

## INSPECTION REPORT

**BRAMFORD CHURCH of ENGLAND VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bramford, Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124723

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Eden

Lead inspector: Sue Orpin

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 266474

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 – 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 205

School address: Duckamere  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
Postcode: IP8 4AH

Telephone number: 01473 741598  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Tony Dack

Date of previous inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is an average sized village primary school with 205 pupils. Pupils are organised in seven classes, one in each year group. Pupils come from a wide area and are in families from a wide range of social circumstances, but are broadly typical when compared with the national picture. Five per cent of the pupils have free school meals, which is below the national average. Pupils' attainment when they start school is that expected for their age. Thirty seven pupils, an average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs, which are mainly moderate learning, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. The school gained the Investors in People Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17808	Sue Orpin	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, citizenship, physical education.
9053	Viv Phillips	Lay inspector	
32529	Anne Duke	Team inspector	Science, art and design, music, foundation stage
32428	Brian Ball	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very effective school** that provides very good value for money. Pupils achieve very well because teaching is usually very good and they make very good progress in their personal development. The leadership and management of the school are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average in most year groups. In 2004, pupils in Year 6 did exceptionally well in national tests compared with similar schools
- Teaching is predominantly very good, although there were some areas for improvement in a few of the lessons seen
- The reception class provides children with a very good start to school and they achieve very well
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school and their lessons are very good. They are very keen to learn and do so with vigour
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, and moral and social development, ensures that pupils' personal qualities are generally promoted very well and that relationships are very good, making a happy school
- The leadership of the head teacher is very purposeful and has been sharply focussed on improving pupils' achievements. Governance is well informed and decisive
- The school takes very good care of pupils' well being, health and safety and personal development

There were no key issues at the last inspection in 1998. **Improvement since that time has been good** in several areas including pupils' achievement, teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	A	A	A*
mathematics	C	D	A	A
science	B	D	A	A*

*Key: A\* - top 5% nationally; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - lowest 5%*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievements are very good.** Children start at the school with standards that are typical nationally. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage so many will exceed the goals expected by the end of the reception year. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The current Year 2 and 6 are achieving very well, although there are fewer higher attaining pupils so standards are slightly below those reflected in the 2004 test results. However, the standards of most other year groups are well above those expected for their age. In other subjects, where judgements were possible, achievement is good, except in personal, social and health education where it is very good. The achievement of pupils who are gifted and talented, and those with special educational needs is very good.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils want to come to school so their attendance is good. They know that in most lessons their ideas are valued highly so they are confident, readily contribute and respect the views of others. The high standards of personal development are a firm basis for academic success. Pupils have very good levels of tolerance and understanding of other children, including those who are different from themselves, but they do not have as great an awareness and grasp of cultural diversity. Children in the Foundation Stage behave very well and they are also very interested in lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.**

**The quality of teaching and learning is very good.** Teachers are usually very skilled in asking questions that allow pupils to think and help them to extend their understanding. Consequently, pupils are used to thinking for themselves and finding solutions to problems. In most lessons, the teacher pays close attention to how pupils are learning and what they need to do next, so pupils continuously succeed in progressively more challenging tasks. Usually the lessons are very interesting and consist of a wide range of activities that stimulate pupils and help them to learn. Pupils are assessed well and teachers usually plan to meet their needs very well. In those few lessons that were less effective, the work was not fine tuned to pupils' needs or there was too little explanation of ideas, so despite their enthusiasm, at times pupils did not fully understand how to achieve tasks. Although homework is set regularly, sometimes it consists of tasks that do not stimulate. The curriculum is good and very well planned, providing a very broad range of interesting subjects but the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in numeracy and ICT through other subjects are less well developed. A very good range of extra activities is provided for pupils. The school provides very well for pupils' care, and welfare, and listens to pupils' views effectively. Parents are made very welcome in the school and are kept well informed. Links with the local community and other schools contribute well to pupils' experiences.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The headteacher's very clear focus on raising pupils' achievements, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, has improved teaching and standards. This is despite some staffing difficulties. The leadership of most other key staff is good and developing steadily. Staff are well trained and supported, and the success of the school is regularly reviewed so all resources can be put to their best use. The governors perform their role well and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Whole school planning and financial management are very good.

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

Nearly all parents are happy with the work of the school, particularly teaching, and they feel comfortable about making contact. Most pupils are very happy at school. They feel listened to, that lessons are interesting and fun and they get help when they need it.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school has no major areas of weakness. In order to build further on its success it should

- Share the strengths in teaching so that all is as good as the best

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Achievement is very good throughout the school and in most years standards are well above average.

#### Main strengths

- In 2004, pupils in Year 6 achieved exceptionally well in national tests when compared with similar schools
- Pupils' achievements are very good in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE)

#### Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage the standards achieved are above those expected with most children being likely to achieve the goals expected, and about one third being likely to exceed most of them. This is largely the result of the very good teaching and learning children experience so they are highly motivated and gaining confidence in learning. All children, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, in communication language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their achievement in physical development and creative development is satisfactory.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (15.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.2 (15.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.9 (18.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (28.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (26.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.2 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

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

2. National test results over recent years in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 and in science in Year 6 have generally risen at a rate that is faster than the national rate of improvement. In 2004 test results in both Years 2 and 6 showed improvement in English in Year 2 and all subjects in Year 6. The improving trend in standards can be seen in most year groups where standards in English mathematics and science are generally well above average. However, the current Year 2 and 6 cohorts have fewer higher attaining pupils so the standards in English mathematics and science in these year groups are slightly lower, being above average. The improvements to pupils' achievements and standards in these subjects are a reflection of the improvements to teaching that have taken place particularly in recent years, and the well developed planning in these subjects. Pupils are especially benefiting from teachers very well developed skills in using questions to help pupils develop their skills in speaking and listening and investigations in several subjects. As a consequence, pupils are learning to become independent in their thinking and demonstrate strong qualities in thinking for themselves and in problem solving.
3. Pupils' achievements and the standards they achieve are less consistent in other subjects, reflecting the school's priorities for improvement as the curriculum is being strengthened and developed to encompass a broader range of knowledge skills and understanding. Pupils are achieving well in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, and design and technology. In



these subjects pupils are attaining standards that are above those expected, although the current Year 6 are achieving standards that are only as expected because they have had gaps in prior learning so their skills are less well developed. In the few lessons seen in music and physical education, pupils achieved standards that were average. The very good achievement and standards in PSHE reflect the high level of importance that the school has attributed to this subject. The consequence of the success of this subject is reflected in the very good attitudes that pupils have to school and lessons.

4. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good in most lessons and they are making very good progress towards the targets set for them. They are very well supported by teaching assistants who help them learn individually and in groups and usually teachers use assessments very well to adapt tasks to meet their individual needs. The needs of pupils who are particularly gifted or talented are also met very well, particularly through teachers' very good use of well targeted questions. In a few lessons that were not as effective, at times, a few higher attaining pupils were less well provided for.
5. Since the last inspection, standards have risen well, especially in English, mathematics, science, ICT and in the Foundation Stage. This directly reflects the improvements of recent years and the strong focus on the development of teaching and learning.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, in response to a very nurturing ethos in which their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed very well. Attendance and punctuality are good. There are no exclusions. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High standards of behaviour and personal development support high achievement very well
- Pupils of all ages and backgrounds thrive on the challenges set at school, particularly in the best lessons, because they are very keen to learn
- Pupils are happy to have a go with tricky questions and hard work because their efforts and ideas are valued and encouraged strongly
- Relationships are very good so pupils flourish within a happy community that fosters friendship very well and they want to come to school
- Although pupils develop consideration and great respect for others different from themselves, they do not have such a full understanding of the richly diverse society beyond the local area

### **Commentary**

6. The school's positive aims and Christian values are reflected very clearly in its everyday routines so pupils learn very quickly about the right thing to do from the very good example shown by others. As a result, they treat people with respect and courtesy, with little need for sharp reminders about rules, as a look or pause is usually enough to prompt pupils to listen or do as they are asked. As they said "we have made up our own rules so most of us know what to do." Their involvement in deciding what kinds of behaviour are acceptable ensures that in most lessons the rate of learning benefits greatly from simple, positive ground rules that everyone understands and can follow.
7. Pupils stressed that "the teachers mostly make our lessons fun" so they want to work, particularly when they can be active learners, as they "like hands-on work." High quality teaching triggers their drive to learn. This was very obvious early on in a design technology lesson for older pupils when they were engrossed by the rapid investigation of how models of moving toys worked and thrilled to discover that their findings would be used to make colourful models of Victorian fairground rides. Pupils also relish the chance to wrestle with problems, such as those set in "maths, because we find out how to work out new ways" (to solve them), which fires their intellectual curiosity very well. In contrast, they dislike homework because "most of it is pointless - we are not really learning anything from it at all."
8. The way in which pupils are praised for the effort they put into their work and trying hard to answer teachers' questions, results in the courage to have another go, even when they make mistakes. It ensures that the school builds up pupils' confidence, step by step, whatever their backgrounds and

abilities, within a very positive climate for learning. As a result, even when lessons are less successful, pupils persist with the tasks they are asked to do without losing heart or self-belief.

9. Pupils describe the school, typically, as “fun, interesting and with lots of friends” because of the wide range of lively things to do and the way in which they work and play so well together. The playground zones where Year 6 pupils organise different games and the recent introduction of ‘friendship stops’ where any pupils can go to find someone to play with, ensure that play can be enjoyable for everyone. Pupils like the “equipment we can play with at playtimes and the big field” as well as “lots of trips” and “the different clubs”, all of which add a buzz to school life and ensure that they do not want to miss out on any experiences.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

10. Pupils can reflect thoughtfully on their experiences because of the way that the school takes time to value and celebrate what they do, helped by the use of skilful, open questioning to stimulate good ideas in sparkling lessons. As a result, pupils’ self-awareness is very good. In a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson for older pupils, which was part of the drugs education programme, very thoughtful, well-chosen questions inspired pupils to listen to each other with meticulous care as they explored why different people try alcohol, caffeine and tobacco. The school works particularly hard to ensure that all pupils are made welcome and have every chance of success, whatever their personal circumstances, talents or difficulties. As a result, it is very good at fostering tolerance of a range of individual differences with easy-going acceptance of pupils’ varied physical, emotional and learning needs. Pupils’ cultural understanding is slightly less well developed because they have fewer opportunities to learn about life elsewhere and other, rich traditions that shape people’s beliefs and experiences. Imaginative work during multicultural week, kindled their interest in different heritages through activities such as African mask making and Indian dancing, but this has not been built on systematically, for instance, by links with pupils, schools, or places of worship further afield.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work. They are involved in all activities very well and every effort is made to adapt the curriculum and the environment to their particular needs.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good and have very effectively improved results whilst also stimulating pupils’ interest very well. The assessment of pupils is good and the curriculum provided is good developing a broad range of subjects to interest all pupils. The attention given to the care and welfare of pupils is very good and the school offers good support to pupils based on a secure understanding of their needs. There are good links with parents, the community, and other schools.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is very good so pupils achieve very well, usually enjoy their lessons and want to come to school. Pupils and teachers work together very well so pupils are developing as independent learners. Teachers generally assess their pupils well, particularly in English and mathematics where pupils’ progress is tracked very well. However, most pupils are not yet sufficiently clear about the level of their work in all subjects.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers use questions very well to help pupils understand in more depth and also to help them think about problems for themselves
- Most lessons are very well planned because teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects and they use assessments very well to plan for pupils' needs
- Generally lessons provide a very good balance between factual knowledge and the skills to use and apply it, so teachers help pupils to develop independence and begin to learn for themselves
- Teachers provide a very good range of stimulating activities so that lessons interest pupils very well and they are very keen to learn. However, some homework is too repetitive or tedious
- Teachers assess their pupils well and use this information very effectively in English and mathematics, although the assessment of other subjects is less well developed
- In those few lessons that are less effective, the work was not sufficiently fine tuned to pupils' levels of understanding and there was insufficient explanation of ideas to help pupils understand

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	14 (45%)	11 (36%)	5 (16%)	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.*

12. Teaching and learning are very effective and on occasion teaching is excellent. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection although a small number of lessons are not as good as most teaching. Generally teachers use questions skilfully so pupils are not simply looking for right answers but are learning very effectively to analyse and understand how to arrive at the correct answer. In this way they are helped to learn for themselves very well and they find learning fun, wanting to know more. They answer teachers' questions with confidence because they know that even if they make a mistake, the teacher will use the answer positively, encouraging them to review and think again. As a consequence, teachers and pupils work very effectively together to discover and find out more. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson for older pupils about using known number facts to help multiply and divide larger numbers mentally, the teacher carefully chose numbers to illustrate what she wanted the pupils to learn. She then sensitively used questions in an outstanding way to help pupils explore their own methods and challenged them all to the very highest level because she allowed them to think for themselves. The teacher asked questions that did not have an obvious answer but could be answered at a range of levels. She inspired pupils' confidence in themselves by her response to their answers, whether right or wrong, assisting them in finding the right answers for themselves. As a consequence pupils are achieving at a very high level, find the activities fun and clearly have a passion for mathematics.
13. In most lessons, teachers' very good command of the subject means they inspire pupils, give them confidence and help them to think more deeply. Generally, the very good use of assessment to help plan lessons, especially in English and mathematics, means that activities are challenging and stimulating for all pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson for younger pupils about putting numbers of different sizes into a correct order, the teacher had accurately planned the same task using different numbers to ensure that pupils of different levels of attainment were all suitably challenged. The very good use of discussion in pairs helped pupils to consolidate their understanding. Pupils finding the work more difficult were helped very well by the use of coloured beads to help them understand numbers. Others were very well supported by teaching assistants, while those who were making better progress in the topic were using 'challenge sheets' to further extend their understanding. Throughout pupils worked with excitement.
14. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning both in small groups and with individuals. They know pupils very well and are very well informed by the teacher so they are able to ensure that the pupils they are helping can understand the lesson, contribute to discussion and carry out the tasks very effectively. The work of teaching assistants is very carefully planned so they know exactly which pupils they are helping, how to assist best and therefore make full use of time.

Work is well planned to meet the needs of Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils. They benefit well from the good and often very good teaching seen in the school. This supports them in making very good progress with their work.

15. Lessons are generally made interesting because teachers have planned a very good range of different tasks and activities that give pupils different opportunities to learn in a variety of ways. Teachers make a point of planning different approaches to learning so that all pupils benefit from a style that suits them. They help pupils understand new or more complex ideas by using a variety of resources well, although the recently acquired interactive whiteboards (that allow pupils and teachers to work together using ICT) are not yet being fully used.
16. Homework is clearly and regularly set and marked, but some is lengthy or repetitious, so pupils sometimes find it “boring” and it contributes less to pupils’ learning than it might.
17. Almost imperceptibly, teachers manage their pupils’ behaviour very well, so that throughout the school pupils are very highly motivated, work very hard and behave very well. In those few lessons where teaching was less successful, the teacher had planned activities that were not as well matched to pupils’ differing levels of attainment and some ideas had not been fully explained so a few pupils did not fully understand what they should do, lost some interest or were held up in their work. For example, in an ICT and science lesson about classifying minibeasts using tree diagrams, pupils were stimulated by the good introduction and initial explanation and the group using the ICT suite readily embarked on the activity. However, despite their initial enthusiasm, a few became frustrated by their inability to spell the names of some of the birds that were to be included on the tree diagram. The teacher had not supplied them with any quick means of finding out, so their pace of work was slower than it might have been.
18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good so children learn very well. A very good range of interesting and stimulating activities are very well matched to children’s needs and assessment is very effective. Learning is carefully planned giving progressively more difficult tasks in a sequence of small steps together with opportunities for children to select activities for themselves, thus helping them develop their confidence and desire to learn very well.
19. Generally teachers assess their pupils thoroughly and pupils are tracked very effectively in English and mathematics with the result that extra help is given where it is needed. As a consequence, pupils achieve very well. Marking is regular and usually gives evaluative and encouraging comments, indicating next steps and therefore helping pupils know what they have done well and how to improve. However, some marking in a few books is less effective, with more negative comments, some of which are in a language that is too complex for the pupil to understand. Assessments are mostly used very effectively to help teachers plan activities and lessons. The information is also used very well to identify areas where changes need to be made to teaching or to the curriculum to help improve pupils’ achievement. Although there are good systems for assessing all subjects other than English and mathematics, they are not yet operating quite as effectively. Throughout the school pupils have targets in English and mathematics that they know and use. However, insufficient use is made of levels for older pupils to help them understand where to focus their attention and further improve their achievement.
20. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) provided for all pupils with SEN are very well written by the class teacher in consultation with the teaching assistants and the coordinator for SEN (SENCO). The targets set for each child are specific and attainable.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good with a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. It is well planned and enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Staffing is well matched to the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good so children have a very good start to school
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that it meets the varied needs of all pupils with differing talents, although the organisation of the morning makes it more difficult for some younger pupils to learn
- There are many well planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in speaking and listening, problem solving and investigation. Consequently, pupils are able to develop independence in their learning very well
- The very good provision for PSHE increases pupils' confidence in themselves and in their learning
- Pupils appreciate and enjoy a very good range of extra-curricular activities and other activities that enrich learning

## **Commentary**

21. The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum and has improved well since the last inspection. The school has maintained its very good attention to all aspects of English and mathematics, which is reflected in its successful achievement of the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004. However, pupils' use of their numeracy skills in other subjects is less well developed. It has significantly improved the development of science, particularly in its emphasis on the skills of investigation. The school has worked hard to improve its provision in ICT and extend the use across the curriculum, which is being reflected in the range of use by teachers. However, planning does not yet maximise opportunities for pupils to use their skills developed in specific ICT lessons to help them learn in other subjects. The breadth of the curriculum and the connections between subjects have also improved since the last inspection. Many subjects are now stimulating and motivating and links between subjects are being developed well. The school's strong ethos and values ensure that all pupils, whatever their needs, are fully included in learning. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and they are very well supported by individual and group work. Those with disabilities are very well supported and encouraged with sensitivity and humour.
22. There is a very good emphasis given to the importance of personal and social education. There is a very well planned programme for PSHE and many displays throughout the school emphasise care, respect, sharing and responsibility. Some are interactive, allowing pupils to add comments and suggestions and showing how their views are important in the development of the school. Throughout the curriculum, pupils are also given many opportunities to organise themselves and to work independently and co-operatively.
23. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good variety of visits and visitors, for example a group who performed African music. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including lunchtime "nurture groups" and after-school sport, drama, music, creative and environmental clubs. Seventy five per cent of pupils, including the younger children, have taken part in extra-curricular activities over the last year.
24. There is a very good range of teacher expertise and skilled classroom support. Visiting staff and members of the community give very good support to music provision in the school. Although the accommodation is only satisfactory, the school makes the most of all its potential. There have been significant improvements to the building since the last inspection. The new information technology suite and the interactive whiteboards in all classrooms have improved the ICT provision for all pupils, particularly in ICT lessons. An outside play area for the Foundation Stage is planned for the near future.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school takes very good care of its pupils and their well-being, health, safety and personal development. It offers good support based on very good knowledge of pupils' personal needs and effective assessment of their academic progress. It listens carefully to pupils' suggestions for making the school an even better place. Improvement in overall quality of care has been good.

## **Main strengths**

- The school's Christian values are reflected very well in the care and respect shown to pupils of all backgrounds, which helps newcomers to settle in quickly and confidently
- As teaching and non-teaching staff know pupils very well, they strive to use real understanding of their particular needs to help bring out the best in individuals
- The school takes care, health and safety very seriously because of its open, warm welcome for pupils with a range of different needs and difficulties
- Pupils receive the help they need to get on well with their work and when teaching is at its best, support is even better because it focuses so sharply on what each pupil needs to learn next
- Adults listen very carefully to pupils' ideas in most lessons, so pupils are happy to say what they think about school life because their views are taken seriously on a day to day basis

## **Commentary**

25. As parents and pupils made clear, teachers "are always approachable if a problem crops up" and "everyone gets help if needed." Although, as in any community, pupils get on better with particular groups or individuals than others, they are clear that they could find someone to listen if they had a problem or were unhappy. The school acted decisively on its own survey information to ensure that this was the case by setting up systems such as the lunchtime 'nurture group' and 'friendship stop' so that no-one is left out or struggles to relate well to others. Relationships are very warm. The school is passionate about making each pupil feel valued and tries to put the right support in place to give all individuals a fair chance of making a success of school life. Pupils appreciate everyday kindness and the very positive efforts made to praise, encourage and reassure them so they feel safe, secure and happy at school. As pupils said, "If there were a national shouting competition for teachers, ours wouldn't win because hardly anyone ever shouts here!"
26. The school is very careful to think about the needs of its wide range of pupils, including those with gifts, talents and disabilities. It is vigilant over matters of health, safety and child protection because of the very high priority it gives to pupils' care and well being. It uses support staff thoughtfully to ensure that each pupil has similar chances to learn new skills and enjoy new experiences, so pupils with disabilities were just as enthusiastic as their classmates about trying out new tennis strokes in a physical education lesson.
27. The school has taken to heart the views of those parents who felt it had not done enough to ensure that pupils with difficulties less obvious than impaired movement receive their fair share of help. It believes in making the most of individual strengths and weaknesses, including those of pupils with special educational needs. As a result staff try hard to match work closely to the capabilities of different groups and individuals. Sometimes they do this very well, based on accurate assessment of how much each pupil knows and can do already, but in those few lessons that are less effective, some of the tasks set and help given though well-meaning, are not fine-tuned to each pupil's different needs. Help in lessons is usually very good, keeping pupils focused on their work and happy to keep trying.
28. The school introduced the idea of a school council relatively recently, but it is working well as a forum for sharing ideas about improvements to school life such as better playtimes and the best way to organise a 'healthy school' week. The school takes pupils' views seriously. It is very well placed to give pupils a first rate sense of involvement, with a genuine 'voice' in what goes on in school, because of the way teachers already value highly what they say in lessons.

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

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are good and contribute well to pupils' personal and academic achievements. Improvement in the way partnerships have been developed and used has been good overall, particularly in the last year or two.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is doing very well in its aim of forging a genuine partnership with parents, based on working together to enthuse pupils about learning and help them to achieve all they can
- The school keeps parents well informed about its life and their children's experiences but recognises that information about pupils' progress is not as clear and frequent as parents would like
- Local links are used well to enrich the opportunities staff and pupils have to learn new things

## **Commentary**

29. Parents think the school does a good job for their children because it expects them to work hard, teaches them well, offers a good range of activities outside lessons and is well led. They find the school approachable and are pleased that their children settle in well. A handful of parents are worried that a few children experience name-calling or harassment in school. Pupils are clear that this is unusual. They know that bullying is wrong and say that they would ask for help to deal with it. Inspectors agree that bullying is rare and that it is nipped in the bud quickly once pupils tell key staff what happened, although some pupils are not always wholly clear what the system is for this.
30. The school is keen to work very closely with all parents because it sees partnership as a priority on the way forward to a school full of pupils who are very happy, successful learners. It recognises that parents have not always felt fully informed or comfortable about approaching the school so has begun to seek and act on their views, find ways to improve communication and welcome them warmly. As a result, the benches were full for an open assembly to which parents were invited. This is helping to build confidence and a reputation in the area that this is a successful, friendly school.
31. The school is good at giving clear information about its aims, achievements and key events through formal documents such as the prospectus and governors' report to parents. Reports on pupils' progress have good features such as a section 'all about my year' in which pupils can write about what makes them particularly proud, what they have enjoyed and what might need improving. This contrasts with how progress is described using phrases from guidance for teachers on judging standards of the National Curriculum, not language parents use and understand. The school wants to find ways to give digestible information more often so parents know how well their child is doing.
32. Local links with the village, the churches, and organisations such as St John's Ambulance, the Boys Brigade and sports clubs, are used very well to reinforce the idea that the school is at the heart of its community. Local people help out with activities such as running the choir and playing the piano in assembly, which enhances children's enjoyment of music very well. Visitors such as accountants and paramedics enrich what is offered in the citizenship programme, through the Young Enterprise scheme. The school's Travel Plan has involved pupils, parents and local councils actively, resulting in a successful bid for funding. The school supported Stowmarket Rotary Club's 'aquabox' appeal, from which the pupils benefited by learning about and helping the Tsunami victims. Links with schools in the 'pyramid' (the local network of schools) ensure that pupils and staff have good opportunities for learning together. These help pupils to move to and from the school with confidence because of familiar faces.
33. Parents are fully involved in the work the school carries out with their children. They are consulted and invited to attend meetings on a regular basis. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that the pupils' needs are appropriately met.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. The leadership of other key staff is good. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a clear and strong vision that leads planning for school improvement and has helped the development of a strong team of staff
- The governing body has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- The monitoring of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is very good, although it is less consistent and effective in other subjects
- Various types of information are analysed very effectively to aid decision making and the purchase of resources

### **Commentary**

34. The headteacher has drive and enthusiasm for the development of this school. He has made a very strong contribution to the clarity of values shared by everyone at the school. The headteacher is driven by the belief that pupils deserve a rich and broad education in which they achieve highly. Strong links are being developed between all subjects, and there are varied opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways according to their individual needs. There has been very careful and skilful development of key staff by both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, leading to a team of staff with improved drive, energy, commitment and professionalism. As a result, progress in developing and improving this school has been good, despite some staffing difficulties that led to the need for employing temporary teachers for a time. The very good leading role offered by the deputy head in changing the teaching methods gives added momentum to planned improvements in teaching and learning.
35. The governing body is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and in ensuring that the school meets all statutory requirements. Members work hard to maintain and develop their role. Governors maintain a very clear programme of regular visits to the school, fostering good links with the community. They have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know about its daily working. They offer strong and close support whilst also providing challenge when it is needed. Governors demonstrate a perceptive understanding of how they can contribute through specific roles to help shape the direction of the school.
36. Everyone in the school is committed to the development of a caring ethos where pupils feel valued, confident, responsible and involved in their own learning. There is a clear and well structured plan of ongoing school improvement projects, which have been carefully prioritised. This is reflected in the school's successful achievement of the Investors in People Award in 2004. The plan pays particular attention to maintaining the existing high standards of attainment whilst addressing the benefits of wider opportunities for pupils in other subjects. The arrangements for staff development and performance management are good and are focused on helping all staff to evaluate and develop their own performance and that of their pupils. This includes good training opportunities within a staff meeting programme focused on teaching and learning. There are effective procedures for recruiting and retaining a strong team of committed staff. Support is also sought and gained from external agencies, most notably through the LEA. The headteacher and senior staff are monitoring teaching, learning, assessment and planning effectively for English and mathematics but the monitoring of teaching and learning by other subject coordinators is less well developed, being satisfactory. Overall, the school evaluates its own performance very well and the action taken to meet the school's targets is very good. Improvement of leadership and management since the last inspection is good.
37. Very good liaison between the special educational needs coordinator, teaching assistants and teachers has the positive effect of ensuring that overall pupils receive well-planned support and, therefore, achieve very well. Teaching assistants, who feel valued by the school, work very well with teachers. Governors have a clear picture of how the special needs support operates in school and they monitor it effectively.



**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	557,746
Total expenditure	561,902
Expenditure per pupil	2,741

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,397
Balance carried forward to the next	38,241

38. The budget is set to support the school's development plan to very good effect, with anticipated surplus funds clearly allocated to improving resourcing, staff non-teaching time and new building work whilst supporting ongoing school development. Financial planning to enable the employment of additional staff and increase non-teaching time for teachers in the future is very good and is closely focused upon improving the quality of provision for pupils. The governors are active in monitoring the budget and have therefore developed very strong financial knowledge. This knowledge is used to very good effect when assisting the head in prioritising and spending. The school has a very good understanding of getting best value for money.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The children enter the reception class with average attainment. They achieve very well during their first year in school and, by the time they enter Year 1, most will have reached the goals expected for children of their age, and about a third will exceed them. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Activities are interesting, stimulating and very well matched to children's needs. Learning is carefully planned to allow a good balance between teacher directed activities and those that children select for themselves. The very good relationships in the reception class enable children to be confident in demonstrating their knowledge and understanding and participating enthusiastically in all tasks. Provision is very well led and managed and children's progress is carefully monitored. Induction arrangements are good with both parents and children having opportunities to visit the school and talk to the adults who work in the class. The transfer between reception and Year 1 is being further developed this year by regular joint working opportunities between the two year groups. The well organised environment, imaginative activities and sensitivity to all needs, results in confident children who settle happily into school life. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but the coming addition of a purpose built outdoor area will further enhance children's opportunities for learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

##### **Main strengths**

- Achievement is very good because children are taught very well
- There are very good relationships, characterised by the children's responsiveness, good behaviour and eagerness to learn
- Many opportunities are given for children to develop both independence and the ability to work co-operatively

##### **Commentary**

39. Children achieve very well in their personal and social development because they are encouraged to make choices for themselves as well as joining in with whole class activities. Classroom routines are well established and children confidently select their independent activities using their self-assessment chart to guide them. When the class is on the carpet learning together, children are attentive and responsive. They demonstrate their growing confidence in learning, eagerly answer their teacher's questioning and applaud other children's good achievement. At break time children retrieve their name card, choose their fruit and drink, help each other with the pouring and chat sensibly in a relaxed and caring environment. The whole ethos is of respect for each other, harmonious working and lively participation, which impacts very positively on children's personal and social development. The reception teacher and classroom assistant know the children very well and share their observations and assessments of children's progress.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

##### **Main strengths**

- Children are confident speakers and attentive listeners
- Children make very good progress in their learning of reading and writing
- Effective teaching makes very good use of all opportunities to develop children's communication, language and literacy skills

### **Commentary**

40. Very good teaching in this area of learning ensures that children achieve very well. With consistent encouragement, they become confident and eager speakers, who listen attentively and with enjoyment to stories, songs and poems. They learn to interact with each other, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversation. Children building a castle, as part of an “organised play and learning” activity, co-operated particularly well, allocating jobs to each other and talking through ideas and thinking. Children are given many opportunities to extend their vocabulary, exploring the meanings and sounds of words. During a lesson seen, they joined in confidently with their teacher’s reading of “Who sank the boat”, imitating a question-mark expression, predicting the story and commenting readily on the contents of the title page. Most children could use their phonic knowledge to attempt reading a word and many could independently recognise simple sentences containing a range of familiar and common words. Almost all children could form recognisable letters, most attempted writing for various purposes and half the class could write labels, captions and simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation. Teaching soundly promotes literacy across the curriculum. The shared reading of “Who sank the boat” was a very effective introduction to a range of scientific activities involving water. Children enthusiastically reported back from these activities giving clear descriptions of what they had done and seen.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- The children achieve very well and several will exceed the goals expected
- Very good teaching ensures that children talk about their mathematical understanding and knowledge

### **Commentary**

41. Children are given many opportunities to consolidate and extend their mathematical knowledge. They are learning very well, with all children able to count to 10, most able to count to 20 and many able to count in twos, identifying odd and even numbers. Skilled questioning by the teacher encourages children to explain their calculations using the appropriate vocabulary involved in addition. Three quarters of the class could “hold” the number of one set in their heads and count on a second set, giving an addition total. The higher attaining children could do this up to 30, telling the “number story” as they did so. They were rightly proud of their very good mathematical knowledge and understanding.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

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

### **Main strengths**

- Children are particularly skilled in looking closely at similarities and differences and being able to comment, explain and ask questions
- Very good teaching, particularly in the science and ICT aspects of this area, results in very good learning, with most children achieving and several exceeding the goals expected

### **Commentary**

42. Well planned and imaginative activities in this area of learning ensure that all children have a wide experience and are confidently developing early skills of enquiry and investigation. In a lesson seen where children were investigating properties of water using their senses, they observed ‘upthrust’ forces, drips, drops and capacity relationships. They could talk about what they had seen and try to explain what was happening. Skilful and challenging questioning by adults encourages children’s thinking skills and articulation. In a lesson seen in the ICT suite, all children were able to control the mouse, dragging and clicking to create a story board. They were confident in their use of computers, engrossed in their work and able to extend their capabilities by adding captions to their story board. They used their knowledge of phonics, familiar words and sentence construction, reflecting their very good achievement. Very good teaching and regular assessment results in children’s

involvement, enjoyment and very good learning. Evidence of work in other subjects in this area is kept photographically and “read” by children and parents.

### **Physical development**

Provision in physical education is satisfactory.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children learn to use a variety of tools safely
- They move in a large space with control and co-ordination

#### **Commentary**

43. Through a well-planned variety of activities, children learn to use small and large equipment safely and sensibly. Children’s fine manipulation skills are developing well with all children able to use pencils, scissors and brushes with increasing dexterity. In the playground children move a ball around a route with control and co-ordination. Most children are likely to achieve the goals expected. Teaching is satisfactory but opportunities to further develop the children’s physical skills will be significantly enhanced when the outdoor learning area is constructed later this term.

### **Creative development**

Provision in creative development is satisfactory.

#### **Main strengths**

- Children sing and make music well
- Activities are well planned and cover all aspects of creative development

#### **Commentary**

44. Most children are likely to achieve the goals expected in creative development. Teaching is satisfactory and they are given opportunities to explore colour and texture, create constructions, use their imagination in role play and express and communicate their ideas. They sing familiar songs with great enjoyment. One group of children was able to make good use of a range of multicultural instruments to compose and perform their accompaniment to a well known song.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is very good.

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

- Pupils achieve very well and in most years they attain standards that are well above those expected
- Teaching is very good, and is particularly strong in the older classes, although the teaching of formal English (Grammar) is not consistent in Years 3 to 6
- Pupils use and develop their skills of language and literacy with great success in other subjects
- The leadership and management of English are very good with close attention paid to reviewing success and taking action to improve further

#### **Commentary**

45. Test results for the end of Year 6 over recent years show consistent improvement, reflecting the well above average standards in most year groups. However, the standards of the current Years 2 and 6 are slightly lower as a result of a smaller proportion of higher attaining pupils in these years. Standards are above the national average but nevertheless, this represents very good achievement for these groups of pupils. Reading skills are developed very well through clearly planned and productive teaching in small groups. The level of difficulty is very accurately planned so reading tasks are closely matched to pupils' individual levels of attainment through the very good use of assessment data. Clear and very effective links are made between the formal grammatical aspects of language and its use when being creative, representing a particular strength in both teaching and learning. Pupils from Year 6 showed a genuine love of reading in discussion. They recalled what they liked about reading in earlier years and outlined the ways they had been encouraged by the school to "learn their words each week from a tin" and how they "had really enjoyed having to read to mum and dad". They read with confidence and used a very broad range of strategies for tackling difficulties, Pupils with special educational needs are also very well-supported and achieve very well.
46. Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening throughout the school. In lessons, they were keen to answer questions and did so very well, often building to a complex level in their answers. They were frequently able to elaborate or extend explanations showing very good analytical and evaluative skills. Teachers used the "Response partner" technique (when pupils discuss in pairs) to very good effect. The pupils' success was also directly linked to the very good questioning skills of teachers in most lessons, showing real understanding and expertise in drawing out high quality responses from individuals and groups.
47. Pupils' written work showed very good technical competence, with appropriate punctuation used precisely and accurate spelling of straightforward and more complex words. Pupils frequently planned their writing using a "Mind Mapping" approach (when ideas are drafted on paper in a diagrammatic form) to gather and organise ideas. Whilst many pupils showed very well developed skills in writing at length and developing their ideas fully, some did not extend their work sufficiently beyond planning. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of language structure was used and applied very effectively enabling them to identify where and how words might be used to enhance or strengthen a piece of work.
48. Where teaching is best lessons are planned and organised very well with very successful integration of all aspects of language development. In better lessons, teaching is more clearly focused on helping pupils to develop and organise their writing for specific purposes. The very good use of teachers' questions also helps pupils to develop their skills of speaking and listening. Teachers select texts carefully and use of questions so pupils are able to analyse and understand formal language and identify the features of the piece of writing. The teacher's questions help pupils to examine opinions, understand and define new words and extend their vocabulary and comprehensions skills. For example, in a lesson for older pupils considering a diary extract, they learned to identify the type of writing and understand what makes writing effective. The teacher's careful choice of the extract, together with sensitive questioning and the use of formal language helped pupils to analyse and understand the diary extract. They were able to share the emotions of

others and understand feelings. In the very small number of lessons where teaching was less effective, the tasks were not demanding enough for all pupils' differing levels of attainment and opportunities to develop writing to greater depth were missed.

49. Assessment is very good and has been used very well to monitor pupils' progress and tailor work to meet the needs of pupils. As a result a well organised "booster" programme to improve writing is being implemented and the positive effects are evident in some pupils' work. Marking is also very detailed and informative.
50. The curriculum is good and generally well balanced to cover all aspects. There is generally good balance between the development of formal language and the creative use of language skills in most classes although in older years there are fewer opportunities to learn grammar in some classes.
51. The leadership and management of this subject are very good. Priorities are clear and there is a very good understanding of how teaching and learning should be improved as a result of close and rigorous monitoring. Key staff are very good role models and skills are shared effectively. Data on pupil performance is used very effectively to track pupils and adjust teaching accordingly. The resources are good overall and used very well to support learning. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

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

52. The use and development of pupils' language and literacy skills in other subjects is very good. Pupils use their reading, speaking and listening skills very well in other subjects. For example in design and technology, pupils explained the feelings created by a variety of masks and sculptures from other cultures and why the colours, shapes or forms made them feel a certain way. Later, the same class were able to speak confidently and informatively about their own designs and how they had arrived at their decisions. Both reading materials and writing activities played a significant role in themed work elsewhere in the school. An example from Year 2 was a "book" produced by the class all about an African village. While the work was essentially focused on geography, a wide range of writing styles had been deliberately and very successfully explored through the topic and information and communication technology (ICT) had also been used to complete the final publication.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is very good.

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

- Results for Years 2 and 6 have generally improved over recent years and were well above average in 2004
- Teaching and learning are very good overall and enable pupils to achieve very well. A small amount of teaching is not as effective
- The curriculum is very good and gives pupils good opportunities to solve problems and think for themselves. However, ICT is not used enough to support learning
- Pupils are assessed very well and their progress tracked very carefully. Pupils are kept informed about how well they are doing and understand how to improve
- Improvement since the last inspection has been very good due to the very effective leadership and management which have focussed on raising standards

#### **Commentary**

53. In recent years, test results at the end of Year 2 have risen and are now above the national average. In 2004, test results at the end of Year 6 rose significantly beyond those of previous years to be well above the national average. The standards in most years reflect those of the results, representing very good achievement by all pupils. Although the standards of the current Years 2 and 6 are slightly lower than the test results of last year, they are above average and also represent very good achievement for these groups of pupils as there are fewer higher attaining pupils in the particular cohorts.

54. The quality of teaching is very good so pupils are stimulated and interested to learn more. They enjoy their work and find it fun, particularly valuing opportunities to think about problems, evaluate solutions and make decisions. Generally, the teachers' use of questions helps them to do this though the use of questions without answers that are obviously right or wrong. Pupils readily discuss different approaches with each other and the teacher. Teachers plan very well using a variety of activities at different levels so that all pupils achieve very well, because their learning needs are very well met. In the better lessons, the teacher's sensitivity in using questions to help individuals and groups of pupils supports them precisely. As a result, pupils are very confident in using and applying mathematics and they readily work independently of the teacher. For example, in a lesson for older pupils, where they were learning to use their current knowledge of number and their understanding of place value to help them multiply and divide larger numbers mentally, the teacher had planned the lesson very carefully so pupils of differing levels of attainment knew precisely what they would be learning. The teacher's outstanding use of questions generated both accuracy and the ability to think about different calculations, stimulating pupils' curiosity and desire to know more.
55. There are few weaknesses in teaching, but in one of the lessons seen, where the teaching was slightly less effective, the lesson planning was less precise so pupils were at times confused by the demonstration of mirror lines and symmetry, and during the activities, some of the shapes chosen for the tasks made the work too easy.
56. Although teachers are beginning to use ICT to help explain and demonstrate, as yet there are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT for themselves to help them learn.
57. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by teaching assistants. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those who are higher attaining, are provided for very well because their teachers plan tasks that match their various levels of understanding very well.
58. Teachers assess their pupils very well and most work is marked very carefully, with detailed comments in most classes. Detailed and regular assessments help teachers to track how well pupils are doing and plan work that helps pupils achieve very well, being generally well matched to the next stages in their learning. Where pupils need additional help it is given very effectively. Targets are set regularly and pupils generally know their targets and find them useful. Most pupils are clear about how well they are doing and where they need to improve in order to achieve a higher level.
59. The subject is covered very well and although pupils' skills in handling number are particularly well developed, the other aspects are also covered very effectively. The area of using and applying mathematics through the use of investigations and problems is also very well developed throughout the school, with the result that most pupils in Year 6 are very adept in solving problems, thinking for themselves and working independently.
60. The subject is very well led and managed and there is a clear vision for the continuous development of the subject and a very accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, acquired through regular and rigorous monitoring of the subject. The actions taken to improve the subject have been very appropriate and very effective resulting in continuous improvements to provision and pupils' achievement.

## Example of outstanding practice

### A year 5 lesson in mathematics

The lesson was to help pupils learn to use their knowledge of number and place value to multiply and divide larger numbers mentally. The teacher had planned the lesson in considerable detail and used the learning objectives and three levels of success criteria to help pupils know precisely what they could expect to learn and how they could judge their own success. She demonstrated what she wanted the pupils to do, using very carefully chosen examples on the whiteboard and then made very good use of paired discussion to help pupils express their ideas. The quality of questioning was outstanding as the teacher was particularly sensitive to pupils' level of knowledge and understanding. Her questions challenged them to think and explore their own methods of calculation to a very high level because she handled their answers with sensitivity, asking well judged follow up questions and giving pupils a sense of growing self confidence and an inspired love of mathematics. As a consequence all pupils' understanding developed very well and they tackled subsequent tasks to design complex multiplication and division questions with vigour and enthusiasm. The lesson concluded with some examples of other pupils' work that had been selected by the teacher, which was carefully allocated to pupils according to their level of attainment. Pupils were then set the challenge to identify whether the work they had been given was accurate and if there were mistakes, to identify and correct them. They tackled this task with exceptional levels of motivation and concentration.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The use and development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects are satisfactory. Although pupils are confident in using their skills and there are some opportunities to use these in other subjects, as yet, much of this work shows little progress from year to year. When given the opportunity, pupils use their skills well, for example, in a Year 3 class pupils were using their understanding of direction in ICT to help them navigate a badger to look for food and avoid danger. They were also learning to understand patterns and use this to make predictions, while a Year 5 class used their knowledge about weights and shapes to help them investigate mechanisms for making different moving toys and models.

### SCIENCE

Provision in science is very good.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school so that standards are well above average in most year groups
- Teaching and learning are very good and pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their skills of scientific enquiry
- The subject is led and managed well and has improved well, although as yet the outcomes of monitoring learning have not been used to help improve pupils' achievement

#### Commentary

62. Over the recent years, results have risen rapidly and in 2004 test results were well above average. These results are reflected in the standards of most year groups, although pupils in Years 2 and 6 are achieving standards that are slightly lower, because there are fewer higher attaining pupils in these years. This is the result of well planned opportunities for pupils to learn about all aspects of science and particularly the skills of scientific enquiry. Consequently, pupils are keen to investigate and find things out for themselves. This was seen during a lesson when older pupils were revising their investigation skills in small groups. They clearly demonstrated an understanding of fair tests and variables; used and understood a range of scientific vocabulary and drew upon their previous knowledge when investigating the effect of exercise on pulse rate. Year 2 pupils use simple equipment and make observations and comparisons using scientific language. For example, when searching a range of habitats in the school grounds, pupils carefully collected their minibeads, made oral and drawn observations, named the external parts of the body and compared insects and non-insects.
63. Teachers use very effective and probing questions that ensure pupils' full involvement in the lesson and encourage them to think clearly about what they have seen and what conclusions they form. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and therefore plan lessons very well with clear learning objectives for the pupils. Very good relationships result in pupils being attentive, involved



and keen to contribute. A varied range of teaching strategies means that pupils of differing levels of attainment respond well and consolidate or improve their learning. In the best lessons, a high degree of challenge extended the learning of higher attaining pupils. An example of this was evident in a discussion with a group of older pupils, who had been working on an “Earth, Sun and Moon” topic. The very good challenge posed by varied activities, including a design technology homework task, enabled all pupils to clearly explain the movement of the earth and moon in relation to the sun and to match this to sunrise and sunset across the world. Pupils were keen to say how much they enjoyed a practical approach and a choice of activities to help them learn scientific facts and principles. In less effective lessons, the over-use of worksheets prevents pupils from experiencing the variety of ways in which they might record their findings, and so develop their literacy skills.

64. Teachers carefully assess how well individuals have done at the end of a unit of work. However, in less effective lessons, assessments are not used sufficiently to ensure that the next step in teaching challenges all pupils, and sometimes marking does not give pupils enough information to help them improve their work.
65. Recent developments, including seeking pupils’ views and perceptions of science, have resulted in an increased emphasis on investigative skills and the reorganisation of science lessons. Pupils now have additional opportunities to discuss their observations and understanding with an adult. This is contributing to pupils’ high standards in science. The subject leader has worked with other staff and governors to evaluate the school’s current provision in science and make a very clear action plan for further improvement. Pupils’ work and teaching are monitored and very good records of this are kept.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and provided with interesting and stimulating experiences
- Teachers usually plan activities that match pupils differing levels of ability well, giving them variety and opportunities to gain confidence in the use of different software and equipment
- The use of the well equipped and resourced ICT suite has helped pupils to develop a secure foundation of skills, although there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other lessons
- The subject is led and managed well and improvement since the last inspection has been good

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards that are above those expected for their age. Most are confident in logging on and off, opening folders and finding their work. They also save their work effectively. They are confident in using basic word processing and they cut and paste pictures into their work. They demonstrate good levels of confidence in using auto shapes, including speech bubbles and in creating pictures with different backgrounds and styles using Paint. Most other year groups are also achieving standards that are above those expected for their age, except in Year 6 where they are in line because there are fewer higher attaining pupils in the group. However, by Year 6, pupils have learned to use Publisher to create a newspaper and are using spreadsheets to analyse simple data and create graphs. Pupils are using PowerPoint and presentations use a ‘multimedia approach’ (using sound, pictures and video clips).
67. Teachers makes good use of the ICT suite and pupils are comfortable and confident in using a diverse range of equipment, including video cameras, roamers and monitoring devices. In the two full lessons seen, the teachers introduced the lesson well and used the equipment to provide good demonstrations and explanations. Tasks were well planned and pupils were given good levels of support when needed. Consequently pupils learnt well and enjoyed the activities they were set. Teachers generally display good levels of competence in the subject, despite a lack of confidence in the reliability of the network at times. They make good links to other subjects, which also helps pupils to learn effectively. Classrooms other than the ICT suite have recently been equipped with interactive whiteboards but as yet these are not being used to their full potential. As a consequence,

despite their good skill levels, pupils are not yet making full use of ICT to help them learn in other subjects.

68. Pupils are assessed regularly and effectively using a recently introduced scheme and teachers use this information well. Although given feedback about their work, pupils are less well informed about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
69. The subject is led and managed well, with a clear and accurate view of what needs to be done to improve. Despite some difficulties in maintaining the system, the equipment and its use are managed well and teachers are well supported to help them develop their expertise.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

70. The use and development of pupils' skills in other subjects are satisfactory. Good links are being made with some subjects such as art and design where the Paint program is used to help pupils explore developing different effects and styles, and using repeated patterns, for example in the creation and design of wallpaper. There is some use of ICT for design and technology, for example in the use of Publisher to design Christmas cards, or when creating nets to make a box. In humanities, there is some use of the internet for research, for example to find out about ancient Egypt. Other uses include word processing to support literacy, the creation of tree diagrams to help classify minibeasts in science and some links to numeracy through the use of graphs. However, generally these opportunities make less contribution than they might and do not always build sufficiently on previous experiences.

### **HUMANITIES**

71. Only one part **geography** lesson was seen during the inspection so no judgement can be made on provision. From looking at work in books pupils cover a broad range of topics. A good example of links with other subjects was seen in year two where pupils had used their geographical study of an African village as the basis for their literacy producing a range of writing styles. ICT was also used to present the whole project as a book.
72. During the inspection only one **religious education** lesson was seen, so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision. However, from pupils' work and teachers' planning the subject is broad and well planned. Pupils work samples showed an awareness of "symbols" from different faiths and the importance of these. Older pupils had explored and discussed 'Christian characters and characteristics', 'Actions and consequences', 'Our world' and 'Caring for our world'. Evidence in books suggests that pupils are discussing issues and raising questions about right and wrong in relation to Christianity and other faiths.

### **History**

Provision in history is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and enjoy their lessons
- Good links are made with other subjects especially literacy
- Although the subject is led and managed well, there is not yet sufficient monitoring of teaching and planning

### **Commentary**

73. Pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age and by Year 6 they have a good understanding of events and their consequences. They are learning to understand life after the Second World War and they have a good grasp of the effects of the 1953 floods on people living on the East coast. They compare lifestyles in Victorian times with those of today and use their factual knowledge about Victorian schooling to generalise and discuss the effects of free schooling and compulsory education.
74. Where teaching and learning were most effective pupils were given stimulating opportunities to explore and discuss different time periods and events through the good use of role play and drama. In a lesson for older pupils on Victorian school life, they articulated very well both their understanding of how it felt to be a pupil and why school life for Victorian pupils was this way. Literacy skills, especially speaking and listening, are integrated into lessons and taught well.

Attitudes towards history are very positive as teachers use a good range of activities. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well so they make good progress. Where teaching was less effective a few pupils were not fully involved in activities so at times the pace of their work slowed.

75. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Much has been done to make learning more meaningful by linking history with other subjects.
76. Leadership and management are good. Pupils' views are regularly sought on history lessons and this helps to make improvements in learning. Curriculum planning is good although there is only limited monitoring of teaching and lesson planning. This restricts the amount of information available to guide improvements in the subject.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

77. Only two music lessons were observed in **music** so there is no judgement about overall provision. In the lessons observed, standards were in line with those expected. Pupils sing with a sense of rhythm; maintain a beat with a variety of sound sources and instruments; link sounds to moods and perform simple compositions. Good classroom management meant pupils' behaviour, involvement and attitudes were good overall, although more challenge in activities would enable greater achievement by some pupils.
78. Pupils regularly sing together in assemblies and visiting staff teach a good range of musical instruments. The school has widened instrumental opportunities enabling all pupils to participate in a six week musical project. Years 4 and 5 have recently taken part in a Samba drumming project, the first of its kind in the school. They had a weekly teaching session with a visiting specialist, learning rhythms and composing techniques climaxing in a whole group Samba performance. A member of the community runs a successful choir during the autumn and spring terms and a recorder group is one of the school's extra curricular activities.
79. The school recognises that it lacks strong expertise in music and intends to appoint a music specialist as an additional member of staff in the new academic year. Meanwhile, staff are receiving extra training.
80. Only two lessons were observed in **physical education**, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision as the full range of the curriculum was not seen. In both lessons pupils were achieving standards that were as expected for their age. Most pupils in Year 1 balanced on one leg and had sound hand-eye co-ordination. More skilled pupils were able to balance a bean bag on their knee or foot. In Year 6, pupils carried out different types of tennis stroke and most could build this into a rally for 6 to 10 shots before they lost control. In both lessons seen, the teaching was good so pupils were learning and achieving well. Teachers provided good praise and encouragement and lessons were well structured to provide progressively more difficult tasks thereby helping pupils to develop their skills well. Pupils with special educational needs were very well supported and included very well in all aspects of learning.
81. A good range of activities is provided throughout the school including athletics, team games such as rounders and cricket, dance, gymnastics and swimming. Teachers are developing their skills and dance has been a recent area of success. A very good range of sporting activities is provided after school.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is good.

### **Main strengths**

- Teaching is good overall and teachers use a variety of art activities to stimulate pupils' interest
- Good use of questioning engages pupils well and leads to good learning

### **Commentary**

82. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above national expectations. They are achieving well and can discuss their artwork and how to improve their efforts. For example, in a lesson seen, older pupils considered and discussed mood and the use of colour when looking at Hockney's "My Parents". Their comments were perceptive and they followed with their own sketch of an old person,

exploring line, tone and shade to create the image. Pupils with special needs are sensitively supported and achieve well. Younger pupils achieve good standards in their development of skills. Lessons seen during the inspection showed pupils achieving well in their colour mixing to paint a gingerbread man, and in their print-making with a variety of media. Pupils' attitudes in this lesson were very good as they watched enthralled whilst their teacher demonstrated techniques and then applied themselves with enthusiasm and great enjoyment to their own tasks. Displays around the school show a good standard and range of artwork including some very good quality printing in a William Morris style. They also encourage pupils to explore ideas and make links to other subjects with examples of impressionist paintings and a particular painting by Katsushika to illustrate the tsunami.

83. Good teaching is characterised by perceptive and probing questioning. It draws out pupils' previous knowledge and builds upon this by making them think about what they are learning. This is a strength throughout the school and was evident in the three art lessons seen. Good relationships and clear demonstration and explanation by the teacher result in all pupils being involved in the activities and feeling successful and enthusiastic about their achievement. Extension of taught skills within pupils' independent work, would further improve learning.
84. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school is beginning to introduce art as a way of enhancing learning in other subjects but this is not yet consistent in all classes. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is good.

#### **Main strengths**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above those expected because pupils are very interested and enjoy their work
- Teaching is usually good and provides a stimulating range of varied activities so pupils are learning a full range of skills
- Improvement since the last inspection is good

#### **Commentary**

85. Pupils in Year 2 plan their work well and do so with purpose. More complex drawings are carefully labelled and all pupils evaluate their work in some detail, although lower attaining pupils have more difficulty in recording their thoughts. All pupils have successfully made photo frames from a variety of different materials and they have designed a moving vehicle. Year 6 pupils have undertaken more complex tasks, such as a spinning mechanism for a funfair machine. They have produced complicated designs well, and these are complemented by sequenced plans to support the design of parts for more complex finished items. The plans are detailed and give both materials and construction. Designs are made and evaluated well, using a variety of approaches including photos, questionnaires and more detailed and challenging analyses. Finished products range from an electronic game, including the circuit board, a box for this to go in and Maori masks.
86. The teaching and learning are good, although there was some inconsistency in the two lessons seen. In the better lesson, pupils achieved very well because of the teacher's skilled approach to helping pupils investigate and evaluate their products. This helped pupils learn technical vocabulary and use design principles very well. As a consequence, pupils were very enthusiastic about their work. In the lesson that was slightly less effective, the teacher had organised the lesson well, but at time explanations were too long and a few pupils experienced slight difficulty in working together so there was less enthusiasm and occasional passivity. Pupils are assessed regularly and effectively, and some marking is very comprehensive and gives very detailed guidance and very clear reference to the level of work achieved.
87. Leadership and management are good and the subject is well planned. Although there is regular monitoring of learning it does not yet sufficiently ensure consistency of approaches between teachers.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.

### **Main strengths**

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above those expected for their age because they are provided with many very good opportunities
- Teaching and learning are very good in specific lessons and through other opportunities both in lessons and around the school
- Good leadership and management complement the strong values and concern for pupils well being and academic success

### **Commentary**

88. By Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how they learn best and most have a well developed ability to understand and share the feelings of others and respect for their views and opinions. They are highly articulate and can discuss issues with confidence both with visitors and with their peers. In the two lessons seen, pupils were enthusiastic and keen to take part. For example, in a lesson about caring for the environment, Year 3 pupils readily talked about ways of improving the school environmental area. The teacher took the opportunity to help pupils understand how they might use the new school suggestion box, the school council and their class representatives. In another lesson about drugs, Year 5 pupils were helped very well by the teacher's sensitive use of questions to debate and explore issues about legal and illegal drugs and their effects. As a consequence of the teacher's imaginative input to foster all pupils' spirit of enquiry, the class did not want to stop the discussion.
89. Although only recently introduced, the school council makes a good contribution because it emphasises pupils' ideas so they feel they are listened to. The council is supported well by teachers, although discussion is more limited when a few pupils miss meetings.
90. Leadership and management are good and the subject is improving well. It is planned effectively and reviewed regularly, incorporating the school's clear values and national guidance.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
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	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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