

INSPECTION REPORT

ELSWORTH C of E (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110830

Headteacher: Mr Nicholas Smith

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 7th- 9th June 2005

Inspection number: 266795

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 Aided
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 134

School address: Broad End
Elsworth
Cambridge
Cambridgeshire
Postcode: CB3 8JD

Telephone number: 01954 267272
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mr James Howell
governors:

Date of previous 22/03/1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This Church of England primary school is smaller than most primary schools. The pupils are taught in five classes. Most pupils come from the village of Elsworth, near Cambridge, but a significant proportion, nearly a half, come from further afield as a result of parental choice. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds but the circumstances of most are relatively advantaged. Nearly all pupils are from white British families, although a small number are from ethnic minority backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their home language. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies widely but is generally above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, around 1 per cent, is below average. A below average proportion of pupils, around 13 per cent, are entered on the school's record of special educational needs and of these a small number has a Statement of Special Educational Needs because they need considerable help with their learning. Overall, the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school partway through this phase of their education, around 21 per cent, is above average, and in several year groups the proportion is exceptionally high. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls overall. In 2002, the school received the 'Healthy Schools' award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, art and design, geography.
9334	Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector	
32954	Wendy Hawkins	Team inspector	Foundation stage, mathematics, science, music, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Teaching is good and as a result pupils learn successfully and achieve well across the school. Staff absence has interrupted the learning of some pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to learning. The leadership and management of the school are good and the governing body provides effective support. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Although the standards that pupils attain in writing by the end of Year 2 are above average, they should be higher.
- The average standards that pupils attain in science by the end of Year 6 are not high enough.
- Teaching is good overall and often it is very good.
- The ethos of the school is very good and there is a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- The new headteacher has a very clear vision for further improvement.
- Pupils and their parents are very pleased with the education provided for their children and the school has established very good links with parents and the community.
- Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to identify clearly what skills pupils have mastered and to pinpoint what pupils need to learn next.
- The improvement plans written by subject leaders do not always focus strongly enough on how they intend to raise standards further.

The school has successfully tackled the main issue raised in the last inspection report. Provision and teaching for children in the Foundation Stage have improved significantly. Standards in reading, writing and science by the end of Year 2 have improved. Standards in ICT have improved. However, standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 6 in science have declined. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. The * symbol indicates that results are very high and are among the top 5% of schools nationally.*

Caution is needed when interpreting the comparative data because the small number of pupils involved means that the results of a single pupil can have a substantial effect on the school's overall grading. Also the proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies from year to year and more pupils than normal enter or leave the school during the school year.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because they are taught well. Most exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' overall achievement is mostly good because teaching is generally good. However, a succession of temporary teachers in one class has had a negative impact on the continuity of pupils' learning. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is good and often very good. The school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 is usually well above average. Last year the results were very high and the latest teacher assessments indicate that they are again likely to be well above average in English and mathematics but not in science, where there has been a significant decline in standards. Consequently, although the overall performance was in the top 5% of all schools last year it is likely to be lower this year. The latest teacher assessments and tests for pupils in Year 2 confirm that standards are well above average in reading and science and above average in writing. Standards in writing should be higher but the learning of many pupils in Year 2 has been interrupted by staff absence. Also there has been far too great a reliance on filling in worksheets rather than encouraging more purposeful writing activities. Across the school standards in ICT are above average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. They behave very well, are confident and have very good attitudes to their work. Relationships are very good, and pupils work and play happily together. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching in the reception year and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good, often very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers keep copious records and assessment is satisfactory but there is room for improvement. Assessment systems do not establish precisely what skills, knowledge and understanding pupils have gained and consequently cannot be used to identify accurately what the next steps in learning should be. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work and their very good behaviour support learning well. Parents assist their children's learning well by supporting them with homework. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and to the school's effectiveness. The good quality of care and guidance helps to foster self-esteem and confidence, which contributes to pupils' successful learning. Accommodation and resources are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school are good. The newly appointed headteacher has already identified areas for improvement and has given a renewed impetus to raising standards further. He has identified assessment as an area for improvement and the need for a clearer focus in the school improvement plan on exactly how initiatives will raise standards. The governing body is effective, gives good support and

ensures that all statutory responsibilities are met. Finances are managed well and are directed towards the most important areas of priority.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the education provided for their children. They particularly like the friendly, supportive ethos that has been established. They regret the interruptions to pupils' learning in Class 2 caused by long term staff absence but acknowledge that the school has done its best in difficult circumstances. Pupils are pleased with their school and feel that it helps them to succeed. They like the computerised whiteboards but would like longer playtimes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and make it more purposeful in Years 1 and 2.
- Raise the standards that pupils in Year 6 attain in science.
- Develop assessment systems so that the information is used to plan the next steps in learning.
- Improve development planning so that it sets out clearly how standards will be raised further.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Throughout the school the achievement of all pupils, including the faster learners and those with special educational needs, is good. In the Foundation Stage many children exceed the goals they are expected to reach before the end of the reception year. By Year 2, standards are above average in writing and mathematics and well above in reading and science. By Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and broadly average in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the reception class, where good foundations for further learning are laid.
- Pupils' achievement is mostly good in Years 1 to 6.
- By the time they leave the school pupils attain high standards in English and mathematics.
- The standards that pupils in Year 6 attain in science are not as high as they should be.
- The standards that pupils in Year 2 attain in writing should be higher.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school at widely varying stages of development. Some are advanced learners with well-developed early learning skills. The attainment of most on entry to the school is generally above average. The good teaching in the reception class helps all pupils to achieve well, so that by the end of reception, most surpass expected standards and exceed the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.2 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.8 (17.8)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year
The 2005 national test results had not been published at the time of the inspection.*

2. Last year the school's performance in Year 2 compared unfavourably when measured against similar schools; it was below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This year, despite interruptions to the learning of pupils in Year 2 caused by staffing problems, the improved results are likely to be considerably above average in all subjects when compared with all schools. This is partly because there are fewer lower attaining pupils in this year's group of pupils in Year 2 than last year. It is also

because this year's group are very well behaved and have particularly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are still not attaining the standards they should in writing but they are exceeding them in reading, mathematics and science. The school's performance is still likely to be below average when compared with similar schools because of the weakness in writing. Standards in Year 2 are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection in mathematics and writing but they have improved in reading, science and ICT.

3. The reasons why pupils are not all achieving as well as they should in writing are clear. In the absence of the class teacher, who is also the subject leader for English, the temporary teachers who took the class for the lower attaining pupils in Year 2 gave pupils too few opportunities to write purposefully and relied too heavily on the use of undemanding worksheets. With the support of parents, who read with their children regularly at home, they continued to make good progress in reading. Also they are keenly interested in science and are very good at finding out information in non-fiction books and on the Internet. This has helped to maintain their good achievement in science. Their progress in mathematics was also not affected as the temporary teachers followed the published scheme for mathematics, which contains clear guidance on teaching skills sequentially. Guidance on the teaching of writing is not so well defined. Also the pupils in the class for the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are taught well and this half of the year group attained very high standards, which enhanced the overall performance of the whole year group.
4. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good overall but it is inconsistent. It is good in reading, science and ICT and it is satisfactory in writing and mathematics. The achievement of the more able group, who work alongside pupils in Year 3, is good. The achievement of the lower ability group who work alongside pupils in Year 1 is satisfactory. This is because teaching is consistently better for the higher attaining group and because working alongside the older Year 3 pupils stimulates the younger group. By Year 2 pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading and science and above average in writing, mathematics and ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.1 (29.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	31.7 (29.0)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	32.4 (30.8)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year
The 2005 national test results had not been published at the time of the inspection.*

5. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is mostly good. It is good in English, mathematics and ICT and satisfactory in science. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in ICT. Standards in science are average. The high standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics have been maintained since the last inspection but standards in science have declined. Last year, the school's performance in the national tests was very high in English, mathematics and science and ranked among the top 5% of schools nationally. The school has maintained particularly good results in national tests for many years. The most recent, as yet unpublished teacher assessments for 2005 confirm inspection findings. The school's performance is again likely to be well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance in science is likely to be well below average. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved well in English and mathematics. Records show that although they are achieving satisfactorily

this year in science, but last year their achievement was unsatisfactory. Consequently there are gaps in their learning.

6. There are clear reasons for the decline in standards in science. The subject leader was absent from the school last year and the school reports that her replacement was not au fait with the English National Curriculum in general and in particular lacked expertise in teaching science. Also the school has identified a weakness in teaching that strand of the subject that deals with experimentation and investigation. Pupils have too few opportunities to organise their own experiments and draw their own conclusions from their results. This has had a negative impact on standards. Furthermore assessment systems do not identify clearly what skills, knowledge and understanding pupils have learned and so it is difficult for teachers to know precisely what the next steps in learning should be.
7. Pupils in Year 6 have done particularly well this year to attain standards that are well above average in English and mathematics because this group has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and there has been a high degree of mobility in this year group, with many pupils entering and leaving the school partway through this part of their schooling. The sensitive teaching they receive has helped them to achieve well. Across the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. These targets are regularly reviewed and new ones set, thus ensuring that good progress is sustained over time. In the 2004 national tests and assessments, the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who exceeded the national target of Level 2 and attained the higher Level 3 standard was well above average in writing, mathematics and science and above average in reading. It improved further in reading and mathematics in 2005, but not in writing. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who exceeded the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard in 2004 was very high in English, mathematics and science. This confirms that the more able pupils are, for the most part, effectively challenged and so achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, behaviour and relationships of most pupils are very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is also very good and their cultural development good, making these aspects of their personal development very good overall. Attendance levels are above the national average for a school of this type and pupils are prompt into school in the mornings.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to work.
- Pupils work and play happily together in a productive and harmonious environment.
- Pupils' awareness of how to treat others and their respect for each other contribute to a happy and welcoming school.
- The very strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to develop their confidence and self-awareness.

Commentary

8. Pupils respond very positively to their learning and are very involved in school life. They like school and work well individually as well as in group situations. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the '*small, friendly and happy school*', the '*good teachers and fun lessons*'. Pupils' contribution to the life of the school is reflected in their willingness to take initiative and responsibility when given the opportunity to do so. The very good quality of relationships within the school bears testimony to the respect pupils show to others' feelings, values and beliefs. All of this impacts very positively on pupils' learning and achievement, whilst also preparing them well for life within the school and beyond. Pupils with special educational needs get good support from staff and as a result feel valued; this maintains their positive attitude to learning.
9. The school's behaviour management support systems are well established. Any minor incidents of unacceptable behaviour are nipped in the bud. Teachers' sensitive management of pupils including the use of praise and celebration of achievement reinforces very good standards of behaviour in and around the school. Pupils respond very well to adults' high expectations of them. Although the attitudes and exuberant behaviour of the children in Class 1 are good, they can sometimes get over-enthusiastic and need careful and consistent management. They generally work well together and are happy to share their toys and equipment and take turns. They are likely to achieve well in their personal, social and emotional education by the end of the year. There are no major concerns relating to bullying or harassment of any kind. There have been no recent exclusions in the school.
10. Pupils' spirituality is developed particularly effectively through opportunities for prayer and reflection, religious education lessons and assemblies. The Christian ethos underpins school life and fosters care and self-esteem, enabling pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities to be well integrated into all it offers.
11. The school has a strong moral code that sets boundaries for acceptable behaviour, and pupils are involved in setting class rules. Its framework of values enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and reflect on the consequences of their actions. Classroom activities and assembly themes often raise moral issues such as those concerned with caring for others and the environment, and adults always set good examples in this respect. Parents are extremely happy with the values the school promotes.
12. A harmonious atmosphere pervades the school. Very positive relationships are fostered and pupils are given many opportunities to enjoy each other's company in extra-curricular activities, school productions and the choir. Activities relating to personal education, the relationships programme and residential visits contribute to this aspect of pupils' education. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take initiatives and responsibilities such as fund raising for charities, the 'eco' committee, school council representatives and looking after the younger pupils. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of environmental issues and the need for re-cycling materials. All of this enables pupils to learn to become good citizens and contribute to the profile of the school in the community.
13. Pupils have opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage through art, music and literature. The school has strong links with the Ely Dioceses and local churches and pupils study the major world faiths in considerable depth. Pupils learn about different festivals and customs, dances, food and traditions through multi-cultural weeks as well as topics within history, geography and religious education lessons. The school effectively draws upon links with a school in southern India to encourage an awareness and understanding of cultures other than their own.

14. Pupils enjoy coming to the school each day, are eager to meet their friends and get on with their lessons. The attendance rate is well above the national average. However, the number of unauthorised absences is due to parents taking holidays in term time, sometimes for extended periods. Punctuality is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.3
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The effective curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant to pupils’ needs and meets legal requirements. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils. Links with parents and the community are very good. A productive climate for learning has been firmly established.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn effectively. Assessment systems are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computer-linked display boards are used exceptionally well in some lessons.
- Assessment systems do not provide teachers with enough help in identifying targets for further learning.
- In Years 1 and 2 there is an over-reliance on filling in worksheets which slows learning.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Teachers’ very good relationships with pupils contribute to pupils’ enthusiasm for learning.
- There are examples of excellent practice in the setting of homework to support learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	6 (19%)	19 (61%)	5 (16%)	0	0	0

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

15. Parents say that teaching is good. The inspectors agree. Teaching in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 was nearly always good; in a fifth of the lessons seen it was very good. It is good in English, science and ICT and satisfactory in mathematics. There was insufficient evidence available to form judgements about the quality of teaching in the other subjects. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 were

nearly always at least good; they were good in well over a half and very good, occasionally excellent, in over a third. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and ICT are good; they are satisfactory in science.

16. There is a good balance of class-based support and individual tuition for pupils with special educational needs. Class teachers and the designated teaching assistant plan together effectively to ensure these pupils are given work which suits them well. This two-pronged approach ensures they reach their individual learning targets and are constantly challenged.
17. There are many strengths in the teaching and few weaknesses. One of the strengths is the way that the computerised whiteboards are used so well. They enhance the quality of teachers' presentations and play a strong part in capturing pupils' interest. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons thoroughly and the brisk pace in lessons that this promotes helps pupils to make rapid progress. In the very good lessons all groups were learning a good range of new skills and were all deepening their understanding. Another overarching strength of teaching is the very good relationships that have been established. This helps pupils to learn effectively in a relaxed atmosphere where they have no hesitation in saying that they do not understand or that they would like further assistance. Teachers are sensitive to individual needs and generate an enthusiasm for learning. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Many are highly skilled and bring a good range of expertise to the school. In one good lesson in art and design the teaching assistant, who is particularly skilled in the subject, led the introduction herself. They are also good at leading groups under the direction of the teacher and at working with individuals who need extra support.
18. Teachers cannot always be sure what pupils have learned and precisely what the next steps in learning should be. This is because assessment systems have not been developed systematically. Teachers keep lots of records but the very volume sometimes obscures clarity. Sometimes, as in ICT, records simply state, 'confident' rather than identifying what exactly has been learned. The school has identified the need to introduce a computerised system that helps to record what skills pupils have mastered and that helps to set targets for future learning. Another area that the school agrees should be tackled is the over-use of worksheets, many of which are undemanding. Sometimes these just occupy pupils rather than helping to take them to move forward in their learning. Also in some classes there are too few opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and science.
19. In the classes for the older pupils an excellent system has been developed that encourages pupils to extend their learning through homework. This involves a homework 'menu' from which pupils select two items each term that particularly interest them. The range includes physical activities, such as devising a game or sporting activity for younger pupils, art and design, design and technology, mathematics, geography, history, music, an independent project of no more than 4 pages or the presentation of a talk to the class. Teachers devise the menus carefully so that the activities complement classwork and there is always something that captures pupils' interest and fires their enthusiasm. The teachers' expectations of pupils' performance are high. Consequently much of the work produced at home is of very high quality. Parents greatly appreciate this approach to homework.

The curriculum

The curriculum and its enrichment are good and meet the needs of the pupils well. Accommodation and resources are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned and children enjoy their lessons.
- The curriculum for the youngest children buzzes with interesting activities and covers all six areas of learning well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The attractive accommodation supports a productive learning environment.

Commentary

20. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The school follows the local education authority syllabus for personal and health education and this includes good quality information to parents to reinforce awareness of issues such as the dangers of drugs. Questioning, investigating and discussion in all subjects are successfully encouraging speaking and listening throughout the curriculum. Pupils are confident and articulate. At times in mathematics and science there are too few opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigations. This is especially the case in mathematics in Year 1 and science in Year 6. Regular French lessons are timetabled in all classes and this further enriches the curriculum and children's cultural understanding.
21. Children in the reception class benefit from a well-planned curriculum. The accommodation is attractive and well organised to provide opportunities for active, purposeful play. The outside play area is enclosed and is well resourced to meet children's needs for all six areas of learning. Children enjoyed making a huge boat with wooden blocks, planks and tyres, acting as pirates and sea captains, sailing the boats they had made, pedalling vehicles across the playground and pretending to be Noah counting animals into the ark two by two. The curriculum for the youngest children has improved significantly since the last inspection.
22. The curriculum has been adapted well for pupils with a special educational need. For example, the accommodation has been modified to meet the needs of pupils with profound mobility difficulties. A close partnership with a local special school enables pupils to benefit from shared provision, and as such pupils have the benefits of both types of school. Pupils who require help with their learning are well managed and benefit from a good mix of whole-class support and one-to-one tuition. Teaching assistants are well organised and well trained. They are highly valued and provide substantial support for pupils' successful learning.
23. Pupils' learning is enriched well through visitors to the school and visits out. Visitors have included professional artists and religious leaders. A prominent and informative display on Buddhism enhanced pupils' growing awareness of other cultures and faiths. The school takes part in an 'Arts Week' and local musical initiatives. There is good take-up of peripatetic tuition for musical instruments. Parents are keen for pupils to have further opportunities for music and drama.
24. Overall accommodation is suitable, attractive, clean and well kept. This helps to support pupils' very good attitudes towards their school and helps to promote respect. Outdoor facilities are particularly spacious and well equipped with a good range of fixed climbing equipment. Pupils are encouraged to care for the grounds and have an active gardening club as part of the 'Eco Schools Project'. This is an initiative designed to heighten pupils' awareness of ecological issues. There is no ICT suite and classes have to share a bank of five laptop computers. This is impairing even better achievement. There is clearly scope to improve this in the future to provide a networked facility with full access to the Internet.

Care, guidance and support

There are very good arrangements to ensure students' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils receive effective academic and personal support and guidance and are involved very well in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very strong Christian ethos underpins the very good care offered.
- Pupils benefit from the positive and trusting relationships in the school.
- Child protection procedures are effective.
- The induction and transition arrangements are well developed.
- Very good systems ensure pupils are meaningfully involved in the life of the school.

Commentary

25. The school continues to offer a very strong ethos of care and consideration for others, which permeates the whole school community. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. Each pupil is valued and respected and feels secure and able to turn to any adult if they have a problem or concern. This has a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem and is reflected in their levels of attainment and progress. Parents are very pleased that their children are well nurtured and supported. They speak very positively about the kind and caring teachers and support staff and the way they treat pupils fairly.
26. Effective child protection procedures are in place and they are constantly reviewed. For example, one of the governors has undertaken recent training, and all members of staff are about to receive the relevant new training shortly. The school demonstrates a positive approach to health, safety and security. Risk assessments are undertaken and the governors approach their responsibilities conscientiously. Support staff and the mid-day supervisors are caring and encouraging. Most staff are trained in first aid.
27. The good induction arrangements enable the youngest children in the reception class to begin their school life happily and confidently. Parents value the very good links with the pre-school playgroup and the sensitive introductions and caring staff that help to ease their children into school. The transition to secondary school is very well organised and ensures that pupils' progression to the next stage of education is smoothly accomplished.
28. Teachers know their pupils very well and have a clear understanding of their emerging academic strengths and weaknesses. The very good relationships that have been established between staff and pupils also support pupils' personal development well. Staff respond sensitively to the needs of each individual. The school provides appropriate opportunities and challenge to higher attaining pupils and is very effective in identifying and making suitable provision for pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties. The school collaborates closely with outside support agencies who help with guidance that promotes a good level of support for these pupils. Documentation and assessment for pupils with special educational needs are systematically analysed and collated. Reports to the parents of these pupils are detailed. Targets are expressed well and targets are readily measurable. Teaching assistants are patient and helpful to all these pupils and make a very positive contribution to their learning.

The school's commitment to embracing all pupils within its community is demonstrated by how well pupils with severe physical and learning difficulties are integrated.

29. There are good avenues of communication that support a very productive dialogue between staff and pupils. Staff consult with pupils openly and involve them in decision-making processes through class and school councils and the 'eco' committee. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their roles and reflect thoughtfully about how they can improve their school. They particularly value the fact that they are given a voice and are able to meet with the governors to share their ideas. Pupils speak confidently about how they are making a difference - such as fund raising to improve the facilities in the playground - and are keen to bring forward their new ideas about lunchtime arrangements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a very strong and enduring partnership with parents and the community. Good links have been forged with partner schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about the school and hold it in high regard.
- The school has been very successful in involving parents in its work.
- The strong links forged with the local church underpin the Christian ethos of the school.
- The very good links with local primary schools and the secondary school help promote curricular development and opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning.

Commentary

30. The school's partnership with parents is very good. Responses to parents' questionnaires indicate a very high level of support for the school. Parents are very pleased that the school is approachable and has high expectations of their children, who like the school, behave appropriately and are achieving well. The inspection team found substantial evidence that strongly supports the parental views. A small number of parents expressed concerns about staffing problems due to long-term sickness and would like more information about how their child is progressing. The school recognises these concerns and has met with parents to address these issues.
31. Parents feel welcome and are encouraged to play an important part in their children's learning at home. They appreciate that they can approach individual teachers or the headteacher, confident that any issues or concerns will be resolved promptly, with care and consideration. Before and after school teachers and parents communicate informally. Parents visit the school for special events or services. A number of parents help out in the school and support pupils' learning experiences well. Some run after-school clubs or undertake coaching; others help in the classroom with group work; listen to pupils read or help out on educational visits. The friends association is run by a very active group of parents who organise a number of successful social and fund raising activities each year. The money raised helps provide valuable additional resources for the school.
32. Although a small minority of parents do not feel they are kept well informed, the school does provide a good range of information. The regular newsletters from the school give details of forthcoming activities and events. Curricular information is shared with parents so they can see what is going on in classrooms. The annual reports are

detailed and inform parents clearly about their children's academic performance and personal development. There are regular formal and informal meetings for parents and attendance at such meetings is good. The school has established good arrangements for involving and informing parents about the progress of pupils who have special educational needs.

33. The school has fostered strong links with the church and wider community. Links with the Ely Diocese and local churches are well developed and the local vicar is a regular visitor who takes assemblies and runs lunchtime clubs. Visitors and visits to places in the local area are linked to various areas of the curriculum and help enrich pupils' learning opportunities. These include visits to the local wildlife area, singing for the elderly and taking part in the local fete and the 'Plough Monday' celebrations. The school has a close partnership with other schools through links that have been established to form a 'family' of local schools. This helps promote joint staff development activities and opportunities for enrichment activities, including sporting events for pupils. The partnership with Swavesey Village College is very good and carefully fostered to enhance curricular activities and provide work placement opportunities for students. Pupils benefit from its specialist science status; they attend skills days or the summer schools organised for more able pupils. The transition arrangements are sensitively organised to ensure that pupils move into secondary education as smoothly as possible.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher and his deputy work closely together to provide effective leadership that underpins the school's success. The role of subject leaders is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has a very clear vision for the further improvement.
- Subject leaders' action plans do not always focus on how proposed initiatives are supposed to raise standards.
- The governing body has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

34. The headteacher was appointed at the beginning of this school year. He has tackled difficult staffing issues and has been obliged to make hard decisions. He sets high standards and has already articulated clearly how he intends to guide the school over the next few years. The lack of a fully developed system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress has been identified as a key area for development. As part of this he has already introduced plans for assessment that are to be directly linked to identifying how each individual pupil's performance can be improved. He has gained the support of staff, governors and parents, and they are looking forward to working together to improve provision further.
35. Good, developing teamwork is evident. Subject leaders have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and recognise that they are accountable for monitoring pupils' performance and for raising standards in their delegated subject areas. The headteacher has generated a new impetus to the continuing development of the school. The deputy headteacher is very much in tune with the headteacher's plans for further improvement and together they form a strong leadership team. The co-ordinator of provision for pupils with special educational needs supports staff well and gives

good guidance on teaching an appropriate curriculum for these pupils. She is well informed and works in close association with outside agencies as and when appropriate.

36. In their planning for improvement, subject leaders describe what initiatives they propose to implement in the forthcoming school year. These often detail the new resources that they intend to purchase but not what impact these should have on raising standards. The success criteria do not always show how the initiatives will be evaluated in terms of improved provision. In ICT, for example, there is no link between the purchase of new resources and what is anticipated that the new resources will achieve in terms of improving achievement and raising the standards that pupils attain. The headteacher has identified this weakness and the new draft improvement plan includes a somewhat clearer focus on standards but subject leaders have still not all fully developed plans that include a clear description of how initiatives are aimed at raising standards or how the improvement in standards will be measured. Also the school improvement plan, prepared prior to the appointment of the new headteacher, only encompasses one year and there is no clear longer term strategic planning.
37. The governing body provides effective support. With the school's exceptionally good results in national tests for pupils in Year 6 in recent years, they are acutely aware of the need to guard against complacency and to remain vigilant in their monitoring of provision and the standards that pupils attain. They are well informed and have a clear understanding of all school issues. They fully support the new headteacher's ideas for moving the school forward, including their greater involvement in setting agendas for their committees and in the decision making processes.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	398,905	Balance from previous year	5,000
Total expenditure	398,566	Balance carried forward to the next	5,339
Expenditure per pupil	3,066		

38. Finances are managed well. The expenditure per pupil is around the average and the governing body maintains a small contingency reserve. Financial management is closely linked to the school improvement plan, where the cost of all new initiatives is described in detail. Taking into account the school's particular strengths in English and mathematics, the good teaching and pupils' good achievement, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children have access a rich curriculum that makes efficient use of the available space and resources. The new outdoor area is used imaginatively to support all areas of learning well. There is a wide range of ability on entry to the reception class but most children enter the school with above average attainment. Children achieve well as a result of consistently good teaching. The curriculum is well integrated and meets the children's needs with due emphasis placed on activities that encourage children to take a personal responsibility for their own learning. Most children reach the early learning goals before the end of their reception year. Assessment procedures are good; staff keep accurate notes to feed into a system that informs planning for individuals and groups of children. This ensures work is well matched to children's interest and ability. The very good ratio of adults, many of whom are parent helpers, to children ensures that the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, are met well. Staff work hard to establish very good relationships with parents and the local playgroup. This developing trust and rapport sets the tone for the school's very good partnership with parents. Management procedures are effective. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, when teaching and children's progress were unsatisfactory. Children are now reaching higher standards in all areas of learning and are much further on with their literacy and numeracy skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good induction procedures which help children settle quickly to their learning.
- Children behave well but expectations of behaviour are not always consistent.
- A calm but active learning environment has been established, which encourages children take personal responsibility for their learning.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. Visits to the reception class for new children are routine and staff have good relations with the local playgroup. The headteacher and staff hold several meetings and visits for parents and children in the year preceding entry. This slow build-up is highly effective in building the child's confidence and enthusiasm for school. It also gives parents and carers a real insight into school life. There is a sense of partnership between the school and home at the earliest stages in the child's school life. As a result children quickly gain confidence with adults and assimilate school routines with ease. They learn to happily sit on the carpet with attention and participate in the full range of activities available.

41. The teachers and all adults are highly effective when modelling good behaviour. They have a calm and respectful manner when addressing children and each other.

Teachers value children's contributions to lessons, and they are expected to be responsible for tasks such as taking the register to the office. 'Helpers' are identified clearly and they are keen to live up to the title, glowing with pride when they are thanked for their effort. Adults are quick to acknowledge good behaviour and children are praised appropriately for listening with attention and sitting with good posture. However there is some inconsistency. For instance, some children call out at times and their contributions are praised, and as a result the contributions of quieter members of the class are overlooked. Although behaviour overall is good as children have good manners and attitudes, greater emphasis needs to be placed on consistent application of behaviour strategies, particularly during whole-class sessions on the carpet.

42. All adults foster the development of social skills in a variety of ways. The class routines, especially at the start of the school day, require the children to take responsibility for their belongings. In activity sessions, such as when they want to ride the bikes, children are required to record their intention to participate by registering their name. They understand they should take turns and are polite to each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good skills in language and literacy.
- Parents are encouraged to help their child at home with early literacy skills.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. There is a good balance between formal teaching and effectively planned activities that develop skills in language and early literacy well. Children enjoy the teacher's introductory discussion sessions at the beginning of each lesson as these are pitched accurately to their level of understanding. Children are good at anticipating and predicting the rhymes in lines of poetry and identifying similar sounds within the text of a rhyming story. Children enjoy writing and are beginning to write clusters of words to form sentences. During the inspection children wrote sentences about boats and most were ambitious in their use of vocabulary. Direct teaching is balanced well by a good range of imaginative activities such as playing in the post office, where children can send postcards to their families. Scrutiny of children's work indicated that children of all abilities were making good progress and achieving well.
44. Parents benefit from detailed information about reading and early literacy skills. The regular contact and frequent consultations with teachers help children to make good progress with reading. Parents are given clear guidance on how they can help their children achieve their learning goals. There is a strong emphasis on language development. Children are encouraged to read at home and to practise matching letters with the sounds they represent. This creates a firm basis for the very good partnership that prevails throughout the school.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching children develop skills progressively and achieve well, many reaching the early learning goals before the end of their year in reception.

Commentary

45. On entry to reception children already have a good grasp of mathematical language and many are ready to tackle simple problem solving activities. The teacher plans such work well and encourages children to think of ways to use their understanding of number in practical situations. In one session, for example, pupils were floating boats and at the same time were encouraged to consider how many more red boats there were than blue ones. In another session most children showed a good understanding of how to place numbers in order up to 10. The more able could identify and place numbers in order up to 50. Being challenged to complete the task without a complete set of numbers extended them further. They were encouraged to adopt a systematic approach, working out if numbers were greater or lesser than the previous one. The teacher made sensitive interventions to enable pupils to make very good progress with their learning. However there was scope in the session to extend the lower attaining groups further as their tasks were time consuming and not as mathematically demanding. As a result these children became restless and with greater challenge could have achieved more.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in this wide area of learning. Children have a good general knowledge, as was demonstrated in their discussion about sailing ships. Children have ready access to computers in their classroom.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good and most exceed the standards expected by the end of the reception.
- The newly developed area outside the reception classrooms provides good facilities for children's physical development.
- Children are particularly skilful for their age in handling small tools and objects.

Commentary

46. While in the area outside their classroom, children moved confidently and safely when climbing a ladder and balancing along a plank. These actions were carried out with good coordination, great enjoyment and a good awareness of others around them. Children drive a range of wheeled vehicles and learn to steer accurately and regulate their speed. Good opportunities are provided for children to use a wide range of small equipment such as large pencils, scissors, paintbrushes and glue spreaders. Staff are well aware of the need for children to practise these skills and provide a variety of experiences where they are required to

manipulate small objects to improve their control. Children were particularly skilful in handling materials when making model boats. They could manipulate materials to form structures and fix small details to the main structures such as tiny foil fishes in the nets of trawlers.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning is skilful in integrating all the facets of creativity into thematic activities that children enjoy.
- Children are very keen to participate and they achieve well.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good so that children achieve well and most exceed the early learning goals before the end of the reception year. The children paint pictures of themselves, explore ways to make prints and make colourful collages as well as complicated models. Their work is careful and demonstrates the careful consideration that most achieve when trying to create a particular effect. During the inspection children displayed considerable precision and perseverance as they made boats from junk materials. Displays of their work are creatively planned and demonstrate the value teachers place on this area of learning. Children are taught music well by a specialist teacher and songs are used well throughout the day, for example, in story time, to reinforce learning.
48. Careful thought is put into facilitating role-play. The ship created in the outside area is a good example. From a range of everyday resources children created an exciting pirate ship. They used specific vocabulary such as 'deck', 'cabin' and 'mast' to communicate with each other in their roles as seafarers. The children were thrilled and fully engrossed in their adventures on the high seas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school pupils' achievement in reading is good and they attain high standards.
- By Year 6 pupils attain high standards in writing and are skilled at studying literature analytically.
- Assessment systems do not identify clearly what skills pupils have mastered and what their next steps in learning should be.
- Pupils' spelling is often inaccurate.
- The standards that pupils attain in writing by Year 2 are not high enough.
- Teaching is good and teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance.

- Computer-linked display boards are used well to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

49. Across the school pupils' achievement is generally good. By Year 2 pupils attain standards that are well above average in reading and above average in writing. By Year 6 pupils attain standards in reading and writing that are well above average. The high standards that the oldest pupils attain have been sustained since the previous inspection whilst those of the younger pupils in writing have improved. Overall, improvement has been good.
50. Pupils have well developed speaking and listening skills. By Year 2 standards are above average and by Year 6 they are well above average. Most demonstrate that they have acquired an extensive vocabulary and understand the meanings of words beyond those in everyday use. However, despite many strategies to promote accurate spelling, the spelling of many pupils is bizarre. Whilst much of this is due to carelessness, it also suggests that early phonic skills have not been fully mastered. Teachers dwell on explaining difficult words. In one very good poetry lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, the vocabulary in the poem being studied included challenging words such as 'patina' and 'accentuate' which were explained well.
51. Pupils' achievement in reading is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils read a good quantity of books and parents support reading well by reading regularly with their children at home. Although pupils' achievement is generally good, it is satisfactory overall in writing in Years 1 and 2 and there is considerable scope for further improvement. Since October 2004 pupils in Year 1 and half the pupils in Year 2 have been taught by a series of temporary teachers and the continuity of their learning has been interrupted. Also there has been an over-reliance on using worksheets for writing practice. These are often undemanding and merely involve filling in letters or words. Consequently pupils in this class have had too few opportunities for purposeful writing, such as writing letters, their own booklets or scripts for plays. In the class for the other half of the Year 2 group, pupils' achievement is very good and the writing tasks set are more purposeful. Although overall standards in writing are above average by Year 2 they should, given the above average ability of most of the group, be higher. This has been the case for several years and is not just due to the interruptions in learning this year. This is confirmed by national test results, which indicate that standards in writing are generally above average when compared with all schools but below average when compared with similar schools.
52. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read widely and are encouraged to analyse writing styles. Pupils' ability to analyse literature in depth helps them to understand how to write effectively. They transfer their good understanding of how authors achieve literary effects to their own writing. Consequently most have developed the ability to write powerfully and sensitively.
53. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is generally good and for those in Years 3 to 6 it is good, often very good and occasionally excellent. In one lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, teaching was excellent. The work of Anthony Horowitz was being studied in detail to tease out how the author achieved suspense and why his writing is so effective.

Example of outstanding practice

In an excellent English lesson for pupils in Year 5 and 6, pupils compared the style and techniques of different authors in great depth.

The computer-like display board was used well to display text and demonstrate features of style. Excellent relationships and good humour characterised each part of the lesson. The teacher referred to one pupil as the class's 'resident expert' as he had read all Horowitz's books. The introductory discussion on genre demonstrated that pupils had an exceptionally wide knowledge of modern children's fiction. The writing task was challenging and involved comparing and contrasting different styles. The teacher skilfully matched the tasks set to pupils' widely differing stages of development and those with special educational needs were supported well. Children became engrossed and worked in silence. The teacher and the pupils together explored elements of style reflectively. The excellent discussion session towards the end of the lesson revealed that pupils had mastered many of the elements of literary criticism. *"He doesn't give it all away - he uses ellipsis to keep you guessing", "Unlike Philip Pulman, his characters are all bone and muscle", "Yes but they are not flat characters - although his style is much 'pacier'", "He achieves tension by asking questions, such as 'Would he make it on time?'"* The teacher maintained very high expectations of pupils' performance and all pupils made excellent progress.

54. Reading and writing are taught particularly well to pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject and are very knowledgeable about children's literature. Also the computerised whiteboards support teaching and learning well. Teachers use them skilfully to display extracts from literature, to present web pages and to demonstrate elements of grammar. Children themselves use the boards to explore web sites and to explain features of particular pieces of literature to their friends. In one good lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, the teacher had used her laptop to prepare a letter for pupils to analyse. She had also prepared the same letter with sentences that could be joined with conjunctions highlighted in different colours. She displayed these on the whiteboard for pupils to examine. This did much to support the clarity of her explanations. This lesson also demonstrated the high expectations that teachers have of pupils' ability to learn rapidly. They had a thorough understanding of the different styles of letter writing and identified accurately indicators, such as the use of apostrophes in 'I'll' and 'I've', as signifying an informal style. In Years 3 to 6 the teachers share their enthusiasm for the subject and so foundations are laid well and pupils' learning grows cumulatively and strongly from class to class.
55. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the subject leader is absent on long-term sick leave, improvement in writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been identified as an area of high priority for development. Teachers have concentrated on improving spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Although they have been successful in improving these separate elements of the writing process, there has been no clear identification of the full hierarchy of writing skills that need to be taught nor enough guidance on how to teach them effectively to the younger pupils. Improvement planning is not as effective as it should be. Plans for development focus on improving resources rather than on how standards are going to be raised. Also assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to identify clearly what skills have been mastered and what should be taught next. Teachers regularly assess the standards that pupils have reached but this does not always inform plans for further learning. Tests are conducted to measure improvement in reading, for example, and 'reading ages' are calculated but these do not help teachers to know what the next steps in learning should be. Resources are good and the school has invested in a good range of good quality fiction as well as an adequate supply of relevant non-fiction material. The library is well organised and pupils can access books readily. They also use the Internet well for research although much of their research is conducted at home.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils use their language skills well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 write their own individual project books. These are often beautifully presented with computers used well to type text and illustrate the work. One on the theme of 'Gymnastics' was particularly impressive. A particularly good initiative in Year 4 and 5 is the use of a theme, such as 'Islands', that acts as a vehicle for incorporating work that derives from many subjects. Pupils write descriptive passages about their island that includes elements of geography, write letters home, diary entries, imaginative pieces about hearing strange noises in the night and instructions for building a shelter.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, pupils attain high standards.
- Assessment data is insufficiently well developed.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 3 to 6, but their achievement is restricted in Year 1 as they have too few opportunities to use and apply their skills.
- As a result of good and interesting teaching, pupils are keen to do well.
- Leadership and management are effective.

Commentary

57. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and by Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above average. The school has done well to help pupils to achieve satisfactorily as those in Year 1 and half those in Year 2 have had their learning interrupted this year due to long-term staff absence. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above average. Results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 are usually well above average. Pupils now in Year 6 are likely to follow this pattern despite a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Good provision has been sustained since the last inspection.
58. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have made better progress than might be expected given the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high levels of mobility in this year group. The good and often very good teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Overall pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress although the more able group make very good progress and their achievement is very good. Pupils' achievement in Year 1 and the achievement of half of the pupils in Year 2, who are taught alongside them, is satisfactory but in this class there is an imbalance in the teaching of different aspects of the subject. There is an over-emphasis on arithmetic and number work and there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in practical and investigative work. As a result learning is uneven. Also the succession of temporary teachers who have taken this class have not followed consistent approaches teaching the subject.
59. Overall teaching and learning are good. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is inconsistent; it is satisfactory overall but the group of Year 2 pupils taught in the class with Year 3 pupils are taught very well. However, the younger pupils have too many worksheets to complete and too few opportunities for purposeful, practical work. An analysis of the work produced by pupils in Year 1 indicated that the mathematics curriculum is heavily weighted towards activities involving numerical calculations at the expense of the other aspects of learning, such as studying pattern, shape and space and problem solving. This curriculum imbalance impacts adversely on the overall achievement of these pupils, and as result they are not doing as well as they should.
60. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and engage pupils' interest well. Demonstrations are practical and often concepts are illustrated or reinforced well through the use of carefully selected software on the computer-linked display boards. Lessons are generally well balanced

and work is matched well to pupils' varying stages of development. As a result pupils acquire new skills rapidly. In Years 3 to 6 pupils have access to a wide range of learning opportunities, with emphasis placed on pupils being active in using and applying their skills. In Year 5, for instance, pupils used their knowledge of percentages to work out discounts on shopping.

61. The subject leader leads and manages provision well. She has very good subject knowledge and uses her expertise well to support colleagues. She knows the pupils well and can talk knowledgeably about the individual progress of each pupil. She monitors pupils' work and has developed a very good understanding of where improvements are required. However, data on precisely what skills pupils have mastered is insufficiently detailed to demonstrate whether all pupils have made sufficient progress, particularly those pupils in Year 1 who have ground to make up. In addition, records do not identify where pupils have gaps in their learning. Also Improvement planning is not as effective as it should be. Plans for development focus on improving resources rather than on how standards are going to be raised.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Teachers use and apply mathematical skills in other curriculum subjects well. They frequently use measures in science and record data using graphs and charts. There are good examples of creative use of mathematical ideas on display, such as where pupils have plotted their names on squared paper and have completed a symmetrical reflection. These are attractive and mathematically accurate. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have used computers well in an investigation into tubes of coloured sweets. Here spreadsheets were used well and data was colourfully illustrated in graphs and pie charts.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are well above average.
- Standards in Year 6 are average and are not as high as they should be.
- Computers are used effectively to support learning.
- Teachers make good use of the computer-linked display boards.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to set up experiments and to conduct investigations.
- Assessment is not systematic and rigorous enough to ensure that pupils are making enough progress in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

63. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in Year 2 have been rising steadily in recent years and overall they are well above average. Achievement is good. In Year 2 pupils have a very good understanding of living processes, materials and physical changes but their ability to investigate and set up experiments is less well developed.

64. Over the past four years pupils in Year 6 have attained standards in national tests that have been well above average and last year they were very high. Standards have fallen this year. The fall in standards is due to a combination of factors. Last year a teacher who was on exchange from the United States taught many of the pupils then in Year 5. The school reports that the teacher had limited experience of the English National Curriculum. Records show that science was not taught regularly to this group of pupils and there were no assessments made. The subject leader was the teacher who was on exchange for the year. On her return pupils' achievement accelerated but there was a great deal of ground to make up. Furthermore, the lack of detailed assessment systems meant that it was not easy to determine where pupils had gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily now but they are not attaining high enough standards due to gaps in their prior learning. In addition pupils in Year 6 do not have enough opportunities for independent investigation. Pupils' work shows a lack of challenge in investigative science and all too often the work was not sufficiently modified to meet the needs of different pupils. Consequently, although their achievement is mostly satisfactory, it could be improved.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of the oldest pupils is inconsistent and some shortcomings are evident. During the inspection the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the good lessons, teachers plan well and lessons provide pupils with an interesting mix of instruction and practical investigation. Teachers make good use of the computer-linked display boards to illustrate information and demonstrate how work might be presented. The boards are used well to display pages from the Internet. This was especially effective in a lesson when the teacher created a link to an educational web site that gave pupils access to detailed information on pond habitats in an interactive visual form. This supported their learning very well as they could reference what they were observing to factual information, which helped with classification.
66. Leadership and management are satisfactory but there are shortcomings. Last year there was no subject leader to monitor provision and there are indications that teaching and learning declined as a result. The subject leader took up the reins again in September and has worked hard this year to raise standards attained by pupils in Year 6. However, assessment systems are not well developed and so it was difficult for her to assess precisely where pupils had gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 is likely to decline significantly this year. Improvement planning is not as effective as it should be. Plans for development focus on improving resources rather than on how standards are going to be raised. There are good links to the local village college, which has special status for science, where some elements of the curriculum for Year 6 are taught.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards that are above average.
- Records of pupils' progress are not sufficiently developed to set targets for further learning.

- Pupils learn typing skills and are developing good keyboard skills.
- Skills developed in ICT are used well in other subjects.
- Pupils are good at making multi-media presentations.

Commentary

67. Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good gains in learning in lessons and achieve well because skills are taught systematically. For example, in one good lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3, pupils learned exactly how to send an email and how to attach a photograph to their text. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are skilled at creating multi-media presentations using 'PowerPoint' and spreadsheets to analyse and present data. Pupils themselves use the computer-linked display boards well to demonstrate points or to explain their views. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 access the Cambridge University mathematics website and submit their answers to the problems posed. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 use a program that helps them to type. Many use both hands on the keyboard and are beginning to use their fingers and thumbs well to type accurately and quite rapidly. Word processing skills are developing well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce beautifully presented project booklets. Good links are made with literature as, for example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 used 'PowerPoint' to make presentations on how to write myths.
68. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers themselves demonstrate good competence in ICT. For example, they use their laptop computers well to prepare lessons and link their machines to the computerised whiteboards. This promotes very clear explanations and demonstrations. Teaching is good because teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance and skills are taught systematically. Many pupils have computers at home and use them to produce beautifully presented pieces of homework.
69. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader has a good overview of provision and has good levels of expertise. She supports her colleagues well and together they have become skilled at using the computer-linked display boards, which add a great deal to the quality of the teachers' presentations. Computers are used well and feature in most lessons. Resources are adequate but the bank of five laptops is shared between the classes and is used by each class for about a week each half term. When it is their turn to have the laptops, the class makes much better progress than when they do not. Clearly greater and more regular access to computers would enable greater progress to be made. The school has recognised the need to improve assessment systems. The records of pupils' attainment and progress are inadequate. They do not describe in detail the skills that pupils have mastered and records do not help teachers to plan the next steps in learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Computers are used well to support teaching and learning in other subjects. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, pupils were introduced to a program designed to help them write stories. The program invited them to create characters, a setting and dialogue which they could weave together to make an interactive story. This gave great impetus to the development of creative writing. In mathematics pupils use computers well for data handling and produce clear and colourful illustrations based on their investigations. Digital cameras are used well to record work in progress and work completed. In Years 5 and 6 for example, the finished products in design and technology were well-made 'toys' that incorporated a cam wheel to make objects move up and down, and these were recorded on camera.

HUMANITIES

Geography was sampled but history was not inspected.

71. Good work was seen in **geography**. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have completed interesting studies based on comparing and contrasting the countryside with the seaside. They have a good understanding of how maps are created to gain a bird's eye view of the landscape. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have used digital photographs well as part of their study of their village. In a good lesson in Years 4 and 5, the computer-linked display board was used well to display websites that dealt with maps and another that contained many photographs of the nearby city of Cambridge. Pupils became tourist officers and created a tour guide to help tourists to appreciate the city. At the start of the lesson the teacher discovered, surprisingly, that pupils did not understand the term 'tourist' but with clear explanations they soon developed a better understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and history were sampled but design and technology and physical education were not inspected.

72. Good work was seen in **art and design**. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good at colour mixing and in one good lesson learned how to paint skies which met the earth at the horizon. Good links are made with literacy in this class and pupils have completed a large mural illustrating a favourite book, 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch.' In Years 2 and 3 pupils have studied art forms created by Australian Aborigines and have used this as an inspiration for their own work. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 the teacher used the computer-linked display board well to share with the class an autobiography of the sculptor Albert Giacometti. Here good links were made with history as pupils discovered that his thin sculptures were much influenced by his horror at scenes he witnessed from the Holocaust. Good links are made that help pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures. In Years 5 and 6, pupils studied native American 'petroglyphs' - rock carvings found in New Mexico, Utah and Colorado that tell the story of families using pictograms and symbols.
73. The success and importance of the school's emphasis on **music** were clearly evident in all the school assemblies seen. During these special and much appreciated occasions, the pupils sang with tunefully and in unison to achieve good harmony that enriched the spiritual nature of the assembly. One lesson was observed. The interest and enthusiasm that stemmed from pupils' ability to play their home-made instruments in order to consider the dynamics of sound enriched their learning. Pupils enjoyed the lesson. Work in music makes a significant contribution to the school's good ethos through its links with work in religious education and through events such as the Christmas and grand summer performances.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship was sampled.

74. The school has a good programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship and the governing body ensures that the school meets statutory requirements in respect of its provision for sex and relationships education and drugs education. The personal, social and health education curriculum is planned in detail

and follows the local education authority syllabus. This area of the curriculum is an important component in the establishment of the school's caring ethos, and its ongoing development is linked closely with its participation in the 'Healthy Schools' and 'Eco school' initiatives. School assemblies and class and school councils enable representative groups of pupils to express their views. They provide useful opportunities for the pupils to develop and share their ideas. Work in this area of the curriculum has a very supportive impact on the pupils' personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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