationship with the pre-school that shares its accommodation. The proportion of pupils currently eligible for free school meals is below the national average, but over the last few years an average and occasionally slightly above average number of pupils have been eligible for free school meals. This reflects fluctuations in income in the local area, rather than significant changes in the pupil population. The vast majority of pupils are white British; a small number are of mixed or other white heritage. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although there are rather more lower-attaining pupils than usual and slightly fewer higher-attaining pupils as some more able pupils from the surrounding area go to private schools. The school gained Investor in People status in 2002. It is involved in a small schools multicultural initiative and an environmental project.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English Art Design and technology Special educational needs
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27698	Gordon Philips	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Music Physical education Religious education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8-10
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10-15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15-17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18-28
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school where pupils achieve well. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good. The quality of care is very good and the school enjoys a close relationship with its parents. The headteacher provides good leadership. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils achieve very well in reading.
- Higher-attaining Year 2 pupils did less well in writing in 2003 tests and, although satisfactory, the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is not as good as it could be in writing.
- Staff have a detailed knowledge of every pupil and this contributes significantly to pupils' achievement and to their personal development.
- Pupils reach average standards and achieve satisfactorily in information and communication technology (ICT) although limitations in resourcing and accommodation for ICT place a ceiling on their achievement.
- Teaching is good overall but there is some variation in the quality of teaching and pupils' independent learning skills could be further developed.
- Pupils' achievement is supported by the close links the school has with parents and the community, and by the very good involvement parents have in their children's learning.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected, in September 1998. Standards have improved and systems for assessing pupils' work are well established. Satisfactory monitoring procedures are in place. Parents are now highly supportive of the school and more positive than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children in the reception class achieve well. They do very well in communication, language and literacy, and well in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement is satisfactory in mathematical development, creative development and physical development. They are likely to reach - and in communication, language and literacy exceed - the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. By the end of Year 2, they reach standards that are well above average in reading, and above average in writing, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. The trend in the school's test results has been broadly in line with the national trend in the last three years. Above-average standards are sustained in Years 3 and 4, and pupils' achievement is good in mathematics, good in reading and satisfactory in writing. In religious education, standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual in getting to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. Teaching and learning are good overall, with particularly good teaching in Years 1 and 2, where work is matched closely to pupils' prior attainment. In Years 3 and 4, teaching often takes insufficient account of the different ages and abilities within the class. A good curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are very well cared for and the school enjoys a close partnership with parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership so that all staff share a commitment to school development and work as an effective team. Each teacher necessarily carries a number of responsibilities and management is satisfactory. Governance is good; the governing body provides very good support to the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the education the school provides. Pupils are positive about what the school has to offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further raise standards in writing for higher-attaining pupils at the end of Year 2 and for all pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Improve facilities for ICT, in line with the school's documented plans.
- Bring all teaching up to the level of the best by consistently matching tasks to the full range of ability within the class and providing more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall and standards are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve satisfactorily overall and sustain above average standards. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls relative to national differences. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well in literacy.
- Higher-attaining pupils did less well in writing than in reading in 2003 tests and, although satisfactory, the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is not as good as it could be in writing.
- Standards in reading are high as a result of a special initiative the school has adopted.
- Pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards throughout the school.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do less well than those in Years 1 and 2 because work is not matched so closely to the different needs within the class.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage do very well in communication, language and literacy, and well in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement is satisfactory in mathematical development, creative development and physical development. They are likely to reach – and in communication, language and literacy exceed – the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. This is because teaching and curriculum planning are good. The curriculum generally reflects national guidance well, although children would benefit from more opportunities to develop their creativity and from better access to outdoor provision.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (16.0)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (16.0)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (17.5)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In 2003, compared with all schools nationally, test results at Level 2 were above average in reading and writing and placed the school in the top five per cent for mathematics and science. At Level 3, however, there were distinct differences between subjects. Results in reading placed the school in the top five per cent nationally (58 per cent of pupils gained Level 3 compared with 28 per cent nationally). Results in mathematics were above average. Those in writing and science were below the national average. Compared with similar schools based on free school meals, results were in the top five per cent for mathematics and science at Level 2 or above; they were in line with the national average in reading and writing. Again, there was more variation at Level 3: reading results were above average, results in mathematics were average, those in writing and science were well below average. The trend in the school's test results has been broadly in line with the national trend in the last three years, with some fluctuation – this being a small school where the performance of individual pupils has a significant impact on overall results. Standards have risen since the last inspection, when they were average and progress was satisfactory throughout the school, and the school met its targets in 2003, except in writing at Level 3.

3. Standards are high in reading because the school has introduced a scheme whereby pupils receive intensive teaching of reading and this has proved very effective. Inspection evidence shows that, by Year 2, most pupils read fluently and with expression. Achievement in reading has been so good because the school has placed particular significance on reading and on developing resources for reading (fiction and non-fiction). There is scope now for extending the challenge and thus performance of pupils in other areas of the curriculum in a similar way to that adopted in reading.
4. Standards in writing are currently above average in Years 1 and 2, as a result of consistently good teaching where work is matched very well to the different learning needs within the class. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, aided by the high adult to pupil ratio, and systematically develop skills in writing. This should enable the school to gain better results in writing in 2004 National Curriculum tests.
5. Pupils achieve well in mathematics throughout the school and reach above average standards. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' achievement is good in mathematics and reading, and satisfactory in writing. Pupils achieve well in the investigative aspects of science and satisfactorily overall. In writing and science, the achievement of older pupils is less good than that in Years 1 and 2 because work is not consistently matched to the different needs and ages within the class. A minority of parents expressed the wish that the school would challenge their children more and a small number of pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class suggested in their questionnaire that the work is 'not hard'. Inspection findings show that some pupils in Years 3 and 4 could make faster progress if work was more closely matched to the different needs in the class.
6. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average but pupils' achievement is restricted by limited facilities; the school is working to improve computer resources and accommodation. In religious education, standards are above average and pupils achieve well throughout the school. It was not possible to collect enough evidence to make detailed judgements about standards or pupils' achievement in other subjects but their work and teachers' planning suggests that achievement is at least satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. This is as a result of teaching that is consistently at least satisfactory and good curriculum opportunities.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They benefit especially in Years 1 and 2 from the work of learning support assistants who work closely with individual pupils and provide very good support to small groups. In Years 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs sometimes do well and benefit from intensive small group work. There are times, however, when lower-attaining pupils in Year 3 are given the same tasks, including the same worksheets, as higher-attaining pupils in Year 4. In these circumstances, they do not make as much progress as they should. Overall, their achievement is therefore satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. There were no exclusions in the last year. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual in getting to school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good attitudes of the majority of pupils have a positive effect on their learning.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour and fosters good relationships.
- Pupils' self esteem is raised significantly because they are valued equally, regardless of their background or ability.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Commentary

8. Most pupils are happy and want to come to school. As parents said, 'They think of the school as one large family'. Most pupils enjoy learning when the lessons are interesting and the work is appropriately challenging. In a few lessons though, older pupils find it difficult to concentrate and do not work to full capacity. Pupils behave very well when they are together as a whole school. At assembly and break time, they interact well. They know the high standards expected of them, as confirmed and supported by parents, and they enjoy good relationships with each other. They and their parents are confident that if there are any disagreements these will be dealt with fairly and quickly. Incentives and rewards are used to encourage good effort and behaviour, both in lessons and at playtimes, and pupils' successes are celebrated in a weekly assembly. Pupils know they are valued equally, regardless of their background or ability, because this message is emphasised through class discussions and assemblies. As a result, pupils' personal development is good because their confidence and self-esteem are significantly increased very soon after starting school.
9. The school fosters a spirit of co-operation amongst its pupils. It works hard to broaden their social experiences by arranging opportunities to work with pupils from other local schools and businesses. This culminates in a residential visit in Year 4, shared with other pupils who will go on to the same middle school, helping to balance the disadvantages of being in a small school. Likewise visits and visitors to the school broaden pupils' cultural learning because of the variety of experiences offered. A small schools initiative with eight local schools, supported by government funding, has given pupils wide-ranging experience of different cultures.
10. Pupils' moral development is good due to the good role models in school and the Christian values promoted by the staff. Members of the school council take responsibility for environmental issues: older pupils oversee the school's recycling policy, including ensuring the correct bags are in classrooms, turning off lights and organising a wormery. The school is striving, through the efforts of the school council, for a Green Flag award. The close relationship with the church and opportunities for reflection in assemblies enhance pupils' spiritual development. In one assembly, pupils were spellbound and listened with eager anticipation to the story of Jesus quieting the storm.
11. Attendance for most pupils is very good but the attendance rate is satisfactory overall, in line with the national average. This is because the number of pupils is relatively small so any non-attendance has a proportionately larger impact on overall figures. Also, several pupils take holidays in term time. The school works closely with the educational welfare service, responding to individual cases rather than adopting a uniform approach to any problems. Most pupils are punctual to school and quickly settle to work on arrival.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. Teaching and learning are good overall, with particularly good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches a good curriculum. Pupils receive very good support and the school enjoys a close partnership with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is frequently good in the Foundation Stage. It is consistently good and sometimes very good in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 and 4, it is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage so that children get a good start to their education.
- Planning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and work is well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Work is not always matched sufficiently to the different learning needs or the mixed ages in Years 3 and 4.
- Precise targets have been set for pupils to help raise standards and marking is very good; the school makes use of an effective range of assessment procedures.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	2	11	5	-	-	

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

12. Teachers have very detailed knowledge of their pupils and can relate how well they are learning to personal information about each pupil. As a result, pupils are confident and relationships between teachers and pupils are warm. In many respects, this supports pupils' learning but there is a tendency for pupils throughout the school – and especially by the time they get into Year 3 – to be a little too relaxed or comfortable with their teachers. Pupils tend to rely on the staff too much and do not always make as much effort as they should. This process of gradual familiarisation is evident in that children in the Foundation Stage usually try hard and adhere well to the school's routines. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils work hard and apply themselves well. But by Year 3, pupils only work really productively when they are given tasks they enjoy or when they are closely supervised. Older pupils are not working to full capacity and so, although their achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good, they are not building on their prior learning as much as they could be. Instead, they are sustaining the above-average standards they reached by the end of Year 2.
13. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage so that children get a good start to their education. Planning is good and assessment is satisfactory, with very careful tracking of children in communication, language and literacy. Teachers have generally high expectations.
14. In Years 1 and 2, teachers identify precise learning objectives for pupils in each year group and these inform their very good planning. As a result, work is carefully matched to the needs of different groups of pupils and lessons are structured so that no time is wasted and learning support assistants – and volunteers – have clear roles. These features of teaching serve as potential exemplars for rest of the school and ensure that pupils develop good learning skills and achieve well.
15. In Years 3 and 4, teachers know the pupils very well and relationships are good. Some activities are stimulating and questioning probes pupils' understanding, but teaching is not based on sufficiently clear learning objectives. Teachers have not necessarily calculated in advance what they want particular pupils to learn from a given activity and so they do not think their own methods through as well as they could. Work is not always matched sufficiently to the different learning needs or the mixed ages in Years 3 and 4. This has an adverse effect on

the progress of higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils work effectively on some tasks but, in a few lessons during the inspection, they did not work to full capacity and occasionally showed signs of disinterest. This generally happened when work was not matched precisely enough to the range of needs in the class or where pupils were obliged to be passive for too long.

16. Throughout the school, teachers make very good use of homework – and of parents' readiness to support their children at home – to extend and consolidate pupils' learning. Pupils have few opportunities, however, to explore topics and find solutions to problems for themselves. Older pupils in particular would benefit from greater challenge to develop their independent learning skills. Teachers provide some challenge to individual pupils but could extend this significantly by setting projects that involved all pupils in independent learning matched to their prior attainment.
17. The school makes use of a good range of assessment procedures, including a number of standardised tests to track pupils' progress – including that of pupils with special educational needs. All pupils now have precise targets to raise standards in literacy and numeracy, although they are not yet using them to full effect. Marking is very good: teachers engage in detailed dialogue with pupils in the comments they make on their work. They also analyse in detail what pupils need to do to improve in response to their completion of half-termly tests in mathematics and their regular 'special writing' that assesses their progress in English. Teachers do not, however, analyse fully how pupils do in non-statutory tests¹ which the school conducts in English and mathematics or compare pupils' progress with national expectations. Teachers are beginning to involve pupils in self-assessment: more opportunities to engage in self-evaluation would potentially raise pupils' awareness and encourage them to take more responsibility for themselves.

The curriculum

A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches a good curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The school has sufficient qualified and experienced teachers to cover its curriculum effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets most pupils' needs well.
- The school provides good support to pupils with special educational needs and makes some special provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities is provided and there is good enrichment for pupils' learning through visits and visitors to the school.
- The accommodation places some restrictions on the curriculum but the school grounds have been developed well to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

18. The curriculum includes some valuable links between subjects which makes learning a meaningful and coherent experience for all pupils. Curriculum innovation is most apparent in reading, where the school's introduction of an intensive reading programme has led to a substantial increase in standards. The school has effective methods for identifying pupils who have special educational needs and who are gifted and talented: it makes special provision for both groups of pupils.

¹ Non-statutory tests are provided nationally for schools and provide an optional means by which teachers can measure the progress pupils are making and compare overall progress within the school with national expectations.

19. Individual education plans are of good quality: targets are specific and measurable. Pupils with special educational needs have very good in-class support in Years 1 and 2. There is currently little in-class support provided in the Year 3 and 4 class, where sometimes it would be beneficial, especially in English. Pupils in this class do, however, have good opportunities to work on a one-to-one basis or in small groups with a teacher or learning support assistant to practise and develop basic skills.
20. Pupils who are gifted and talented have had opportunities to take part in special events with higher-attaining pupils from other schools and, once a week, the highest-attaining pupils go to a local middle school for 'magic mathematics'. Individual teachers try to provide challenging questions for the most able pupils in Year 4 but the development of challenges for gifted and talented pupils could be developed further.
21. The school uses the local community very effectively and its links with other schools to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils go on visits to support their learning in a range of subjects, with particularly good opportunities in science. Visitors into school, such as engineers for a science and design and technology project on flight, and visits by an artist, provide stimulation for pupils' learning. Outside school time, there is a very good range of clubs that are well supported by pupils. Additionally, pupils take part in school productions and join with pupils from other schools in the area, for instance, for musical performances that develop their social skills as well as extending their learning experiences.
22. The headteacher and governors have been strategic in the appointment of a number of part-time staff, who extend the range of experiences and expertise available to the pupils; in most respects, the staffing arrangements work to the school's advantage. Resources are sufficient to meet curriculum needs and very good resources support the development of pupils' reading skills.
23. The school's accommodation is somewhat restricted, which places some limitations on the Foundation Stage curriculum, most notably in physical development, and is restricting development in ICT, pending the building of an extension which is scheduled to start in a few weeks time. The outside area has been developed well to support pupils' learning in Years 1 to 4 and teachers use this well. The school grounds have been developed very well to include adventure equipment - such as concrete pipes and large tyres let into the ground - that supports open-ended imaginative play. A pond encourages wildlife and the school has established habitats for various mini-beasts, which contributes to pupils' learning in science. Pupils' involvement in the establishment of these resources and in work towards becoming an Eco School supports their personal development: the school places much emphasis on teaching pupils about the environment and, as a result, pupils have become very interested in conservation and recycling.

Care, guidance and support

The school offers its pupils very good care and guidance in a safe and supportive environment. Monitoring of personal development and achievement is good. There are good arrangements for seeking pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for and the small classes mean they receive a good level of individual support by staff who know them well.
- Pupils new to the school benefit from very good induction arrangements and this is enhanced by pre-school provision being based on school premises.
- Pupils achieve well because their personal development and achievement are monitored effectively.
- Detailed marking in Years 3 and 4 encourages pupils to make decisions about how they can improve.

Commentary

24. A parent who said 'it is like sending my child to another home rather than a school' illustrates well the caring atmosphere of Hartest School. Parents' responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting confirm that they appreciate and are very confident in the school's high levels of individual care and support for their children. Clear guidelines through the policies ensure consistency across the school concerning matters such as child protection, discipline and first aid procedures.
25. The high staff to pupil ratio enables teachers to know their pupils closely as individuals and to encourage them to develop confidence and high self-esteem. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for younger ones and they take this responsibility seriously, as seen in the playground during the inspection. In the pupils' questionnaire, most pupils confirmed that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried at school. Academic achievement is supported well through personal targets. Monitoring of pupils' academic achievement and thorough tracking of their personal development involve a great deal of informal discussion between staff, who know the pupils very well. The very personal comments on the annual reports confirm this.
26. Pupils know their views are important because they are encouraged to talk and write about how the school can help them to improve. This is done through a very good system of marking aimed at engaging older pupils in discussion about their work. A section on the annual report is included for pupils' thoughts on how they can improve and what they value most about the school. The school council is active and gives pupils good opportunities to contribute to developments; at present, pupils' main contribution is to the school's work on the environment. Pupils have a sense of ownership of this project and are involved in decision-making.
27. Induction arrangements for new pupils have been very carefully thought through. The pre-school on site, and the 'Bambi Club'² for pre-school children and their parents, have both enhanced provision significantly. Their increased familiarity with the school before starting contributes very well to children settling in and parents are very appreciative of the work the school has undertaken to establish these on site. An example of how pre-school children feel very comfortable in school was seen at the parents' pre-inspection meeting. All those accompanying their parents went happily into another room with a teacher without a backward glance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are very good. Parental involvement, both with work at home and support for the school, is also very good, as is the quality of information for parents. Links with other schools are very good through the local support networks and well established with pre-school provision. Community links through local businesses, the church and the village are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents contribute very well to pupils' learning at home and at school and are complemented by the high quality information that parents receive.
- Parental involvement through the Friends' Association and the help that parents provide in school are very good.
- The school's links with the local community and other schools contribute very well to broadening pupils' learning experiences.

² The Bambi Club provides a meeting point for mothers and young children.

Commentary

28. Parents at the meeting were highly positive about the school and their responses to the questionnaire were very positive overall. The school places significant importance on the partnership between home and school and encourages parental participation, which benefits all the pupils through increased resources and support for their learning. This link works very effectively because parents feel very well informed, are welcome in school and are keen to play their part in this small community. Several parents help in school on a regular basis and many more volunteer on specific occasions. Parental involvement begins even before their children start school through the pre-school and Bambi Club. Parents take a keen interest in how their children are doing and appreciate the information contained in the annual reports, provision of curriculum details each term and regular newsletters. They are consulted through questionnaires on how the school can improve and also have the opportunity to give feedback on their children's reports. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately consulted and pupils have some opportunities to contribute their views about their targets. The significant number of parents attending the Governors' Annual General Meeting illustrates their high level of commitment. This meeting is combined with activities related to areas of the curriculum to raise parents' awareness. The Friends' Association raises significant sums of money for the school because parents are made to feel their contribution is appreciated. In this small school, parents enjoy a feeling of 'belonging', as witnessed by the friendly and supportive atmosphere at the pre-inspection meeting.
29. Community links are very good because they are focused on enhancing pupils' learning. Thus, business links are not only used to further pupils' knowledge in a variety of subjects, but also involve other schools so that pupils increase their social skills through co-operating in larger groups. Higher-attaining pupils have the opportunity to share greater challenges with more children of similar ability. The link with the local church is strong and benefits pupils because they have the opportunity to celebrate important festivals there and to share their achievement with the wider community, for example, in art displays. This link also contributes to their learning in history and geography and pupils enjoy the local rector's inspiring assemblies. Through these links, pupils develop greater awareness of their place within the larger community.
30. Links with local schools are very good as a result of the strong small schools support network which enables the sharing of knowledge, expertise and workload, bringing the teachers and pupils some of the advantages that larger schools enjoy. Transition arrangements for Year 4 pupils transferring to middle school are very good because pupils know the school well through shared activities such as sports day, subject activities and performing plays together with other local primary schools. The links with the pre-school are very strong as the school initiated its establishment on the site. As a result, numbers are rising and the school's reputation is spreading by word of mouth to other villages in the surrounding area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership so that all staff share a commitment to school development and work as an effective team. Others with leadership responsibilities generally fulfil them well. Management is satisfactory. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good strategic leadership and directs the school's work effectively.
- Raising the profile of the school is leading to an increased roll, which should ultimately give rise to improved learning opportunities.
- The headteacher and staff with subject responsibilities engage in limited formal monitoring and evaluation.

- The governing body provides very good support and satisfactory challenge to the school.
- There is a large carry forward in the budget but this is the result of clearly planned developments.

Commentary

31. The headteacher is committed to school improvement and to pupils' continued development. Teamwork is strong and teachers collaborate readily with one another, based on a mutual vision for the school. The headteacher provides effective support to new teachers, and all staff have good opportunities for professional development. These factors are reflected in the school being awarded Investor in People status. There is a satisfactory, though brief, school improvement plan which contains generally appropriate priorities; a beginning has been made in developing subject improvement plans.
32. At the time of the last inspection, the current headteacher was quite newly appointed. In the interim, she has raised the profile of the school in the local community and this is leading to a beneficial increase in pupil numbers. A major contributory factor in securing the school's future was the headteacher's very good strategic move in establishing a local playgroup on school premises and acting as a venue for the Bambi Club one morning a week. The local community appreciates both these facilities a great deal and this has helped to cement the school's close working relationship with its parents and others within Hartest.
33. The headteacher is the only full-time teacher and teaches three days a week. This gives her very direct experience of the pupils but also limits the amount of time she has for managing the school. Monitoring procedures mean that she has a satisfactory overview of the school's work. She undertakes only a small amount of formal lesson observation and relies instead on regular informal visits to other teachers' classrooms and work scrutiny. The few observations that have been recorded show that lesson monitoring needs to be sharper and linked more closely to pupils' learning. Subject co-ordinators are not allocated any time for lesson observation – with the exception of the ICT co-ordinator – and have limited knowledge about what goes on in other teachers' classrooms within their subject. Co-ordinators scrutinise work and look at planning but this is insufficient on its own because it is not, for instance, leading to improvement in the match of work to the different needs of pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the spreading of good practice that already exists in this respect in Years 1 and 2. Furthermore, most teachers are responsible for co-ordinating a number of subjects which necessarily reduces the focus they are able to give to any particular subject area.
34. Special educational needs is co-ordinated effectively by the headteacher. She liaises appropriately with outside agencies and parents, undertakes relevant training and provides some subsequent training for the staff. She monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs, mostly through scrutinising their work and assessment records, and provides appropriate guidance for teachers when a pupil needs to be identified formally as having special educational needs.
35. The fact that assessment procedures are good and marking is very good, means that teachers are able to track the progress of individual pupils. They do not, however, use data sufficiently to compare the achievement of pupils in this school with that of pupils in other schools. This is especially the case in Years 3 and 4, where pupils are not required to take statutory tests before they leave as a means of judging the school's effectiveness. Teachers do make use of national non-statutory test materials, but lack of analysis in relation to the national picture makes it very difficult for teachers – including the headteacher – to be sure pupils are doing as well as they should or to identify where they ought to be doing better.
36. Governance is good. The chair of governors works very closely with the school and offers a great deal of support as a regular volunteer in the classroom. Other governors provide very good support for social functions and help the school in practical ways. The governing body operates through a number of working parties and particular governors have designated

responsibilities for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs and gifted and talented provision. These governors go into school and observe pupils at work in lessons, although they do not attempt to make judgements about teaching. Other members of the governing body visit the school each term and governors conduct health and safety checks. Governors question the headteacher to some extent, but they tend to leave decisions about educational matters to the staff. Some governors have an understanding of national performance data but most rely on the explanations the headteacher provides. Governors oversee financial matters more closely although they do not monitor the impact of spending decisions directly or have a real understanding of best value.

37. There has been a large carry forward in the budget for the last two years but the money brought forward into the current year was the result of clearly planned developments. This money has enabled the school to employ an additional teacher for the Foundation Stage, preventing these children from being taught with the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Much of the remainder is earmarked for the extension, which will significantly improve facilities for ICT. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money: being a small school means that its costs per pupil are high but pupils achieve well and make good progress in their personal development.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	176,039	Balance from previous year	44,960
Total expenditure	182,095	Balance carried forward to the next	38,904
Expenditure per pupil	4,552.38		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and provision has improved since the last inspection. They do very well in communication, language and literacy, where teaching is very good, and well in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world as a result of good teaching. Teaching and children's achievement are satisfactory in mathematical development, creative development and physical development. Children are likely to reach – and in communication, language and literacy exceed – the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Teaching is good and planning reflects the Foundation Stage curriculum appropriately. Less emphasis is placed on spontaneous creativity, however, than is the best practice with children of this age, and opportunities for children to move freely from the indoor to the outdoor area are limited because of steps immediately outside the Foundation Stage classroom. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers keep very detailed information about how well children are doing in communication, language and literacy. They record information about other areas of learning and make some useful observations about individual children, but assessment is less comprehensive in these other areas. They do, however, look at children's work to track their progress and use what this reveals to plan future lessons. There is good early identification and support for children with special educational needs. Very good partnership with parents provides every opportunity for them to become involved in their children's learning and the work that children do at home supports their overall achievement very well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond well to the routines and behaviour is good.
- They are developing good social skills and relate well with one another and with adults.
- The close partnership with parents fosters children's personal development and confidence.

Commentary

39. Children are happy and secure and clearly enjoy good, trusting relationship with the adults who work with them. Parents say that they settle in very quickly, many aided by the easy transition from the playgroup – which is based in the school – to the reception class. Their confidence is also fostered very effectively by the close links the school has with parents and the imaginative ways in which links are forged between home and school.
40. There are clear routines and teachers generally communicate to pupils their high expectations for behaviour. 'Golden time' and 'golden rules' are used to reinforce positive behaviour. Most children behave well, try to succeed at the tasks they are given and concentrate in class. They work very hard with their reading and writing.
41. Children have opportunities to talk about their experiences in circle time and to share their feelings with others. Teachers model caring behaviour for children and insist that, if a child has been unkind to another, he or she apologises. Pupils join the rest of the school for assembly, where they behave very well, and before lunch they close their eyes and put their hands together for a prayer. A child is chosen each day to act as helper to the teacher, and so children learn to take responsibility. They all gain much enjoyment from 'looking after' younger children when the Bambi Club comes into school, and develop a good range of personal and social skills that stand them in good stead when they move into Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in reading in response to a regular reading programme.
- They also achieve very well in developing their writing skills and several should exceed the Early Learning Goals for writing.

Commentary

42. Teaching is very good in this area of learning. Teachers' expectations are high in communication, language and literacy, and they use an effective range of teaching methods that challenge the children and enable them to understand and progress rapidly. This augurs well for these children as they move up through the school and supports teachers' efforts to raise standards in writing.
43. Children listen with interest to stories, often aided by the teacher's good dramatisation. Regular focused practice at learning simple words as a whole class means that children quickly acquire knowledge of a number of high frequency words needed to begin to read independently. Most can sequence pictures, with some prompts, to retell a story.
44. Children have good opportunities to develop their language through talk with one another and with adults. When they are playing together, they talk about what they are doing and negotiate. They readily contribute to question and answer sessions and are confident about expressing their ideas.
45. The school is using a special programme to develop children's knowledge of phonics. Their developing knowledge of the links between sounds and letters is providing a very good foundation for writing and ensures they are getting an early grasp of spelling. During the inspection, the 'letters of the week' were actually the phoneme combinations of 'oa' and 'ie', which provided a high level of challenge for children of this age. They responded very well and could think of some words that rhyme and contain these sounds in the middle of them. They showed an awareness of initial letter sounds and some could identify final letter sounds.
46. Standards of writing vary but most children are working above expectations and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, several are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in reading and writing. Children have made little books and are given good opportunities to write for a range of different purposes, for instance, writing stories, captions and sets of instructions. All children relate pictures to meaning and attempt to write a caption underneath their drawings. Lower-attaining children are beginning to form their letters correctly. Average-attaining children make reasonable attempts at spelling simple words and show phonic awareness. Most use a pencil effectively and hold it correctly. Higher-attaining children are able to write a logically sequenced account, with some use of capital letters and full-stops. Their writing is fairly even and their spelling is well above average; for example, they make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making satisfactory progress in developing a range of skills but they are less advanced in mathematical development than in communication, language and literacy.

Commentary

47. Although teaching in mathematical development was good in a session observed during the inspection, teaching overall is satisfactory in this area of learning. Appropriate emphasis is given to number recognition through counting songs and games. Nearly all recognise numbers one to ten and some can find one more than a given number. Children are encouraged to count and to gain mathematical understanding in real-life situations, such as counting at snack time. They did well in recognising coins in a lesson on money during the inspection.
48. Records and children's work show that they have done work on shape and number. Higher-attaining children can estimate fairly accurately and make comparisons, for example, recognising that one thing is 'more than' another in relation to quantity or volume. All children can count to at least ten and some can identify missing numbers from a sequence. Although children have practised tracing over numbers, very few are able to write numbers independently yet. They are not therefore transferring their good pencil control gained in literacy to their mathematical development. This is because teachers place less emphasis on recording as part of mathematical development. Neither do they keep such detailed records of how well children are progressing in different strands of this area of learning as they do in communication, language and literacy.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

49. This area of learning was not inspected in detail but scrutiny of planning, assessment and displays and discussion with staff show that provision in this area is good. The curriculum ensures that children have a good range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Activities include cooking, using a digital camera, using computer programs, making models, taping sounds with a cassette recorder and learning about electronic equipment in the kitchen. Children have explored materials to learn about their properties and classified them. In lessons and in assemblies, they hear stories from the Bible and draw pictures about them, and they learn about other cultures. They visit the church and attend special services. Otherwise, there have not been many visits and teachers do not take the children out into the community as much as most schools do with this age group. Children do, however, benefit from initiatives at a whole-school level and are well integrated with the rest of the school in a way that supports their knowledge and understanding of the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

50. Provision in physical development was not inspected in detail but curriculum planning and observation of children in a number of sessions shows that their achievement is broadly satisfactory in this area of learning. Children are making good progress in developing control when using pencils, paintbrushes and construction toys. They make satisfactory progress in sessions with a physical education focus, including dance. They have limited opportunities, however, to play regularly in the outside area because there are steps immediately outside the classroom, which mean that they require adult supervision when they are outside. This restricts their physical development to some extent and reduces opportunities for independent exploration of their physical environment. They have good opportunities to gain water skills when the swimming pool is made available in the summer.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

51. Provision in creative development was not inspected in detail but curriculum planning and observation of children in a number of sessions shows that their achievement is satisfactory in this area of learning. Children have some opportunities to paint and to combine materials to produce three-dimensional models, but only one art-focused activity is planned each week. Furthermore, they have limited regular opportunities for expressing themselves through dressing up and engaging in spontaneous creativity. Toys and resources are provided for

children to engage in role-play, for example, by playing with the farm or in the home corner. There are few resources available on a daily basis, however, that support more symbolic play or enable children to select materials and create pictures or models from their own initiative. One session with a music focus was observed during the inspection and this provided satisfactory opportunities for children to sing and to play a limited range of musical instruments. A teacher in the Foundation Stage is soon to attend a course in music, which should support the school in extending opportunities for children to develop a wider range of musical skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in reading and by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average.
- Standards in writing were above average overall in Year 2 tests in 2003 but fewer pupils gained Level 3 in writing than in reading or mathematics.
- In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good overall and work is matched very well to the different needs in the class.
- Marking is very good; it lets pupils know what to do to improve but teachers are not entirely clear about how to bring about optimum improvement in pupils' writing in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

52. Pupils reach standards in reading that are well above average as a result of the school's emphasis on reading as a key skill that underpins all learning. Pupils' comprehension of what they have read is particularly strong by the end of Year 2 and results in National Curriculum tests in 2003 were well above average in reading, with a high proportion of pupils gaining Level 3. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to make good progress in developing their reading skills. The school has invested a significant amount of money in books and other reading resources, which have been used to very good effect to raise standards.
53. Speaking is a little above the national average throughout the school; listening skills are about average. Not all pupils have the necessary self-discipline to listen really carefully in a whole-class situation, although they do this well when working in small groups or engaging in one-to-one conversation.
54. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 in response to consistently good teaching and work that is very carefully matched to the different learning needs and ages in the class. Teachers identify precise learning objectives for different groups of pupils, group them well according to their prior attainment, and make very good use of learning support assistants to ensure that pupils work at a level that is suited to their learning needs. This ensures that time is used well, pupils know what is expected of them and they make systematic progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well.
55. Although satisfactory, the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is not as good as it could be in writing and, in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, pupils did less well at Level 3 in writing than they did in mathematics and reading. Overall standards in writing were above average and the school did very well in the number of pupils who reached the upper range of Level 2. Inspection findings show that the school is effective in teaching pupils the basic skills of writing, so that most pupils by the end of Year 2 are able to organise their ideas in a logical sequence of sentences demarcated by capital letters and full-stops. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 and average-attaining pupils in Year 3 are beginning to produce extended pieces of writing but they make limited use of imaginative vocabulary. In contrast,

where they have engaged in collaborative work – for instance, producing class poems in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4 – striking images are piled one upon another to very good effect. Some of the best writing is also produced when pupils use ICT to draft and redraft their work. Older pupils generally remember to use adjectives and adverbs, however, only when they are reminded to do so and are not practised in checking their own work for errors or to see how they might improve it. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 4 sustain their ideas and include some imaginative vocabulary that captures the reader’s interest but even they do not always seek to make their writing varied and stimulating. Teachers are working consistently to improve pupils’ handwriting and presentation, with satisfactory results.

56. Very good marking communicates to pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work and shows how much teachers are committed to raising standards. There is some excellent marking in the Year 3 and 4 class. Furthermore, the good practice of pupils throughout the school doing a piece of independent writing every half term provides teachers with valuable information from which to assess their progress. This, and other written work, is assessed very thoroughly. In this way, the school is already doing part of what it needs to do to raise standards further in writing, but the knowledge of what pupils need to improve does not inform teachers’ methods sufficiently. Pupils all have specific individual targets for literacy, which again are capable of helping them to improve, but pupils do not make very active use of these targets when they tackle each new piece of work.
57. Strengths in assessment procedures but incomplete use of assessment information to raise standards in writing are particularly evident in Years 3 and 4, where most pupils have already grasped the basics of writing and need to be refining their skills and becoming more thoughtful about how and what they write. Teaching does not place enough emphasis on evaluating ideas for writing, on modelling high quality writing with the whole class and then transferring these skills to pupils’ individual work. Tasks are not always intrinsically interesting and limited use is made of redrafting. Most importantly, tasks are not matched closely enough to the different learning needs in the class for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Occasionally, this leads to older and higher-attaining pupils finishing a task before the end of a lesson while younger or lower-attaining pupils are still struggling with it.
58. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a good overall push to raise standards and provision has improved since the last inspection. Teachers liaise with one another as much as possible – with very good collaboration between the two teachers in Years 1 and 2 – but the co-ordinator teaches part time and has a number of other co-ordination responsibilities as well. She is not given any time to observe others’ teaching and does not get involved in the scrutiny of pupils’ work. This is undertaken, instead, by the headteacher who does have an effective oversight of how individual pupils are achieving. The literacy co-ordinator and the headteacher have attended some courses aimed at improving teachers’ subject knowledge. The school has not yet received support from a leading literacy teacher in the local education authority although this has been planned for some time.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Language and literacy are promoted well across the curriculum. Good promotion of literacy takes place in design and technology, where pupils write about how they will make their design and sometimes evaluate their products. In history and geography, pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills. In science, they record their findings from investigations and learn the specialist vocabulary of the subject. In personal, social and health education and religious education, pupils produce some of their best writing, because they write from direct experience and explain and recount stories that have clearly interested them. Teachers could, however, promote pupils’ literacy and develop their presentation skills more by making better use of display to celebrate their written work. At the time of the inspection, most display consisted of teacher-generated materials or posters that informed pupils but did not use their own work and creativity to enrich the learning environment.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good and especially effective in Years 1 and 2.
- Homework is used well to support pupils' learning.
- Mathematical skills are developed well in a range of curriculum areas.

Commentary

60. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 show that pupils have performed at levels above the national average in four out of the last five years and that they are achieving well. The number of pupils attaining Level 3 in tests at this age is also increasing. Evidence of work seen during the inspection in Years 1 and 2 showed pupils working hard during sessions and really enjoying the challenge in the tasks set. Some Year 2 pupils showed place-value understanding of quite large numbers for their age, and some higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 were stimulated by working in groups with older pupils. The standards seen in Year 3 and 4 were also above average, with pupils of all abilities achieving well, including those with special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils.
61. Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good, with teaching in Years 1 and 2 being very good. The following features contribute to this:
- Lessons proceed at a brisk and stimulating pace.
 - Work is well matched to all abilities.
 - Very good relationships are based on care, knowledge of individual needs and good humour.
 - There are consistent working routines in classes.
 - Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questioning skilfully.
 - Good links exist between subjects so that numeracy skills are constantly being placed in real contexts.
62. With two year groups in each class, teachers have to plan well to ensure that each pupil is appropriately challenged. This is achieved as a result of teachers knowing their pupils very well, by making good use of the knowledge of older pupils to help their peers and by carefully planned activities. The teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 was particularly successful in setting a range of targets for the different ability groups in the class. The teacher supported all of the groups very well with challenging activities for all and by repeatedly making pupils assess whether or not they were achieving their individual objectives. She employed a very good form of self-assessment. Those groups who were not supported directly by her or the teaching assistant had to make self-assessments at the end of the group work session, showing whether or not they had achieved their objectives and indicated how hard or otherwise they found the work. Pupils did this very diligently and were praised for their helpful honesty.
63. Homework is used well to support pupils' progress in mathematics. Very good booklets are provided for parents, which highlight targets for the year and give parents a range of activities that they can do with their children to help them succeed. Many of these are fun activities but the information helps parents realise that these all have the purpose of raising standards and bringing their child success. Mental arithmetic, which is well developed in all classes, is reinforced through homework activities.
64. Leadership of the subject is good. Provision has shown good improvement since the last inspection with a better standard of teaching, clear targets and a consistent raising of standards and achievement for pupils of all abilities. Management is satisfactory; the co-

ordinator liaises with the other teacher with whom she shares a class but has not had the opportunity to observe lessons in the Year 3 and 4 class.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Mathematical skills are developed well in a number of subjects. For example, timelines are regularly used in history, science work includes accurate measurement and ICT provides opportunities for pupils to understand more about shape and angles through the use of the 'roamer'. Pupils also produce a range of graphs to support their work in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in National Curriculum tests are above average.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils have very good opportunities to learn from practical experiments in Years 3 and 4.
- There is a strong emphasis on scientific enquiry throughout the school.
- The environment is used very well to deepen pupils' understanding.

Commentary

66. In the most recent teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, all the pupils reached the standards expected. This was well above the national average but the number attaining Level 3 was below average. Work in pupils' books, however, shows that they are covering the whole range of the curriculum and achieving well, especially in Years 1 and 2. They sustain above average standards in Years 3 and 4 and make satisfactory progress overall but do very well in investigative work.
67. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2, supported by very careful matching of tasks to the different needs and ages within the class. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and a strong emphasis on giving pupils access to practical experience. As a result, they enjoy the subject and gain in confidence. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 does not, however, match tasks to the different needs or mixed ages in the class. Pupils in both years make good progress in their knowledge of science but higher-attaining and older pupils could move forward at a faster pace in some lessons in their understanding and skills if they were given tasks more closely matched to their prior attainment and allowed to proceed at their own pace. Greater use could be made of independent learning for these pupils. Similarly, recording methods are not always matched sufficiently to the needs of lower-attaining or younger pupils.
68. A positive feature of teaching throughout the school is the thorough grounding the pupils receive in how to conduct a fair test. This ensures that experiments are systematic and pupils comment accurately on results. There is also a strong emphasis on cross-curricular work to make their work more relevant and interesting. For example, pupils visited Clare Country Park in Years 1 and 2 as part of both the science and geography curriculum. They studied the making of 'bug houses' there and transferred their knowledge to making one to put in the pond in the school grounds. This work included elements of design and technology in the making of the houses, ICT in recording their work using digital cameras and literacy in making captions to go with the display work. The school's business links also enrich the curriculum opportunities and resources available to pupils.
69. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in Years 1 and 2 and is supported in her co-ordination of the subject for older pupils by a subject specialist who works in the Year 3 and 4 class. Management of the subject is satisfactory, hampered to some extent by the part-time

nature of teachers' roles making it difficult for the co-ordinator to observe others' teaching. All teachers monitor pupils' progress appropriately through tests and assessments at the end of each unit of work. This helps the subject co-ordinator to monitor individual achievement and the success or otherwise of teaching. Teachers also comment, at this stage, on which resources and approaches have worked well during the work, with the intention of improving provision in the future. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and standards have risen.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Difficulties in the distribution of computers limit the use teachers can make of ICT and the development of pupils' skills.
- ICT skills are used and promoted well across the curriculum.

Commentary

70. Throughout the school, standards in ICT are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 create pie and bar charts showing how everyone travels to school. They use word processing and drawing programs and can access information from CD-Roms competently. In Years 3 and 4, they further develop these skills and interrogate the Internet to support work across a range of curriculum areas. They produce a large proportion of the labels that accompany displays around the school. The individual contribution of pupils is not highlighted in these displays, however, and visitors and parents would not realise that the labels have been produced by pupils. Older pupils are beginning to create a school website, preparing some of their work in humanities to be displayed on the front page.
71. Achievement is satisfactory but could be improved, along with individual standards, if computers were accessible in both classrooms. The school used to have a computer suite in which large groups could be taught basic skills at the same time. The area in which the suite was housed is used for other purposes now, although there are plans to install another. At present, teachers have to work very hard with the scattered equipment available. A very good lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2 in which pupils were organised into four different groups aided by the teacher, classroom assistant and two parent helpers. All groups made good progress across the range of ICT skills as a result of this level of support; however, if the highly skilled teacher had had a greater number of networked computers to work on, she might have achieved good results without having to rely on helpers and very time consuming preparation and planning. Although this was the only whole lesson seen, the teaching of skills to small groups in other lessons was also good.
72. Leadership is now good and management is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is planning well to overcome the difficulties of the present hardware situation. She has a clear idea of how to bring about improvement when the new suite is opened, and has undertaken some monitoring of lessons. All aspects of the curriculum are covered well, including a very good range of control investigations. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Computers are used in several areas of the curriculum. Literacy work is word processed and well presented. Pupils use the Internet to aid research in humanities and science. Artwork is produced using drawing programs, and music packages are used to help composition. Pupils also receive homework in a range of subjects that includes research on home computers.

HUMANITIES

74. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision, achievement or teaching in geography or history. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography** and some parts of lessons were seen.
75. There is every indication from the samples of pupils' work seen that standards are broadly average in both subjects and it is clear that a range of visits play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. The school has visited a local toy museum and taken part in living history work at Hedingham Castle. There are good links with science in environmental work, with a visit recently to Clare Country Park, helping pupils to realise the rich environment they are fortunate to be growing up in. Pupils study houses in the past and have done some interesting work on their own homes.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in religious education are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good and particularly encourages pupils to reflect.
- Assessment is good and marking provides pupils with very good information about how they are doing and what they could do to improve.

Commentary

76. Standards are above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for the subject. Pupils learn about religions, focusing mainly on Christianity but also learning about Judaism and Hinduism. They are beginning to be able to compare a range of features of the religions covered and know that religions have many things in common. The most impressive aspect of their study is the degree to which they can relate aspects of religions covered to their own experiences, and this element of their work is above average. This is as a result of good planning by teachers to a common pattern which looks at concepts such as forgiveness, gets pupils to reflect on aspects of their own lives and then moves onto religious teaching on the concept and considers how adherents might behave. Pupils have very good subject knowledge for their age, of stories and facts from religions, but also of concepts. For example a Year 1 pupil remarked, when considering a story that he had heard the previous week, 'Some people said it was a miracle'.
77. Although only one lesson was observed, it is evident from scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils that teaching is of a consistently good standard. In the lesson seen, the teacher regularly encouraged the pupils to reflect on the feelings and emotions involved in the story they were studying. This led to some perceptive comments such as, 'They didn't say thank you because they were so pleased, excited that they got better and they forgot.' A particular feature of teaching is the very good marking, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Each piece of work is followed up by the teacher, with comments that encourage further thought and reflection, and there is a genuine dialogue about the topics covered.
78. Leadership of the subject is good and management is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory resources but supplements these with artefacts and other materials borrowed from a local education authority centre. Pupils visit the local church but opportunities to visit other places of worship are rather limited; there are no temples in the area. The rector is a regular visitor to the school, as a contributor to assemblies, but does not contribute to religious education. The school has had a Jewish visitor and its multicultural education project included a visit by a representative of the Hindu religion. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. Insufficient evidence was collected to form an overall judgement about provision, standards or teaching in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education. It was only possible to observe part of an art and design lesson and physical education lesson and a small part of a music lesson. No lessons were seen in design and technology. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with staff.
80. In art and design, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to work with a range of materials and processes. Some of their best work has been produced through experiencing other artists' work on visits, for example, to a local sculptor's studio and to 'Art in the Park' where they were able to use materials experimentally to produce imaginative three-dimensional work. In their work after Andrew Goldsworthy, they showed a good understanding of his techniques and pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced effective junk sculptures which were sprayed gold and silver. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked well in a lesson that enabled them to produce a painting of Medusa's head. Some who had shown limited involvement in a literacy lesson earlier in the day worked carefully and expressively, doing their best to depict Medusa's key features. Sketchbooks are used well by older pupils and, as in other subject areas, marking communicates clearly how pupils could improve their work.
81. Work in **design and technology** suggests that pupils are acquiring a suitable range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Their work suggests that they enjoy the subject and pupils are involved in some useful self-assessment in design and technology. Some of the designs of older pupils include annotations to explain particular design choices and include consideration of possible materials. When they made a moving animal, pupils in Years 3 and 4 included in their designs a description of the method to be used and a cutting list. When evaluating different types of sandwich fillings, they gave their reasons for liking or disliking particular ones. The work of pupils in Years 3 and 4, such as the model gliders as part of the project on 'flight' and dishes in food technology, show average making skills. As part of the school's celebration of the Queen's Jubilee, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given a challenge to design 'a chair fit for the Queen'. This led to the production of an imaginative large-scale card model after pupils voted for the best design.
82. In **music**, pupils have good opportunities to perform with those from other schools in performances. They also work in preparation for school productions. A string quartet from the local upper school came in to play for pupils, which gave them an opportunity to ask questions and find out about the commitment involved in learning an instrument to any significant level. Violin lessons are provided one day after school and a recorder club is starting very soon. Pupils sing in assembly with confidence and enthusiasm. They have opportunities to sing in carol services at school, in the church and have attended services at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral.
83. Only part of one lesson was seen in **physical education** and it is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement about provision, standards or teaching. Scrutiny of planning indicates that the complete range of the curriculum is covered and pupils have some good opportunities to extend their skills through extra-curricular activities such as a dance workshop and maypole dancing. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn to swim during the summer term and over the summer holidays. The school benefits from a good-sized hall and very pleasant grounds with markings for major sports.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, achievement or teaching in personal, social and health education. The school ethos and assemblies contribute positively to pupils' development as effective citizens as well as to their personal and social education. Strong emphasis is placed on raising pupils' awareness of environmental issues and, as they

were told in one assembly, making them realise that they are 'the ones who are going to be here in the future'.

85. Pupils have some opportunities to develop their independence and problem solving skills through personal, social and health education. For instance, they were recently given the challenge of working in groups to build a model bridge, which revealed varied levels of personal and social skill. All pupils took part in a 'thinking skills' day aimed at helping them to think in broader terms. Through its business and community links, the school provides pupils with valuable opportunities to extend their knowledge of how to stay healthy and keep themselves safe. In part of a personal, social and health education lesson during the inspection, the teacher encouraged pupils to think about how important families and friends are. In doing so, she brought pupils closer to recognising the importance of positive personal qualities and the need to value, help and care for others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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