

INSPECTION REPORT

FREETHORPE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Freethorpe, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120808

Headteacher: Miss Rachel Quick

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme

Dates of inspection: 11th - 13th October 2004

Inspection number: 266849

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	168
School address:	The Green Freethorpe Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR13 3NZ
Telephone number:	(01493) 700 215
Fax number:	(01493) 701 758
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sally More
Date of previous inspection:	9 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a smaller than average sized rural primary school close to the Norfolk Broads. There are 168 pupils on roll who come from the immediate village and hamlets and villages around Freethorpe. There is a good social mix of families including a proportion from more affluent homes. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are no pupils in public care. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and a few are from other ethnic groups. There are no pupils whose first language is not believed to be English. The school has no refugees, asylum seekers or travellers. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (15 per cent) is close to that nationally and there are two pupils who have statements of specific need. Most pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties and a few have behavioural difficulties. The pupil mobility figures show that in the last school year there were 14 joining other than at the usual starting time and six who left other than at the usual time of transfer. There is a new headteacher who has been in post for less than a year and some changes of staff. Many changes have occurred in the last year enabling the school to develop further. It works in partnership with other local schools, including the local high school and has a strong and successful sporting tradition. It is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools and its successes are recognised in the awards of 'Investor in People' in 2002 and the Football Association Charter Standard, Activemark and School Achievement Award in 2003.

The majority of children attend the local playgroup before they start school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is below that expected for children aged four with communication and language skills and numeracy skills being the weaker elements. At present the school is in the

middle of re-organisation and although it will remain a primary school it will be affected by a loss of pupil numbers when it loses the second intake at Year 4.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Mrs M Hulme	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum English Religious education Music English as an additional language
9327	Mr S Vincent	Lay inspector	
29995	Mrs M Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs
32282	Mrs L Holbrook	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 10
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10 - 15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18 - 30
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is **satisfactory** and rapidly improving. The purposeful leadership of new headteacher is inspiring staff to work as a team in raising standards and the quality of education but more needs to be done. There is good support from both staff and the governing body. Teaching is improving and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. In the Foundation Stage achievement is good. Pupils are happy and feel valued, they form good relationships and their personal development is well provided for. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress across the core subjects and good progress across the areas of learning.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels in national tests, particularly in Year 2.
- Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory and often they are good.
- The purposeful leadership of the headteacher provides good direction for the school's work but still needs to extend the subject leader's roles so they are more effective.
- There is a good curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the pupils.
- The caring, supportive ethos provides well for pupils' personal development.
- Pupils with behavioural problems do not have the support they need.
- The lack of ICT¹ resources is a barrier to achievement.
- Handwriting and presentation are weaker elements in English.
- The involvement of parents in the education of their children contributes well to their achievement.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection

Given the time since the last inspection, progress is **satisfactory** but has been slower than it might have been. Since the new headteacher arrived work has speeded up and issues have been tackled although subject leadership roles have still not reached the stage of development desired. The headteacher has taken effective action to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and put into effect a programme to improve the school's overall performance. This has resulted in a new school structure, better curriculum, improved teaching and assessment, better lesson planning, greater involvement of parents and pupils, improved policies, more professional development for staff and faster identity of pupils with special educational needs together with the provision of some support. Action plans are in place for further development, which the school is well placed to provide.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The table below shows standards in national tests are at least satisfactory by the time pupils leave school, but over time the trend is a falling one and the most recent results of 2004 show a dip in all subjects and less pupils reaching the higher level.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003

¹ Information and communication technology

English	B	A	A	A
mathematics	A	B	C	C
science	A*	A	A	A

Key: A - very high; 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.*

When pupils start school most have fewer communication and number skills than expected for their age but they make good progress and achieve well. This continues to Year 2, when most pupils reach the standards expected for their age in national tests. However, too few children reach the higher level and the school is trying to improve this. Inspection findings show that achievement in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory and improving, including that of higher attainers, which was a concern at the last inspection. Although the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because now they are identified and supported earlier, the lack of support for a minority with behavioural difficulties restricts the progress and achievement of both them and others in the class. Standards and achievement in ICT are satisfactory but the lack of resources impedes achievement in all year groups. A significant proportion of pupils transfer to the school each year and have much less time to reach the standards expected but staff work particularly hard to overcome this barrier to achievement.

Pupils' personal development is **good** and is supported effectively by the **good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils are happy at school, form good relationships and have good attitudes to learning. Most behave well in lessons and at playtimes but there are a minority of older boys whose behaviour adversely affects the progress of others. Most show care for one another and love being given responsibility. Attendance is **good**.

Quality of education

The quality of education is **satisfactory** with good features. The teaching is satisfactory overall but in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 it is good. There are no unsatisfactory lessons and the good and very good teaching holds pupils' interest and they work harder. A lack of resources for ICT hampers teaching and restricts achievement. English lessons would benefit from more attention to handwriting and presentation. Inconsistencies in the marking of work leave some pupils not understanding how to improve. A relaxed atmosphere results in pupils' security and an eagerness to work hard. Assessment is now good so planning for individual needs has improved. Curricular provision is good. Most pupils receive the support they need and parents' greater involvement in their children's education supports their achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She encourages and supports staff well but needs to extend the roles of the subject leaders to make them more effective. The school is governed well and governors work closely with the headteacher and staff for continued improvement. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very good views of the school and want to continue contributing to their children's achievement, particularly through the Parents' Forum. Pupils have good views of the school

because they enjoy the activities provided and get on well with staff. Their self-esteem is high because they are listened to and take part in making the school a good place to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do to improve and raise standards are:

- RAISE PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT IN YEARS 2 TO 6 BY ENABLING MORE PUPILS TO REACH THE HIGHER LEVEL IN NATIONAL TESTS, PROVIDING MORE ICT RESOURCES SO THAT PUPILS CAN MAKE FASTER PROGRESS IN LESSONS AND PROVIDING THE SUPPORT NEEDED BY THOSE PUPILS WITH BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES.
- Remedy the teaching inconsistencies regarding handwriting, presentation and marking.
- Extend the leadership role of subject leaders by making time for them to observe teaching and learning in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is mainly **satisfactory** but in the Foundation Stage it is good. Overall, pupils reach satisfactory standards in English, mathematics and science.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils make good progress and achieve well despite starting school with fewer skills than children usually have at this age.
- In national tests most pupils capable of reaching the expected standards for their age do so but too few reach a higher level, particularly in Year 2.
- The achievement of higher attainers is improving.
- Because pupils with behavioural difficulties do not have enough support their achievement is unsatisfactory and sometimes restricts the progress and achievement of other pupils.
- The lack of ICT resources is limiting pupils' progress and achievement.

COMMENTARY

1. When children start school their knowledge, understanding and skills are wide ranging. Assessments show that most have fewer skills than expected for their age and they have particular difficulties in the areas of communication, language and literacy and in numeracy. As at the last inspection, children make good progress. This year they are working at expected levels and most children will reach the goals² they are expected to reach in the areas of learning, by the end of the Reception Year. A few will do better and start National Curriculum work.
2. There is some variation in national test results from year to year, depending on the number with special educational needs. Until the new headteacher came many such pupils had not been identified and over time had lacked the level of support they needed, which influenced results. In addition, the school works with the constant challenge of pupils transferring to them at Year 4, which makes it difficult to secure children's success in learning the basic skills before they tackle the national tests.
3. In 2003 in comparison with all other schools the National Curriculum test results showed that standards in reading, writing and mathematics for Year 2 were in line with those expected for the pupils' age. Almost all reached this level, including those from minority ethnic groups, which was good progress given the low starting point when pupils entered school. However, as at the last inspection, few children reached the higher level so when a comparison is made with similar schools results do not reflect so well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (14.3)	14.6 (14.4)

² Goals refer to personal, social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; mathematical; and physical development areas of learning.

mathematics	16.6 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)
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There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The most recent results in national tests (2004) show that Year 2 pupils did best in mathematics with every child reaching the level expected for their age. In reading 90 per cent reached the expected level and in writing 76 per cent did so. Although there are no national figures available yet with which to make a comparison it is evident that few reached the higher level. The school aims to have more Year 2 pupils reaching the higher level so assessment for learning has been introduced, all pupils have targets for improvement and the organisation of the school has been changed to allow more focused time for Year 2.
- In 2003 the standards by Year 6, in comparison with all other schools, were well above the national average in English and science and were similar to the national average in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (28.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (28.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- A few pupils did not reach the level expected for their age in English and mathematics but all did so in science. There was a considerable improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level with English coming out best. A comparison with similar schools based on prior attainment shows very good progress for English and science and satisfactory progress for mathematics. In mathematics fewer pupils reached the higher level and more failed to reach the standard expected for their age compared with the other subjects.
- The most recent results in national tests (2004) show pupils did best in science. Results were less good in English and least good in mathematics. The statutory targets were just exceeded in English but not in mathematics. The Year 6 national test results have been high and are in line with similar schools but trends over time show a drop in standards. Weaknesses in these subjects have now been identified. Action plans have been put in place to deal with them but it is too soon yet to see what impact these will have.
- Inspection findings are that standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with those expected for their age by Year 2 and in Year 6 with some who are doing better. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is mainly satisfactory but is better for some higher attainers especially when they are taught in a smaller group for literacy. The secure foundations, established during the Reception Year are being built on as pupils move through the school and the good leadership from the headteacher together with the improved teaching are beginning to make an impact on achievement. The school recognises that development to raise standards is essential and has started to use analysis to identify and remedy weakness and make more extensive use of scrutinising pupils' work. Raising standards in national tests is now a priority. Although many changes have been made in the last year the school has had limited time yet to see an impact on standards. However,

teachers have trust in the leadership of the school and have responded well to the action taken to improve standards.

9. Overall, achievement for most pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. These pupils progress at the same rate as others because they have the individual support they need from experienced teaching assistants. There is regular monitoring of their learning and teachers plan well for them taking into consideration the targets in their individual education plans and the activities provided meet their specific needs. Progress for a minority of older pupils is satisfactory when support is available and less so when it is not, which is unsatisfactory.
10. The achievement of higher attainers that was a concern in the previous inspection is being tackled well and this has improved, particularly in literacy sessions. At present they achieve better when taught in a small group and their achievement is good.
11. There is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls. Gender has not been a problem for this school in the past because boys and girls achieve equally. However, this may change as some year groups now have a greater number of boys and staff are keeping tabs on English, mathematics and science to determine if it is affecting standards.
12. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and in Year 2 and Year 6 are satisfactory for the age of the pupils. This is similar to the time of the last inspection.
13. Standards in ICT are as expected for the pupils' age by Year 2 and in Year 6. This is similar to the last inspection but now resources are unsatisfactory and this is having an adverse affect on pupils' progress and achievement. The school lacks the number of computers it needs to enable the teachers to show every child in the class the same skill at the same time. Although teachers keep records and ensure all learn these skills it takes much longer because only a few can have the 'hands on' experience during lessons. Action has been taken to improve this situation but the equipment needed is not in place yet.
14. Few lessons were observed in other subjects but where there was sufficient evidence standards were satisfactory and pupils' achievement was at least good. Design and technology, which was stated to be unsatisfactory at the last inspection now has a new subject leader who is breathing new life into it and is improving standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils' personal development is also good, supported well by the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attendance is good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children's positive attitudes to work contribute effectively to their good efforts.
- The good example set by staff and their high expectations of how pupils should behave results in most children getting on with tasks and working hard.
- A small minority of older pupils lack support to help them behave better.
- Adults are good role models and establish good relationships with pupils making them feel secure and confident in tackling work.
- Children play an active part in the life of the school community.

Commentary

15. Pupils are happy to come to school. They feel safe and well cared for and they express pride in their school, talking enthusiastically about their enjoyment of the wide range of activities offered. They are not anxious about bullying or harassment and pupils readily identified adults they would turn to if they had concerns or worries of any kind. Younger children feel that many older pupils are considerate and supportive to them and have occasionally enjoyed opportunities to read to them. The school is making more opportunities for all pupils to take increased responsibility. Older pupils particularly enjoyed their involvement in organising Sports Day. Class councils are already in place and there are plans to extend this with a school council to reflect and act on pupils' views across the school.
16. Relationships between teachers are good. Staff are good examples to pupils of how to behave towards one another and what is acceptable in the school community. Teachers praise children for social skills as well as good work in class and the 'Golden Work' board is used to display certificates awarded for of all kinds of success. Because the Behaviour Policy has involved children and their parents in its review all pupils are aware of the schools' 'Golden Rules' and have been involved in developing their own class rules. Consequently, behaviour is good in most classes and in the playground, but on occasion the behaviour of some boys in Years 5 and 6 can be disruptive. Where this involves pupils with recently acknowledged special educational needs, the school has sought advice and is working hard to put in place additional support.

EXCLUSIONS

17. Because most pupils behave well there have been no exclusions during the last school year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	163	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

18. The majority of pupils with special educational needs work hard, have good attitudes to their work and develop confidence in their learning, responding well to the good and appropriate support they are given in lessons, in individual teaching and when withdrawn for work in smaller groups. However, because a small minority of older boys lack support for their specific needs, they do not maintain their concentration in lessons or react as well to their work. Consequently their achievement is less good than others and sometimes hampers the progress that others can make.
19. Relationships in the school are harmonious and adults and children get along well together. New arrivals and children from ethnic minorities are quickly befriended and soon become part of the school community. As a result, pupils' self-esteem and

confidence grows. In the Foundation Stage this works particularly well and although most are still part-time they have settled into the routines, help one another, share and take turns, show trust and respect for their teacher and are eager to try new skills. Their behaviour is consistently good and forms a good foundation for developing good racial harmony.

20. There is a good school ethos and pupils are taught with a strong emphasis on the principles and values related to fairness and respect for all. This gives a good foundation for pupils to develop an understanding of their own beliefs and values. Acts of collective worship provide opportunities for quiet reflection on issues introduced to extend their understanding of other people’s values and beliefs. Pupils listen attentively and applaud as others show their work and talk about the things they have discovered. Opportunities to find out about other cultures exist in many curriculum areas. Displays of work on aboriginal art or explaining the spirituality of music reflect the recent review of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils’ involvement in community initiatives such as the village band, or those organised by the church such as harvest festival, help pupils to understand about social responsibilities and citizenship.

ATTENDANCE

21. Parents know that their children achieve best if they do not miss school. Attendance has improved and is now good. The data in the table below does not show that for four sessions the school was closed because of inclement weather making attendance appear lower than it should be.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall with some good features. The range of learning opportunities is good and relevant to the needs of the children. Links with parents are good. There is an effective partnership with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall. Teachers’ assessments of children’s work are now **good** ensuring their understanding of how well children are progressing is used effectively in lesson planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership from the new headteacher provides purposeful direction for staff.
- The teaching of the Foundation Stage is consistently good so children achieve well.
- The good relationships motivate most pupils to make good efforts and work hard.

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs ensures all are included in curricular opportunities and assistants are well deployed to support and improve their work.
- Lack of support for teachers who have pupils with behavioural problems in their class makes the teaching more difficult than it might be.
- The teachers' good knowledge of subjects and areas of learning extends children's learning.
- Improved assessment ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals.
- There are teaching inconsistencies regarding handwriting, presentation and marking.
- The lack of and unreliability of ICT resources is a barrier to high quality teaching.

Commentary

22. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, as it was at the last inspection, it is improving because now there is no unsatisfactory teaching and there is a larger proportion of good and very good teaching. In the Foundation Stage teaching is good and two lessons were very good. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good with two lessons that were satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 teaching was satisfactory overall with several good lessons mainly in Years 3 and 4.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	5 (15%)	15 (47%)	12 (38%)	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.

23. The headteacher's direction is helping staff have a consistent approach to the way that lessons are taught and the way that children are treated. Teachers are very concerned about all children being treated fairly and, in their responses to inspection questionnaires, 91 per cent of parents thought that this was the case. Children too, in discussions with inspectors agreed with this view. The headteacher sets a very good example through her own teaching; most lessons that were very good were attributable to her. Now staff have the same aspirations for the pupils based on improving standards, but team building is at an early stage. The inspection findings confirm the school's own self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Although teaching has improved it is early days for some initiatives and staff recognise that further development is needed to have consistently good teaching and learning.
24. The teaching of the Foundation Stage is consistently good and sometimes very good. The teacher knows the importance of methods, such as purposeful play and how resources help children learn effectively. In lessons the teachers and their assistants observe children at work and keep a note to discuss it later. Children are encouraged to say how well they think they have worked and how some outcomes could be improved. The lack of some facilities outdoors limits the range of activities that the teacher can provide but this has improved and continues to do so.
25. Teachers have established good relationships with children. This has provided a firm foundation for children's learning and gives them the motivation to try hard. Most children pay attention, are eager to answer questions and try hard. Some lessons were very good because teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects or areas of learning they teach and are good at explaining new ideas in ways that make sense to children and answer questions accurately. Children's learning is extended because they are offered first hand experience in practical tasks, a wider range of knowledge or see links with other subjects.

26. Teachers ensure that all pupils with special educational needs are included in all curricular opportunities and teaching assistants are effective in supporting them to improve their work and achieve success. The new procedures for the regular review of pupils' progress towards their own learning goals and the tracking of progress in literacy and numeracy is helping teachers become more effective in identifying the next stage of learning. There is limited support available for the pupils with behavioural problems and the quality of teaching suffers particularly when that support is not there. Consequently, although teachers handle the situation well there is some disruption and the progress of other pupils suffers. Planning challenging activities for more able pupils is now in place and working well but is at an early stage of development.
27. The system of assessment that ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals is thorough. This has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher has provided appropriate support and guidance. Now it is being used effectively to keep tabs on children's progress and identify what they need to learn next. A review of planning has taken place since the headteacher took up post. Lesson planning has improved and staff understanding of assessment for learning is better. Their expectations of how well pupils can achieve has improved. One of the school's best features is the introduction of assessment for learning and change is particularly evident in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Analysing test results and scrutinising work has helped teachers to see the need for improvements. For example, the analysis for English indicates that more work is needed to improve writing resulting in teachers focusing on good quality guided reading and writing, shared writing and improvements to the weaknesses in spelling. Pupil self-evaluation is developing so there are planned opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of others against success criteria. As they get older children's understanding of how well they have done improves. Children told inspectors that they were taught new things in lessons and most knew how to get help if they were stuck.
28. Although marking and assessment are now linked to learning objectives there is still scope for improvement. An inconsistent approach to marking persists. Most teachers do mark work regularly and use the system outlined in the policy but some marking of pupils' work lacks the comments that help them understand what they must do to improve their work. Samples of written work from last term contained many positive comments giving pupils the impression that there were no weaknesses and sometimes words such as 'brilliant' were used when work was far from that category. This was prior to the new marking policy being introduced. Target setting has been introduced so pupils know where they have weaknesses but none of the records seen had dates showing when pupils improved.
29. In one subject, information and communication technology, the quality of teaching did not reflect teachers' knowledge or the guidance and support they were receiving from the subject leader. Although the lessons seen were satisfactory the lack of sufficient computers adversely affected what teachers could do and how much progress pupils could make.

The curriculum

The provision for the curriculum is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong commitment to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are fully included and valued equally.
- A thoroughly planned yet evolving curriculum extends and improves children's learning.
- Together with a strong sporting tradition, interesting activities in lessons and wide ranging school clubs enhance experiences well for all pupils.
- Good emphasis is placed on pupils' personal, social and health education and a developing awareness of citizenship.
- Not enough resources restricts pupils' achievement in ICT.

Commentary

30. Providing a broad, balanced and interesting primary curriculum that motivates learning for all pupils and attends to all their needs is central to the aspirations of the headteacher and her staff. A fully reviewed curriculum framework now ensures that all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are included, with appropriate teaching time. The guidance provided enables staff to build learning securely on pupils' skills and understanding in order to raise standards.
31. Provision for the Foundation Stage curriculum is good. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the curriculum for the age group, which is based on the nationally recommended early learning goals with links to the National Curriculum where appropriate. The outdoor area has improved and additions are nearly complete. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified and they receive good quality support. Faster learners are given opportunities to progress further, for example, one child is already reading. There is a relaxed atmosphere where pupils feel secure and happy, behave well and make good efforts to complete tasks.
32. Full account is taken of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the programmes of literacy support are used very beneficially to improve the achievements of pupils with less secure reading and writing skills. The low priority given to design and technology at the time of the last inspection is now being remedied with new subject plans and the recent appointment of a subject leader. With recent curricular changes in place, priorities within the school development plan focus very precisely on how weaker aspects of the curriculum and standards are to be improved.
33. Extending pupils' learning experiences is imperative to the school's work and is being successfully achieved through well-considered initiatives. For example, plans have been finalised to introduce French and working with an art instructor is boosting pupils' creativity and enjoyment as well as presenting openings for improving their work in art and design.
34. Pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well promoted not only through lessons, but also during the now well-established Circle Times when pupils discuss issues that are of relevance to themselves and the school. A daily 'fruit time' in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 not only encourages healthy eating but is also a time when science, numeracy and social development successfully unite each morning. Sex and relationships education and drugs education currently taught through the science curriculum are the focus of review for staff and parents who want to see changes.
35. There are strengths within the satisfactory, but constantly improving, provision for pupils with special education needs. Now more rigorous and early identification of pupils' needs, followed up by good quality support for individual children or small groups in most classes is helping pupils to make sound progress in their learning. Tasks are modified if

necessary and pupils achieve success. However, in some classes the nature of the individual needs of a few pupils still necessitates full-time support to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. The school recognises and supports pupils with particular talents and abilities, which is especially effective in numeracy and literacy sessions where apt challenge results in good achievement.

36. Many occasions successfully enrich and add interest to the curriculum for all pupils within lessons through a variety of visits, visitors and events, such as weeks devoted to a theme and through opportunities in the arts and music. Local church representatives regularly take part in collective worship. A residential visit open to all junior pupils, offers new activities and experiences such as filmmaking. Pupils of all ages benefit from the many extra-curricular activities ranging from guitar club to cycling available at lunchtimes and after school strong science-based links are well established with the local high school. Very good provision made for sport by teachers, parents and outside coaches is recognised through national awards. A Football for All Day inspired older pupils to organise and run the school's summer Sport's Day.
37. Teachers and teaching assistants, are well qualified and provide a range of experiences and expertise that contributes well to the quality of the curriculum. The school's accommodation is satisfactory, with bright, busy classrooms and many well-displayed shared areas. Material resources are sufficient overall and in some subjects better, for the effective teaching of the curriculum. The exception is ICT where the resources are limited and a constraint on the rate of progress pupils can make, which is unsatisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

There is **good** provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive are **good**. The school is **good** at seeking, valuing and acting on the pupils' views.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The good arrangements to ensure pupils and staff work in a healthy environment ensure pupils are secure and happy so they readily take part in activities.
- The good range of support and guidance enables most pupils to make good efforts and achieve success.
- The good opportunities for the pupils to contribute to the way the school is run result in good attitudes to the school and their work.
- The particularly trusting relationships with adults makes pupils feel secure and eager to tackle tasks.

Commentary

38. Health and safety arrangements are good so pupils feel secure and settle to tasks that improve their learning. Staff are vigilant about ensuring pupils are safe and carefully supervised at all times. The headteacher personally manages the school's procedures for child protection and there has been refresher training recently. The staff handbook gives clear guidance on how to handle any concerns and a governor has oversight of these important matters. A recent risk assessment of the playgrounds led to improvements. First aid and medical arrangements are good with all accidents recorded

and clear procedures for administering medicines. The school is keen to encourage a healthy lifestyle and is working towards the 'Healthy School Award'. Pupils are particularly encouraged to take an active part in a wide range of sports.

39. Support and guidance for pupils has improved and is now good. Well-managed assessment procedures mean teachers can keep track of pupils' progress and personal development. Pupils' well-being is of paramount importance to staff. Now there are good practices for staff to get to know the youngest children before they start school and to help them settle in. The arrangements now in place are an improvement and parents are overwhelmingly pleased with how happy their children are now. Pupils joining the school in Year 4 have similar opportunities for visits and to make friends and soon settle into school routines. The good links that have continued with the local playgroup who visit regularly help ensure a smooth transition. There are good procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and more children are now receiving additional support than previously. However, there are a few older pupils who need this support and at present do not receive it. The achievement of these pupils and sometimes that of others in the class is adversely affected.
40. Much more is now being done to give pupils a say in how their school is run. Class councils have been established and, although the pupils are still learning how to raise, discuss and carry forward ideas, they are already beginning to make sensible suggestions. They know that their views matter and that staff respect and try to act on what they say. They help to devise class rules, have some input to discussions that result in policies such as on behaviour and are encouraged to think of ways to improve facilities such as outdoor play. A school council is planned as the next stage of development. Relationships between children and adults are good; pupils trust them and talk enthusiastically about staff who help them and say that the school is a friendly place. Their parents strongly agree that their children enjoy coming to school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** overall partnerships with parents, the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The highly effective way in which parents are consulted and their views considered.
- Good range of information for parents and their involvement in the life of the school.
- Links with the community and other schools benefit pupils and staff.

Commentary

41. The school's links with parents are much improved since the last inspection and they are consulted about school matters extremely well. The leadership has made considerable efforts to involve parents and seek their views about aspects of school life. Now parents come into school more freely and approve the headteacher's determination to work in partnership with them. Of particular note is the work of the Parents' Forum. This is open to all parents, chaired by a governor and where concerns and issues are raised for discussion and debate. Parental views are shared with the headteacher and governing body who try to take them into account when making changes. Similarly, the school can pass ideas or questions to them, for their consideration. So far, they have acted as a consultation body on the behaviour policy, the homework policy, travel arrangements to and from school and the home-school agreement. At the moment, they are reviewing the school's sex and relationship curriculum.

42. Communication with parents is good. Parents gather information in regular newsletters, through information about the subjects and topics to be studied, through reading diaries and through meetings to explain teaching; those on mathematics were particularly well attended. Each term there is a formal meeting to discuss their children's progress and the pupils' annual reports give a good picture of how well they are doing and how parents can help their children in the future. Open days to look at children's work and a special one for grandparents are well attended. The partnership with parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs is good. Parents are very appreciative of opportunities to take part in discussions about the information they receive, the early identification of each child's needs and their children's targets.
43. As a result of this, parents are keen to support their children's efforts both academically and in extra-curricular activities, approving of the homework policy and the range of activities offered. The changing of library books with parents each morning is now a regular feature and families come early to do it. Parents also give their strong support in many other ways. There are a good number who help in lessons and with after-school clubs. Others have helped improve the school's conservation area, painted and decorated classrooms or arranged social events and raised funds for equipment.
44. There are productive links with the community. Wherever possible the local area is used to support studies and local people, including parents and grandparents, use their expertise to extend knowledge and understanding, for example, as talking history books about World War II and fund-raising with British Sugar. The school premises are used by the Guides and the local band and for village events such as the flower show and Christmas concert. Strong links with the local football club and their youth teams extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Contacts and work with other schools is also benefiting the school well. Liaison with the high school ensures that information about those with special educational needs is available well before pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Good links and support with the pre-school playgroup help ensure children move smoothly to primary education. Various sporting events and music festivals are shared with other local schools and science projects with secondary pupils maintain and extend interest in the subject. There is considerable professional contact amongst staff of these schools, which extend and enhance their knowledge to improve their teaching.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is good and she is supported well by all other staff. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership of the headteacher is motivating staff and setting a clear direction for development.
- The good leadership of the governing body is both supportive and challenging.
- The effective way in which the school is managed is bringing about improvement.
- Subject leadership has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Although special educational needs is managed well overall, some pupils lack the support they need.

Commentary

45. The new headteacher has taken effective action to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and put into effect a programme to improve the school's overall

performance. Many aspects have been changed and improved, including: the school structure; several policies; increases to taught time in the school day; curriculum planning; assessment procedures; provision for special educational needs; staff redeployed; and new appointments made. The views of parents have been canvassed and they too have contributed to the setting of the new direction. All this work has been brought together in a comprehensive school development plan, which is now the shared ambition of staff and governors and has the wide support of parents.

46. The governing body, with some new members and a new chairperson, is also contributing to the good leadership of the school. They have worked effectively alongside the headteacher to set out the improvements needed, including what they themselves must do to improve their own effectiveness. They have established committees that work well; taken responsibilities for subjects or aspects of the school's work, which brings them into regular contact with pupils and teachers; and undertaken considerable training. All governors participated in the school review; they have reviewed the school's aims and values as part of an update of school literature; and received comprehensive reports from teachers. As expertise and confidence has grown, the governors' ability to both support and challenge has increased and they now do this so well they can influence the work of the school and its policies. Their good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses enables them to have a significant influence on leading the school's development with a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision.
47. The management of the school is good. It is organised efficiently and by reflecting on good management practice elsewhere. Essential functions are covered well and staff accept that the procedures in place are necessary and can be followed easily, which is improving teaching and pupils' achievement. The headteacher leads the monitoring of standards and overall school performance, keeping the governing body updated, so that they understand how well the school is doing within the national picture. Advisers have helped the headteacher and governors to understand how well the school is doing and this has enabled them to contribute effectively to the school review. Performance management has been implemented well and individual targets are linked to the school's targets set out in the development plan. Staff are clear about their roles, responsibilities and personal objectives and know there is the guidance, support and relevant training available.
48. The last inspection, which took place six years ago, identified the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders as a significant weakness. This still remains much the same. At present, the headteacher monitors teaching and learning mainly for the purposes of performance management and does so largely in the key areas of English and mathematics. However, in the remaining subjects rigorous monitoring by other teachers of the teaching and learning in their subjects and on a systematic basis, has not started. There is one exception. Because the leader of the Foundation Stage works with all the Reception children she is well placed to carry out this work and does so keeping good records. The headteacher has re-organised staffing and duties to create some non-teaching time to enable monitoring to be carried out. A training programme to help teachers acquire the necessary skills has been established. Although there has been this recent progress, given the length of time since the last inspection and the fact that this aspect of weakness was not only evident at the last inspection but also at the one previous to that, the progress in this one area is unsatisfactory.

49. The budget and finances are well understood with regular reporting to governors to keep them properly informed and there is a projection of finances stretching into the future. Governors and staff have a good understanding of the principles of 'best value' and the need to equate standards, achievement and quality of education, to the budget they all manage. The administration is good and the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. At present the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	396,015
Total expenditure	443,527
Expenditure per pupil	2,831

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	47,259
Balance carried forward to the next	24,370

50. There was a previously accrued underspend in excess of £24,000 found at the end of March 2004, which has been retained by the school with full approval of the local authority as a cushion against the effects of future reorganisation, which will reduce the number of children at the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Currently most Reception children attend school part-time, mornings only and share their class with some Year 1 pupils. In the afternoons this classroom is used by the whole of the Year 1 group and the five oldest Reception pupils work with them, experiencing a full day. This organisation meant it was not possible to see lessons in all areas of learning so no overall judgement is made about standards, teaching and learning for knowledge and understanding of the world and the creative development areas of learning.

There is a wide range of attainment when children start school and teachers' assessments show that it is generally lower than at the last inspection with many lacking the language, literacy and number skills usually expected by the age of four. A few pupils have difficulty communicating at all. However, the good and sometimes very good teaching enables the children to make good progress; they achieve well and reach standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical and physical development areas of learning that are expected for their age. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because the teaching is good.
- The very good relationships make children feel secure and happy.
- There are high expectations to which children respond well.

Commentary

51. The teaching is good; children achieve well and are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach in this area of learning by the end of the Reception Year. Most children are already familiar with routines and understand what is acceptable behaviour. The children settle quickly to tasks, most behave sensibly and have good attitudes to their work because they enjoy the range of practical activities provided. They tackle new routines with gusto, such as choosing activities from a selection board and quickly manage them independently. Because the teachers encourage co-operation and perseverance, most children have a calm approach to their work. Those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who ensure they join in all activities and ensure success. All adults give lots of encouragement because they want children to feel confident to try new things; in this they are successful. Many show determination to overcome difficulties experienced because the adults have established very good relationships with them. The adults are trusted and the children are eager to please. Many tasks are planned to promote co-operation, which encourages them to help one another, work in pairs and play together. Children are taught to take responsibility, tidy up after themselves and change their clothes for physical activities. They do this well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because the teaching is very good.
- The well-planned programme of work extends children's language.
- The effective teaching of basic skills helps children with reading and spelling.
- Teaching assistants and volunteers support children's learning effectively.

Commentary

52. The lack of communication skills on entry to school is a barrier to achievement and to overcome this the planned programme of work gives an emphasis to providing opportunities to extend the children's use of language. Because the teacher emphasises mutual respect children listen to one another and are tolerant of one another's differences. Children are encouraged to express themselves and the teacher listens to what they say, giving feedback in a positive manner.
53. Because the teacher is skilled and has a good understanding of what children need to learn and how to teach it, the children look forward to every lesson and find the work interesting. There is an emphasis on learning basic skills. The very effective use of such resources as puppets makes the literacy sessions stimulating, maintains children's interest and gives them an incentive to improve because the puppet tells them how to do it. Because they learn letter sounds every day, the children are gaining confidence in matching the right sound to the letter. Lessons begin with a quick session of word level work and children use whiteboards for their attempts at writing, which can easily be erased if mistakes are made. The relaxed atmosphere and adults who talk positively to children result in children knowing it is safe to make mistakes. Children learn the skill of forming letters to write soon after they start school. There is good balance between activities directed by the teacher and those from which they can choose, such as forming letters in the sand or with paint. A small group of faster learners attempt to make their own story book and children enjoy talking about pictures in the reading books as they try to learn the first simple words. Adults assisting the teacher are very well directed and use their expertise effectively to reinforce and support children's learning. They are skilled at helping children develop ideas, persevere with tasks and extend talk and thinking.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Children experience a wide range of practical activities to support their learning.
- Teachers are good at planning work that builds on what children have learned.

Commentary

54. Children make good progress and the majority are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Lessons are lively and well organised because teachers plan activities that children find enjoyable and explain carefully what they have to do. In their eagerness to take part with the older pupils in the class the children are picking up the skills they need to start the National Curriculum together with those for numeracy sessions so they have a taste of the learning they will experience in Year 1. Short, brisk oral sessions get children ready for the main activities. Resources such as number fans are used well to enable

a quick assessment of children's understanding. The teacher's effective use of puppets to ask questions and reinforce where to find support if children are not sure makes them confident in attempting responses and gives the teacher a better understanding of what they know. Because teachers use many opportunities to reinforce counting skills in everyday situations, children's mathematical understanding is extended. Good use is made of time and there are no dead moments during lessons because they are well organised. The teacher builds on what children have learned in previous lessons. When learning about two-dimensional shapes the use of everyday language to describe them helped children to learn their attributes. The teacher built securely on what was learned the day before when children looked at everyday objects and talked about their shape, for example, an envelope that had four straight sides and four corners like a rectangle.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Commentary

55. Teacher's planning and work samples show that a range of interesting activities are planned to extend learning. In the one lesson observed with Year 1, which had a science focus there was good planning with appropriate tasks for the five Foundation Stage children who were present. The teaching was very good and the teaching assistant worked well with the Reception children to ensure they understood and were not out of their depth. Good links were made to music as the class explored sound using musical instruments and enjoyment was evident with opportunities to experiment. This lesson built securely on previous learning earlier in the week when children were encouraged to ask questions about why things happen and how things work using senses to explore. Reception pupils also had opportunities to find out about and identify the uses of everyday technology using computers and programmable toys to support their learning in operating simple equipment.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**, reflecting the good teaching, but the outdoor area still requires improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and activities are well planned for children to extend their physical skills.
- Although the outdoor area has been improved it still lacks appropriate physical challenges.

Commentary

56. Children are achieving well because the teaching is good and lessons are planned to make the best use of resources to extend the range of skills needed for physical development. The inclement weather conditions led to good improvisation with the activities planned for outdoors being transferred to the hall. However, children used wheeled toys safely, negotiating obstacles as they steered them over a set route. They learn about balancing on different body parts and controlling how well they can hold that shape which was much more difficult.
57. Manipulative skills are improving and children extend their control of pencils, scissors and paintbrushes and learn to manipulate materials and objects. Good use is made of the hall in raising an awareness of space and developing control and co-ordination in movement. It was evident that children enjoyed challenging sessions and need more than the good quality wheeled toys and small apparatus they use outdoors. The school recognises that the outdoor area requires further development because the lack of some provision outdoors limits the

progress children can make. The headteacher has put plans in place and started to improve it but at the time of inspection not all work was completed. Despite the difficulties, the good teaching is enabling children to develop many skills satisfactorily.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

58. The teacher's planning and work samples show that a range of interesting activities are included to extend learning. Opportunities for role-play in the imaginative area are good, as seen in a literacy session, because children find it attractive and choose to play there. Because adults are involved in this activity more talking and listening takes place and language skills are extended. The teacher plans activities for children to explore colour, shape and texture and their efforts are displayed. Particularly good efforts were made to design patterns for clothes. Children experiment with musical instruments as they explore sounds. All love singing, memorise songs and actions and are learning to use percussion.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 ensures most pupils have a good knowledge of basic skills.
- There is too much variation in pupils' performance at the higher levels in national tests.
- A lack of additional adult support for special educational needs pupils with behavioural problems sometimes restricts the progress of others.
- Achievement for higher attaining pupils has improved and there is good support for pupils with learning difficulties.
- Standards in presentation and handwriting are unsatisfactory.
- The subject leader is ensuring that the school has a clear understanding of the way ahead in order to raise standards.

Commentary

59. When children enter school they have fewer language and literacy skills than are expected for their age. A few pupils find it difficult to communicate at first but the programme of work provided and the good planning for purposeful play enables all children to make good progress and achieve well. Most children will reach the goals that are expected in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Reception Year. The older Foundation Stage children are making good progress in acquiring the basic skills. Already they show an interest in reading and are rapidly learning the skills such as letter sounds to read new words and how to form letters to write. One child read a simple sentence from the reading book with confidence and accuracy. Their progress is good and they are prepared well to transfer to Year 1.
60. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in National Curriculum tests, including those from minority ethnic groups. However, there are variations from year to year in pupils' performance at the

higher levels. At the previous inspection all Year 2 pupils reached standards in reading and writing that were as expected for their age but none reached the higher level. This improved in the 2003 tests but although some pupils reached the higher level the proportion was lower than that of other schools nationally. In the last inspection in Year 6 results were well below those expected for the pupils' age and fewer pupils reached the higher level than in other schools nationally but in 2003 a considerable improvement was seen at Year 6, particularly at the higher level when 40 per cent reached this standard. A comparison with similar schools, based on prior attainment at Year 2, shows pupils made very good progress.

61. In the most recent national tests (2004), for which we have no national comparisons as yet, the results were disappointing because at Year 2 few pupils reached the higher level in reading and none did so in writing. In Year 6, although standards overall were satisfactory, almost a quarter of the year group did not reach the standards expected for their age, far fewer pupils reached the higher level than the previous year and there were three pupils who could not be entered for the tests because of learning difficulties. There are a number of contributing factors to these results. Until the new headteacher arrived the school was spending much less time on this subject than is generally recommended for primary schools. Although the working system has changed the lack of such a structure in the past has not enabled continuity and progression to flourish. The school gains a significant proportion of pupils who transfer from other schools at the Year 4 stage. Last year a third of the Year 6 group had learning difficulties. Most transferred to the school and staff have the constant challenge of improving this situation in a shorter period of time than they would have for other pupils. Teachers undertook the training for introducing the National Literacy Strategy but there has been a lack of understanding of some aspects and too great a reliance has been placed on commercial schemes of work. However, the local authority literacy adviser is now supporting the school to help improve this. Weaknesses have been identified through analysis of national and optional tests and an action plan put in place to deal with them.
62. Teaching is satisfactory overall but generally better in Years 1, 2 and 3. In these classes the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and know how to teach basic skills. Teaching methods are imaginative, such as the use of puppets and interest is maintained. Individual needs are catered for well and teaching assistants make a significant contribution. The teaching at Years 5 and 6 is influenced by a small group of older boys who have behavioural problems, which have only been recognised since the new headteacher took up post. The school knows the support they need but as yet does not have the finance to provide it and consequently teaching is less good than in other classes. Although teachers handle it well and no incident is allowed to cause significant disruption the staff often have to deal with such incidents alone and cannot move lessons on as quickly as they wish. Staff expressed concerns about the adverse affect this has at times on the progress that others can make.
63. Inspection findings from lessons and the samples of written work from last year and this term, show standards were satisfactory overall in speaking and listening, reading and writing, which is similar to the last inspection. A small group of higher attainers in Years 5 and 6 are doing better when taught away from the rest of the class. The teaching of this group is very good and attributable to the skills of the headteacher. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or those from other ethnic groups. All teachers plan well for lessons, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Individual tasks are matched well to the pupils' stage of learning and those with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers promote mutual respect and pupils are now listening better and prepared to make a response. The good relationships that exist between teachers and all pupils result in trust and security so they readily take part in discussions and most show good attitudes to their work. Because teachers try to involve everyone in the whole class group pupils gain confidence and are finding it easier to communicate. The headteacher has introduced additional literacy support for those pupils finding some aspects difficult and the teaching assistant uses her skills and expertise effectively in their learning.

64. In the samples of work it was evident that presentation and handwriting lack the emphasis needed to enable pupils to take pride in their work and this is unsatisfactory. Handwriting skills are taught well at the Foundation Stage and teachers are now introducing joined writing earlier because previously this skill was not taught until Year 3. Teacher expectation has not been high enough, for example, the Year 5 samples of work had no joined writing. It is now improving although more attention is needed.
65. The subject leader is providing sound leadership of the subject and her audit and analysis of tests shows where further improvement is needed to raise standards. Currently writing is a focus for development. Pupils lack opportunities for good quality guided reading and writing and shared writing. There are still some weaknesses in spelling because previously the school used a commercial scheme, which restricted their ability; this has now been changed. Although there is steady improvement the subject leader has had no opportunity to observe teaching and learning across the school and this is a weakness.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Overall, pupils use their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills satisfactorily in other subjects and opportunities to apply ICT to consolidate literacy skills are increasing; for example, a child in Year 2 thought she worked faster when word processing than when handwriting. The use of literacy skills helps pupils see a relevance to their work. However, sometimes there is little emphasis on presentation because pupils are not always encouraged to use their handwriting skills in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching encourages pupils to explain their mathematical thinking.
- In well-structured lessons pupils know what is expected of them and how well they are learning and they make generally good progress.
- Some aspects of the subject curriculum are less well developed and this affects standards.
- Pupils enjoy their work and have good attitudes to their learning.
- Very strong leadership is driving subject improvements.

Commentary

67. Inspection findings are that standards in mathematics are in line with those expected for the pupils' age at both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including that of minority ethnic groups. This is very similar to the picture at the last inspection.
68. The national test results show that by the end of Year 2, most pupils are reaching standards in line with their age and in 2003 every pupil did this and about a quarter of the class did better, which was good progress given the low starting point on entry to school. This happened again in 2004 but in both years few pupils reached the higher level and the school is keen to see improvement here. In lessons and in current work most pupils in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily with a few higher attaining members of the year group responding very securely to more challenge in their work.
69. In the 2003 national tests the Year 6 results were satisfactory when compared to all other schools but represent a steady decline in standards over the previous four years. The most recent tests (2004) show a further drop in the percentage of pupils reaching both the accepted level for age and higher levels. However, results are close to the statutory targets set by the school for this year. Many changes have been made to improve this situation and raise standards again. In lessons, many pupils in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily at this early stage of the year with a proportion doing better.
70. Teaching overall is good and consequently pupils make good progress in their lessons. Teaching is well planned in line with the national recommendations. Lessons are carefully structured to include a time to develop mental agility and to extend independent working through a variety of tasks. The learning objectives of lessons are shared with pupils so that the teacher's intentions are always clear and this, together with the effective use made of the time towards the end of each session to check understanding,

reinforces learning and helps pupils to know how well they are achieving. Inclusion is good and all pupils understand what is expected and respond appropriately.

71. As teachers' marking comments improve, pupils are beginning to know if they have learned what was intended. When using knowledge of perimeters to find the length of the sides of rectangles, pupils in Year 4 explain their answers with increasing confidence and as the teacher records their different strategies (doubling, quadrupling or splitting numbers to help addition) their shared thinking successfully contributes to the good learning of the whole class. Good relationships in lessons have a positive impact on learning and the lesson buzzes as perimeter calculations are shared with a partner. Working sensibly in pairs pupils in Year 2 discuss how to make up 'tricky' amounts of money at the end of their lesson making a difficult task easier to manage.
72. Most pupils respond with interest, are fully involved in their learning, work hard and behave well so that lessons on the whole move at a good pace with smooth changes between activities enabling good progress to be made. In an especially lively session, pupils in Year 3 really enjoyed plotting co-ordinates on the grid in their game so much so that they did not want to stop because their learning was fun.
73. When appropriate, numeracy targets are now included in the individual plans of those pupils with special educational needs. In most lessons, these pupils receive good quality and well-deployed support through focused help. The suitably matched learning activities enable them to achieve success. In some lessons, the lack of additional support for a few older pupils with specific needs, reduces the effectiveness of a well-planned lesson by taking time away from teaching. Those pupils with a particular aptitude for mathematics are identified and in Years 5 and 6, as they work together, their learning is challenging and successfully extends their mathematical reasoning. The progress of all pupils, particularly those transferring to the school, is regularly monitored so that weaker areas can be identified early and appropriate support assigned. Funds have been found to provide additional support through programmes designed to boost learning.
74. Leadership of the subject by the headteacher is very effective, she leads by example and is firmly focused on raising standards throughout the school for all pupils. Changes to the curriculum for mathematics have embedded the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy into the teaching. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored to support teachers as they apply these principles in their lessons. A thorough analysis of the progress and attainment of pupils throughout the school has clearly identified areas of weakness and priorities are set within the school development plan to remedy them. Current written work shows improvement and supports inspection findings. Some aspects such as work on problem solving or developing graphs to present data were not well represented in previous work with a subsequent effect on standards. Despite improvements there has been little time to see an impact on standards. Of note are the series of curriculum meetings devoted to calculations and problem solving - increasing parents' understanding of teaching and their confidence to support their children at home.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Aspects of mathematics are becoming better incorporated in the work undertaken in other subjects. The use of ICT to support numeracy is limited overall but is successfully achieved in Year 2, where pupils collect information about eye colour, record it on a bar

chart using a computer program and make simple statements about their findings as part of their science work. Some links are made to history when pupils in Years 3 and 4 include shapes in their posters for the newsletter about Roman times. In science, accurate measurements of time and length are included appropriately when collecting or comparing information from practical activities. However, information gathered in science does not reflect a variety of graphs or charts, particularly as pupils move through the school. This restricts the opportunities they have to read and understand their findings and draw conclusions about their work.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical tasks encourage all pupils to be actively involved in their learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to science, showing their interest and enjoyment in lessons.
- Factual scientific knowledge and understanding are taught well.
- Numeracy and ICT skills are not used enough in investigative work.
- The subject leader has few opportunities to monitor how effectively science is taught.
- Good links with the high school widen science experiences.

Commentary

76. Inspection findings are that standards overall are in line with the pupils' age by Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including those from minority ethnic groups. In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, all children reached typical standards for their age and a significant number did better, an improvement since the last inspection when no pupils reached the higher level. By the end of Year 6 the 2003 national test results compared very well with other schools with half the pupils reaching the higher level, which is an improvement since the last inspection. However the test results for 2004 dipped, as did those for this year group in other subjects, with a few pupils failing to reach the expected level for their age and fewer reaching the higher levels. A detailed analysis of tests by the subject leader has highlighted areas where improvements can raise standards again especially in explaining the results of investigations. The samples of pupils' previous work support these findings. Written work for the current Year 6 is at least satisfactory at this stage in the year with higher attaining pupils doing better and giving more reasoned explanations in their work. In lessons for all classes pupils make good progress and do better than expected because of good teaching.
77. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In the infant classes the teachers' high expectations, skilled questioning and organisation of activities move lessons on at a good pace, learning is at its best and pupils know what is expected of them and do well. They have very good attitudes to their learning because activities are interesting and fun. Because of the imaginative ways they explore how sounds become louder or quieter, Year 1 pupils are totally engrossed in their lesson from the beginning, working hard to discover that the number of instruments or the distance can make a difference to the sounds they hear. Pupils of all ages and from all groups enjoy the practical activities that enable finding out with increasing independence and regular times to share their findings. However, when discussions are interrupted by pupils' lack of concentration, or responses and ideas are too directed, learning is only satisfactory.
78. The teaching of scientific factual information is thorough, often extending into the more difficult understanding to challenge the higher attaining pupils such as the work undertaken in Years 5 and 6 about the human heart. Teachers expect pupils to know and use the specific scientific vocabulary with understanding when explaining their work; there is great excitement when rice vibrates on a drum and all pupils in Year 2 proudly talk of

the *vibrations* they observe throughout their lesson. Limited use is made of ICT skills to support science. From the samples of written work, it is clear that although some full investigations are undertaken and accurate measurements are made, a widening range of ways to represent findings in investigations, such as line graphs with older pupils, are not used enough for pupils to develop the analytical skills they need to improve standards in this aspect of the science curriculum.

79. Pupils with special educational needs make at least sound and often better progress in lessons. They benefit greatly from well-organised support, such as in the Year 2 lesson, when they sustain the focus on the science they are learning and achieve well. The more able young scientists in Years 3 and 4 act as scribes for their groups as they decide together how to test the absorbency of paper fairly. Collaborative work such as investigating switches in Year 6 makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
80. The subject leader is an experienced science teacher who previously taught the subject to all pupils from Years 3 to 6. She is beginning to tackle her new role well and provides sound leadership. Monitoring teachers' planning and ensuring that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met is her current priority. In addition, she is preparing examples of marked work that will be essential to support the consistency and accuracy of teachers' judgements about pupils' learning. However, she has yet to observe teaching and learning. Working closely with the High School extends understanding and skills, for example, in a recent success in the Year 5 Power Science competition, or when working on experiments led by Year 10 pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of resources limits the progress that pupils can make.
- The subject leader has a clear understanding of the weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve provision and standards.
- Overall, ICT is not used well to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

81. Standards at Year 2 and in Year 6 are as expected for age and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2 pupils know how to use a cassette machine and operate a mouse to carry out numeracy and literacy tasks. They can operate a programmable toy and learn how to control direction and movement. Word processing skills are well developed by Year 6 and pupils have made multimedia presentations. However, opportunities to raise standards further are constrained by a lack of resources. The low number of computers means that children have limited access to them in order to practise the skills taught them by their teachers and teaching is occasionally affected by limited and unreliable resources. However, despite the limitations good efforts are made to ensure pupils are taught all the skills required by the National Curriculum.
82. Consequently there has been little improvement since the last inspection although the subject knowledge of teachers is now more secure resulting from the training they have

received through the New Opportunities Funding initiative and the support they receive from the subject leader. The newly appointed headteacher has recognised the problems and has already gained funding for additional resources and together with the subject leader drawn up a detailed action plan to resolve these issues. When such resources arrive the school will be in a strong position to raise standards.

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. Since there is no ICT suite in the school most teaching must take place in classes with just one computer, which makes it difficult to teach a new skill to the whole class other than by doing so in small groups. This means pupils acquire skills more slowly. In the good lessons, the organisation of the lesson is carefully planned to allow maximum 'hands on' time for pupils who then make good progress. Pupils' attitudes to ICT are good. In one lesson, pupils in Year 3 enjoyed combining text and graphics to produce a mathematics poster for younger children following a lively presentation from the teacher. The task was challenging and as a result the children made good progress and completed their task well. There are now assessment activities built into the planning and further work on assessment procedures is planned.
84. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily. She has taken advantage of opportunities to develop her skills and is now keen to use her personal expertise to give further support and guidance to her colleagues. At present, there are no opportunities for her to monitor and evaluate standards across the school but strategies have already been identified to improve this situation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. ICT is not used enough to help pupils in other subjects. There are a few examples such as mathematics, science and art and design but the underdevelopment is mainly the result of a lack of equipment.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in geography and history was sampled so no judgements are made about provision, standards or teaching and learning in those subjects.

86. In **geography** the reorganised teaching of geography has made teachers responsible for teaching the subject to their own class. In Years 1 and 2 the subject is planned in themes and a range of visits to explore aspects such as the herring fishing industry in Yarmouth helps pupils to understand geographical issues. By the end of Year 2, they develop sound mapping skills and work shows that they design a simple plan and draw a simple map showing their route to school satisfactorily. In Year 2 the samples of work were well presented and carefully set out but marking was not constructive and occasionally work was unmarked, which left pupils in doubt as to how well they had done. In Year 6 pupils talk about the ways they research geography using the Internet or library. They use an atlas to pinpoint locations and talk about the different types of maps that are available and what they show, for example, relief features. Some pupils use geographical terms correctly to identify features or areas such as fens, land drains and climate. When asked about environmental issues such as global warming and the effect on their locality they have little understanding as yet. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has had insufficient time yet to make an impact on the subject. However, the use of assessment has improved and now takes place at the end of each teaching unit, through

targeted activities. Ongoing assessment is also used by the teacher to inform lesson planning.

87. In **history** lessons are taught through topics and pupils' learning is supported by the experiences of a range of visitors to lessons. For example, in the Year 5/6 class, pupils' understanding of the consequences of war was deepened as they sat spellbound to listen to the visitor recount his experiences as an evacuee during World War 2. Pupils also enjoy learning that involves visits to local places of historical interest, for example, the Norwich Museum or the site of a Roman village. By Year 2, pupils have an emerging sense of chronology and readily sequence events in the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale. In the lessons seen teaching was good. Skilful questioning by teachers deepens understanding of historical issues and encourages all pupils to respond, which they do with enthusiasm resulting in the majority of pupils making good gains in knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator has a good deal of experience and is well placed to support and guide colleagues but, as yet, she has limited opportunity to monitor and evaluate her subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The good teaching helps pupils achieve well.
- The good relationships encourage openness in discussions.
- The subject leader is ensuring that the school has a clear understanding of the way ahead in order to raise standards.

Commentary

88. Standards in religious education by Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the Norfolk agreed syllabus. By the time they leave school, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of world faiths and there are effective links through worship that extend the learning opportunities in lessons. The samples of work were wide ranging and show that pupils can express their thoughts and feelings in many ways other than the written form, for example, through art, mathematics and dance. The written work made use of some worksheets but these did not adversely affect pupils' attainment and samples of word processing and factual writing indicated that tasks reflected the range of abilities in the year groups. Most pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well although a small group of older boys found it difficult to maintain concentration and in this class achievement was less good.
89. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development. Teachers ensure there is a relaxed atmosphere and talk positively to pupils. They show respect for them listening carefully to what they say. They are good role models and show respect for each faith and emphasise the need for tolerance towards those who have different beliefs or views from themselves. In some written work there were examples indicating that teachers pay good attention to raising pupils' awareness of moral dilemmas and social responsibility.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall, particularly in the infant classes and in Years 3 and 4. Lessons were well planned and met the requirements of the local syllabus. In the one lesson seen at Years 5 and 6 the teaching was satisfactory. Limited space made it difficult for the

teacher to achieve an intimate atmosphere for discussion and pupils had to move furniture. It was a short lesson because the subject is taught in two smaller periods of time so pace needed to be good but the behaviour of a minority of boys with special education needs did not meet the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and progress was slower than it might have been. However, once the pupils became involved in creating Islamic designs the behaviour improved because there was sufficient challenge to keep them working independently. Pupils build up a good knowledge of Christianity and know that the Bible is special to Christians. In the infant classes this is very well linked to literacy and activities necessitate discussion, reading and writing. Teachers make effective use of resources, some of which they make themselves, as in a Year 2 class when pupils gained a greater understanding of a story Jesus told about 'The Sower' as part of their work on harvest festival celebrations. In Years 3 and 4 the use of a video introduction to Sikh worship maintained pupil's interest and stimulated questions. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are good but there is inconsistency in applying the marking policy and work often lacks comments that help pupils know how to improve, particularly in Year 2. There is good practice from which staff can benefit.

91. The subject leader works very hard and has made good improvements to the subject. No longer does she do all the teachers' planning with tasks linked to festivals and celebrations and assessments for each year group. The suggestions for improvement, made by the headteacher, have been followed and now all teachers have a better knowledge of the subject and there are adequate resources to assist them. The religious education audit clearly indicates where further improvement can be made such as better comments in marking to help pupils improve. The subject leader now needs opportunities to observe teaching and learning across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were sampled. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Therefore, no judgements are made about the provision, standards or teaching and learning in these subjects.

92. In **art and design**, pupils' work throughout the school represents experiences of their use of a range of media and processes in both two and three dimensions to explore the world around them. Art and design skills are shown to build securely on previous learning. However, the use of ICT to develop artwork other than for research is limited. Pupils take inspiration from their work of other subjects, or from famous artists, diverse times and cultures. The Pop Art of the historical period of the 1950's and 60's caught the imagination of pupils in Years 5 and 6. It triggered investigations into the work of different artists' use, for example, of form and space, resulting in good quality bold repeating patterns and commercial illustrations in the styles made famous in those decades. Inspired by work on Macbeth, older children depict "*The deadly glare of the three witches sends shivers down your spine*" dramatically in their paintings. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Year 1 really enjoy their artwork and respond with a high level of interest to the positive and imaginative teaching and achieve well as they concentrate on making detailed designs for their T-shirts. The art instructor is working with all classes and helping pupils to see how their designs may be improved. Great interest is generated as pupils of all ages collaborate to represent 'Freethorpe Children Create' an experiment in expressing the interests, musical and sporting aspects of school life through their own ideas and images.

93. **Design and technology** remains a subject needing development as it was at the time of the last inspection. Recent changes to the curriculum framework indicate that the National Curriculum requirements are fully met and good material resources are now available to support pupils' learning. Older pupils recall making puppets and using tools to make musical instruments, while pupils in Year 2 enjoy making pop-up books after looking at how the mechanism works and inspired by their literacy work on the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. Real interest was created amongst Years 3 and 4 pupils in designing and making land yachts. In the one lesson seen teaching was good and stimulated positive discussion as pupils evaluated the performance of their vehicles in playground tests. The teacher's skilled questioning challenged them to consider how to improve their structures or reduce friction to make the yachts travel even faster in their next test run. Strengthening investigative and practical skills and developing full design and make activities throughout the school is the main task of the subject leader as well as tracking pupils' progress in each aspect of the whole process. New to the school, he brings personal expertise and great enthusiasm to his role and a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards.
94. In **music**, pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences and there are indications that the school values this subject and provides well for it. Parents and other members of the community visit the school to share their expertise. Most notable was a *Tudor Day* when pupils had the opportunity to play instruments from that period, listening carefully to the range of sounds. In assemblies singing is good and on one occasion was spiritually uplifting. In the one lesson seen teaching was satisfactory; most pupils enjoyed studying mood music, particularly 'The Blues'. The well-planned lesson had clear learning objectives and pupils understood what the teacher wished to achieve by the end of the lesson. A singing warm-up prepared pupils well for exploring and identifying the relationship between sounds and how music reflects different intentions. The structure of music teaching has changed recently and is no longer taught by the subject specialist but by the class teachers who make evaluations of pupils' progress during lessons, which are monitored by the subject leader.
95. In **physical education** pupils take pride in their achievements and enjoy the prowess of their school sports teams, including both football and netball teams and their links with local sports groups. In the one lesson seen, teaching was good and pupils were prepared well by the use of clear instructions. The teacher's good subject knowledge meant that technical vocabulary was modelled well. The activities to improve fitness levels were enthusiastically undertaken and the majority of pupils worked hard, although a small group of boys found it difficult to maintain concentration. The result of exercise was clearly illustrated when the teacher made several opportunities for the monitoring of their pulse rate following different levels of exercise and pupils were able to explain that regular exercise has very positive beneficial effects on health. The school takes full advantage of opportunities for children to swim and most can swim 25 metres and have an understanding of basic water safety. There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular sport and this is very well supported by parents and local sporting institutions such as Norwich City Football Club, where some pupils are members of the academy. The newly appointed co-ordinator holds a coaching award and is very enthusiastic about his new responsibilities and keen to support and encourage other staff. He has already identified a need to develop work in dance and athletics so that these aspects are of the same perceived standard as games and gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work so no judgements are made about overall provision, although the subject features strongly in the overall curriculum.

Commentary

96. Since the new headteacher arrived the pupils' personal, social and health education is well promoted throughout the school. It is an important part of the school's work and the good ethos provides a foundation for the respectful relationships between the pupils and adults who work in the school. Because these relationships are good, pupils have trust in teachers and feel confident to take part in discussions. Circle Times have been introduced and are now well established. Here in a class situation, children sit in a circle and pass an object of security to one another as they have the confidence to speak expressing their thoughts and feelings about things important to them. Pupils discuss issues that are of relevance to themselves and the school, learning to consider the opinions of others and respect their feelings and ideas.
97. In the lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher guided Years 3 and 4 pupils to meet as a class council and consider how playtimes could be improved, a successful example of acting upon the school's priority to develop citizenship in all classes leading to the future election of a representative school council. This emphasis is reflected in most pupils' good attitudes to their learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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

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	4
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).