

INSPECTION REPORT

HELMINGHAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY

Stowmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124586

Headteacher: Mr S Valentine

Lead inspector: Ian Naylor

Dates of inspection: 16th - 17th May 2005

Inspection number: 266988

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	67
School address:	School Road Helmingham Stowmarket Suffolk
Postcode:	IP14 6EX
Telephone number:	01473 890267
Fax number:	01473 89077
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Pearce
Date of previous inspection:	12 th July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Helmingham is a very small rural primary school. The school roll has increased by nearly 50 per cent since the last inspection in 1999. It has three mixed-age classes. The school is fully inclusive, with 20 per cent of children on the special needs register. About a third of the children live outside the catchment area. Pupils are drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, but about a quarter are from families in higher socio-economic groups. A private Nursery is situated adjacent to the school site, and a growing number of children from it move to the school. The school is currently a part of the Suffolk Healthy Schools Initiative and Well-being Programme. The school building and land is privately owned, although education is provided by the local education authority.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20906	Ian Naylor	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; History; Geography; Music; Art.
9931	Margaret Kerry	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
1224	Graham Todd	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Information and Communication Technology; Design and Technology.
30810	Liz Kounnou	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Religious Education.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Consultants Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	12
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Helmingham School provides a **satisfactory** standard of education and there is a good school ethos. There are many good and some very good features of the school. The school is well managed and the headteacher shows good vision and direction, so that the school is well placed to improve further the pupils' standards and achievement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievements in English are good because of good teaching.
- Teaching and achievement are good in art.
- Attendance is very good and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The workplace environment for staff and pupils has been enhanced by improvements to the accommodation.
- There is very good involvement of parents, and links with them.
- Very good links with other schools have been established and good links with the local community have been sustained.
- There is good attention given to the welfare and safety of pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are provided for well.
- The curriculum is enlivened and enriched by many opportunities in the arts, sports and music, and in the provision of a modern foreign language in Years 2 to 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory and achievement is good in Year 2, but standards in Year 6 are unsatisfactory, although achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is lower than the minimum recommended.
- The use of assessment information does not sufficiently inform teaching and learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage, science and ICT.

The new headteacher, appointed just under two years ago, has introduced more rigour and a greater sense of purpose and direction to the school. Standards have fluctuated since the previous inspection, but these must be seen in the context of a small school. The numbers in cohorts over the last three years have been very small, which means that comparisons with other schools nationally may be unreliable. However, there are clear indications that there has been a recent improvement in achievement, especially in English, mathematics and science. There is now a satisfactory system in place for recording and assessing pupils' progress. Pupils' attainment in religious education is satisfactory. Improvements in staff training, resources and levels of equipment in ICT have helped to raise the profile of the subject.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In the 2004 national tests, standards by the end of Year 2 were average in reading, above average in writing, and average in mathematics, compared with those of all schools nationally. They were below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics when compared to those of similar schools nationally. Standards by the end of Year 6 in English were below average compared with those of all schools nationally and of similar schools. There was a similar situation in mathematics and science. Over the three years since 2002, this shows a decline in English and mathematics but a slight increase in science. In 2004, at the end of Year 6, girls outperformed the boys in English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Most children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) will reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception Year and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' current achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and they reach average standards by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, current standards are good in English and achievement is good. Standards and achievement are satisfactory in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In ICT, standards in Year 2 are satisfactory, but they are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. In religious education, achievement is satisfactory. In the other subjects, there are indications in the lessons seen and from samples of pupils' work that achievement is very good in French, and at least good in physical education, music and art. Achievement is at least satisfactory elsewhere. Pupils with SEN make good progress towards the targets set for them. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons, show interest in the activities and behave well. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning **are satisfactory**. They are good in English, French, physical education and music. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and give clear guidance to pupils about what they will learn and how to make progress in their achievements. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good. The curriculum is satisfactory but it is made more interesting and relevant to pupils' needs through the addition of a modern foreign language and a range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, offering good opportunities for sport and the arts. Nevertheless, the amount of teaching time in Years 3 to 6 is below the recommended minimum. Staff ensure good welfare, guidance and support to pupils. There are very good links with parents, whose keen involvement in the classroom is welcomed. The school has increased its links with other local schools since the last inspection and these are now very good. Links with the local community remain good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. There are some stronger features in both the leadership and management of the school, particularly in the headteacher's vision for the direction of the school and in the good management structures and procedures. There are good financial systems and controls. Governance is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. A core of governors is closely involved in the school and gives good support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents say they are given very good information about their child's progress and are welcomed into school. They believe that there has been an improvement in pupils' standards and achievement since the appointment of the current headteacher. Pupils are very happy with their school and enjoy lessons. They are pleased that a school council is being formed.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in ICT in Years 3 to 6.
- Increase curriculum time for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Use assessment information more effectively to inform teaching and learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage, science, and ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement and standards are **satisfactory**. The numbers in cohorts over the last three years have been very small and this means that comparisons with other schools nationally may be unreliable.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in English by Year 6.
- Standards in ICT are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Commentary

1. In the 2004 national tests, standards by end of Year 2 were average in reading, above average in writing, and average in mathematics compared with all schools nationally. They were below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics compared to similar schools nationally. Standards by the end of Year 6 in English were below average compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. There was a similar situation in mathematics and science.

2. When compared to the national averages over the three years since 2002, the trend for progress over time has been below the national picture by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There has been a fall in standards in English and mathematics, but a slight improvement in science.

3. Most children in the Foundation Stage will exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Reception Year and their achievement is satisfactory.

4. Current standards in English are satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 2 achievement and standards in reading and writing are satisfactory. For the two pupils in Year 6, current standards are good in English, and achievement is good. Standards and achievement are satisfactory in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In ICT, standards in Year 2 are satisfactory and pupils achieve well, but they are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. However, the school has now made it a priority to raise standards and is taking firm action that is expected to bring about an improvement.

5. In religious education, pupils meet the expected standards of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

6. In the other subjects, there are indications in the few lessons seen and from samples of pupils' work that their progress is very good in French, and at least good in physical education, music and art. Achievement is at least satisfactory elsewhere.

7. Pupils with SEN make good progress in each year group towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs).

8. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE).

9. In 2004, at the end of Year 6, girls outperformed the boys in English, mathematics and science. The school is aware of the fluctuations between the relative progress of boys and girls and is taking appropriate steps to address this. However, the very low numbers in each year (for instance with only two girls in the current Year 6 cohort) make this difficult in the short term.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes, values and personal development

Pupils have **good** attitudes to school and work. Attendance is very good. Pupils behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Levels of attendance are very high.
- Pupils show a strong sense of responsibility.
- Attitudes to work are good, although there is some low-level disruption.
- Behaviour at break-times is very good.

Commentary

10. Pupils are keen to come to school and show pride in being members of the school community. They are very willing to take responsibility, in organising resources for assembly, for example. They show a strong sense of care for each other. Pupils were very quick to report a minor playground mishap to the teacher, in the meantime comforting the child who had fallen over.

11. Break times and lunchtimes are taken up with constructive play. Pupils take full advantage of the range of playground games provided, and are keen to demonstrate these to a visitor. They are polite and courteous in conversation.

12. Attitudes to work are good. In one religious education lesson they showed very good attitudes when they were totally engrossed in developing fundamental 'wondering questions'. However, in some lessons there is a degree of petty disruption, fidgeting and immature behaviour. The school has identified this as an area for improvement.

13. Personal development is good, and assemblies play an important part in this. In the assembly observed, a Christian text was used, and was skilfully interpreted in both words and symbols so that younger and older pupils could understand the point. Social and moral responsibilities are made very clear, and contributions to the school community are celebrated through the 'Tryers' Book'. Pupils are very proud to be recognised in this way. Out-of-class activities, including a residential trip, provide good social and cultural opportunities.

14. Attendance is well above the national average. The school promotes attendance very effectively by carefully recording the reasons for absence, following up absence notes, and discouraging term-time holidays.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.1	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	3.1

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
67	1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Pupils' welfare is good and there are very good links with parents and very good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Teaching is good in English, French, physical education and music.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons well and have good subject knowledge.
- Expectations of behaviour and effort are not always high enough.
- Marking and homework are used well to support pupils' learning.
- There is good teamwork amongst staff.
- Pupils with SEN are taught well.

Commentary

15. Lessons are well planned. They provide interesting and relevant activities for pupils and engage and challenge their abilities. Teachers make clear to pupils what they will learn and give careful instructions as to how they can succeed in the tasks they are set. Teachers have good understanding of their subjects and approach them with enthusiasm and skill. This is particularly the case in English, French and music. The careful consideration made by teachers of the different age groups and range of abilities in each class means that pupils are correctly placed in teaching groups for each activity, to reflect their age and ability. This largely overcomes the problems of having wide age ranges in each class. In the best teaching, teachers take advantage of the fact that younger pupils can often learn more quickly by emulating their older counterparts. As a result, pupils make at least satisfactory and often better progress in their learning. Teachers use electronic whiteboards and other resources to good effect to motivate pupils and encourage their learning. Expectations by teachers of pupils' behaviour and performance are not as high as they could be. Sometimes there are minor distractions in lessons, with much chatter amongst pupils and not enough concentration and effort to the work in hand. The school is already aware of this problem and has begun to address it.

16. Pupils present their work well in their workbooks. Handwriting is generally neat and pupils clearly take pride in what they do. This is because teachers mark work regularly and support pupils' progress by making useful written comments and evaluations in the workbooks. Homework is given regularly in English and mathematics and this promotes good achievement in spelling, reading and number skills. There are good systems for rewarding effort and achievement, and staff give recognition to good work by ensuring that pupils' work is attractively mounted and the best work displayed.

17. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and cooperate well with one another and with the visiting specialists for music, French and physical education. They involve parents well in

supporting their child's learning and encouraging parents to help in the classrooms. There is close collaboration between the headteacher and teacher for Years 4, 5 and 6 so that their class teaching job-share has a smooth transition between them during the week and pupils' progress is well supported.

18. Teachers delegate well to teaching assistants. This gives good support in particular to pupils with SEN, who are provided for well. Teaching assistants help to record and assess the progress that pupils make in the targets set in their IEPs. They have very good relationships with pupils.

19. Since the last inspection, assessment and recording systems have been introduced that are effective and provide useful information for some but not all subjects. They are best in English and mathematics. The identification and assessment procedures for pupils with SEN are good. Their IEPs are good and they are reviewed on a termly basis; parents and pupils are fully involved in this process. The plans have clear targets against which progress can be measured. The pupils are carefully monitored and the reviews indicate that the majority are making good progress. Records are well kept. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information to inform teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	3	11	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The pupils have access to a **satisfactory** range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of out-of-class activities. The issues from the last inspection relating to music and art have been satisfactorily tackled.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for ICT is not fully covered.
- A strong focus on French, music, the arts and sport is enriching the curriculum opportunities for pupils.
- Improvements to the accommodation have enhanced the well being of staff.
- The teaching time for Years 3 to 6 is less than officially recommended.

Commentary

20. The planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is good use of the outside play space to promote the different areas of learning. The teachers in Years 1 to 6 plan well for literacy and numeracy, and the school has ensured that the national strategies have been implemented well. There is a new scheme of work for science; this is helping teachers to improve their planning for the wide age and ability range in each class. There have been recent improvements in the curriculum and resources for ICT, but pupils do not have enough access to computers, with the result that several areas of the ICT curriculum not being covered by older pupils.

21. The amount of taught time is below the nationally recommended minimum in Years 3 to 6. This is having an impact upon some areas of the curriculum, for instance in ICT. There is also some teaching time lost by a slow start to the school day and to lessons that follow break times.

22. The school has enriched the curriculum well by providing good opportunities for French, music, the arts and sport. The school employs two music specialists and an administrator who is a proficient pianist. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the recorder, clarinet and violin. A specialist

teacher from the local high school comes to give pupils lessons in French. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in sport and the school has plans to introduce more sports competitions.

23. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The curriculum is adapted and modified effectively to meet pupils' SEN. All identified pupils have good IEPs and these are reviewed three times each year. Those in Years 2 and 3 are given a home pack so their parents can help them at home. The work is closely linked to the targets in their IEPs. The school has not yet formally identified any gifted and talented pupils.

24. The curriculum for PSHE is good, with each class having one formal lesson in the subject each week. Some aspects of PSHE are taught in science or in specific lessons, for example, sex and relationships education. Drugs education is taught in partnership with the police.

25. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum. The number of teaching assistants has been increased recently. They provide effective support and work closely with the teachers.

26. There have been some recent and significant improvements to the accommodation. These have greatly improved the working environment for staff and pupils. They have increased pupil safety and security, contributing significantly to promoting a better learning environment for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, and health and safety are **good**. Pupils receive good support and guidance. They are well involved in the life of the school and are able to express their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good care for pupils who have medical needs.
- The school is vigilant about health and safety.
- Systematic arrangements for tracking progress have now been introduced.
- Pupils are active participants in the life of the school.

Commentary

27. Pupils' well being is a high priority for all members of staff. Relationships are good. Playtime is well supervised, and pupils are expected to play in a way that is enjoyable, but also responsible. The school gives good attention to the security of pupils and staff, and to all aspects of health and safety.

28. Teaching assistants are well involved in the support and care of pupils, as well as in their learning. Procedures for child protection are very thorough, and there is a high level of awareness amongst teachers and support staff. There is very good care for pupils who have particular medical needs. The academic support, care and advice available for pupils with SEN is good.

29. Induction is well managed, with good links with the nursery next door from which many pupils come. Pupils who arrive during the course of the year are helped to integrate quickly and successfully. There are strong links with secondary school through the local pyramid.

30. Last term, a systematic way of tracking pupils' progress was introduced. In a school where cohorts are very small, this is an important development. It is not yet fully implemented, but is beginning to give a more rigorous picture of individual progress.

31. A school council has been formed, and elections were about to start during the inspection week. These had been well linked to the recent general election. Pupils contribute to the climate of

the school by supporting targets promoting particular kinds of behaviour or actions, such as actively befriending others in the playground. In discussions, pupils are very clear that they like school and feel that they have a stake in what happens.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is **very good**. Links with the community are good, and there are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very satisfied with the school and give very active support to its work.
- Good community links enhance learning.
- Close collaboration with other schools broadens pupils' experiences very successfully.

Commentary

32. Parents are well satisfied with the school, and the roll is rising as parents choose to send their children here. Parents are willing volunteers in class, and as helpers with extra-curricular activities. They support children's learning by regular participation in hearing reading. There is also an active friends' association, which contributes significantly to school resources.

33. The school gives parents good information about their children's progress through termly consultation and annual reports. The reports clearly reflect good knowledge of individual children, set targets for improvement and give parents a good picture of what their child has achieved. There is close liaison with home over the progress that pupils are making. Parents of pupils with SEN in Years 2 and 3 are very keen to support their learning and have welcomed the introduction of the home packs. Parents of pupils with SEN across the school are fully involved in the review of their IEPs and annual reviews of statements.

34. There are good links with the community, given the size and context of the school. These include strong links with the local clergy that enhance pupils' personal development. Sport is another point of contact, with a member of the local community leading a football club.

35. The school takes very active steps to counter any isolation that might result from its being a small rural school. There are very extensive and active links with other schools. The local pyramid of schools is used to provide collaborative activities for Years 3, 4 and 5. There is also a cluster of small village schools that collaborate on a Year 6 residential trip. These are very effective ways of broadening pupils' experiences and extending their social contact. There is also very good collaboration through sporting activities.

36. These links with other schools are also used to explore common issues. A recent example has been to undertake joint staff training on how to deal with low-level disruptions in class. This networking provides better opportunities for staff development than would be possible for the school acting on its own.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher has introduced more rigour and a greater sense of purpose and direction to the school since his appointment two years ago. There is good overall management, particularly of finance. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have clear aims for the school and work hard to ensure that standards are improved. However, they do not yet have sufficient procedures for monitoring or giving in-depth support to the headteacher and staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff well-being and the ethos and environment of the school have been promoted well.
- The headteacher has a good view of what the school should do next and provides a good role model to staff and pupils.
- There are effective policies and procedures in place and financial management is good.
- There is not enough monitoring of teaching and learning to improve standards.

Commentary

37. In the relatively short time since his appointment, the headteacher has made a big impact upon promoting the well being of staff and improving the school's accommodation and general environment. He has worked well with the governors, local authority officers and managers from the Helmingham Hall estate (the latter are the landlords of the school building and grounds) to effect improvements to offices, classrooms and outside areas of the school.

38. The headteacher has a clear vision and a determination to improve overall standards in the school and has already been successful in sustaining the good quality of the school ethos noted at the last inspection. He has the vision and capability to take the school forward in its future development: to improve standards and raise overall achievements. A realistic and achievable school improvement plan (SIP) has been in place over the past two years through which staff have worked and achieved the majority of the targets set. A new SIP for the next three years has just been approved by governors and introduced. This is much more clearly focussed in its targets for raising pupil standards. It also benefits from having a wider scope in its direction for other areas of school, such as raising governor awareness and involvement, implementing workforce reform, addressing minor pupil behaviour issues, and promoting the role of subject leaders.

39. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning does not occur as often as it should. This is mainly due to difficulties faced by a small school, in which there are only three teachers to undertake all the subject leadership responsibilities, and when one is a newly qualified teacher who is not permitted to do so in the first year of employment. School self-review and monitoring of pupil performance information needs further development.

40. There are good management structures including good financial controls. The school buys into a financial support package from the local authority's finance department and the school administrator works in close conjunction with them to ensure financial commitments and procedures are effective in obtaining best value. An efficient school office provides good administrative support to staff and a warm welcome to parents. School policies are reviewed and evaluated regularly by the headteacher and governors. Staff have access to good opportunities for professional development. Management of the special educational needs provision is good. The money received by the school for SEN is spent well, mostly to fund teaching assistants. There is good planning for the deployment and workload of staff. The requirements of workforce reform have already been planned and budgeted for and are to be implemented in the next academic year. All statutory requirements are met.

41. A core of governors gives good support to the school and has close involvement. However there are some vacancies on the governing body, which has reduced the extent of its overall involvement and support to staff. Although all governors are allocated areas or subjects to monitor and to give support to staff, there is only limited evidence of this being effective. For instance, a weakness reported at the previous inspection for standards in ICT has not been satisfactorily addressed.

42. Satisfactory leadership and standard of education, together with relatively high pupil costs, means that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	315,464.00
Total expenditure	314,537.00
Expenditure per pupil	4694.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8,495.00
Balance carried forward to the next	8722.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Most children will reach the goals expected for children in the Reception class by the end of the school year, and their achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Reception class are taught together with pupils from Year 1. Great care is taken to provide them with opportunities to learn as they play outside. The small and secure outdoor area has been developed very well, and one of the adults often leads play out there. There is mainly a tendency only to use the area when the weather is fine, but during the inspection children gained a great deal as they played outside on colder days. The curriculum provided is satisfactory overall and covers all of the areas of learning. However, it is often not sufficiently challenging for the most able because assessment is not used well enough to plan the next steps for learning for each group of children. Assessment of children's overall achievements is carried out regularly to complete a suitable end-of-year profile for each child. This information is not routinely taken into account when lessons are planned. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator currently carries several other major areas of responsibility and this severely limits her effectiveness. As a result, development of the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has not kept pace with national improvements. Provision is satisfactory but not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are invited to stay in class at the start of some days and this greatly increases their child's confidence.
- The good relationships in the class help children to feel safe and secure.

Commentary

44. The majority of children have good social skills and are confident and eager to try out new experiences. They are very capable at dressing themselves, for instance after physical education lessons. On some mornings each week, parents are invited to stay with their children for a while and this is very successful. Children are proud to show their parents what they have been doing and gain great confidence from the support their parents give. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children quickly learn to trust the adults, as a result of the good relationships that are established in the class. They enjoy playing together, for example making up their own games in the shop outside, and most are good at sharing with one another. Adults help children to solve any disputes well. Nevertheless, the children do not have many opportunities to make their own decisions and take the initiative in their learning. They often choose an activity from those available in the classroom but do not usually become involved in organising resources for themselves.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy books as a result of the good encouragement they receive.

Commentary

45. There are many regular opportunities for children to practise basic skills such as learning letters and sounds. Working with older pupils in Year 1, children learn to enjoy stories such as the *Rainbow Fish*, and *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*. Children develop their spoken language in the outdoor area well as they use the boat to act out the story. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and at their best when adults intervene wisely to guide children's play. This helps children to develop their spoken language well. However, too many activities are not tailored well enough to help children develop their skills. This is because assessment is not routinely used to guide lesson planning. Plans tend to list the activities that children and staff will engage in, rather than what children of different abilities will learn in each lesson. As a result, children too often work at activities that are not well designed to help them make the best progress. Nonetheless, they make satisfactory progress, as is evident in the clear development of their writing skills over the year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good attention to teaching mental mathematics skills helps children with their mathematical development.

Commentary

46. Children work with Year 1 pupils at the start of some lessons. They not only find these opportunities enjoyable but they also gain great benefit from working at this challenging level. As a result, they develop good mental mathematics skills and count in 5s and 10s with great confidence. Many of the activities planned in the outdoor area help children to develop mathematical skills as they play. For example, the shop helps them to count out the money they will need to make a purchase, and children have a great time making new price labels for all the goods on sale. This helps them develop their skills in writing numbers and prices correctly. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Nonetheless, as with language development, assessment is not used well enough to guide the activities that are planned. For instance, children working in a large group together were all asked to do the same activity, recognising coins and prices. Many of them could already do this confidently and the work was not tailored well enough to help them reach the next stage of development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD/ PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT/CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

47. There is not enough evidence to enable a judgement to be made about provision, as these areas were only sampled. Nevertheless, it is clear that the classroom and outdoor area are organised to provide children with suitable experiences. For example, children are in the process of planting out bedding plants. and as some plants were caught by a late frost this created an ideal opportunity to learn about the conditions that plants need in order to grow.

48. During the inspection, wet weather upset the planned outdoor lesson. The small hall restricts what children can do to develop control. Nonetheless, they practised aiming and throwing a beanbag into a hoop and some improved their techniques. There was no suitable extension planned for those children who could already achieve this when the lesson began. There are many opportunities throughout the day for children to gain more control of their hands. Suitable activities, such as modelling with play dough and completing jigsaws, are a regular feature of classroom experience.

49. The classroom shows lively displays of children's work and includes an area for them to explore musical sounds. During the inspection, they thoroughly enjoyed decorating the word *God* with sparkly materials and paints, and were hoping their work would be chosen to go into the teacher's 'special' bag. The outdoor area provides children with plenty of opportunities to develop their imagination; the boat is a particular favourite. In one lesson, some children enthusiastically hauled anchor after donning the lifejacket and buying provisions from the shop to sustain them on the journey.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **good**. Pupils achieve well and current standards are above average by Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good reading, writing, speaking and listening skills by Year 6.
- There is good teamwork to support pupils' individual learning needs.
- Good support is given to pupils with SEN.
- Teachers use homework, good marking and reward systems well to promote learning.

Commentary

50. Standards in the present Year 2 are average overall. Achievement in Years 1 to 3 is satisfactory as a whole, though some pupils find it hard to listen and concentrate, which affects their performance. Pupils achieve well in Years 4 to 6 because much of the teaching is of good quality. As a result, pupils reach above average standards in the present Year 6. The achievement of pupils in reading and writing is satisfactory in Year 2, but good by Year 6 because of decisive school action. Speaking and listening skills are good in Years 4, 5 and 6; in Years 1, 2 and 3, they are satisfactory. Teachers give pupils good guidance and clear instructions on what they will learn, which means that pupils understand what they have to do to achieve success. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) has targeted improvements in writing over the last year and there are clear indications that this has had a good impact on pupils' attainments. There are good examples in pupils' workbooks of extended and descriptive writing, including good handwriting and spelling in Years 3 to 6.

51. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to write letters to a shop to complain about a broken toy. They understand the format for letter writing and pay good attention to spelling and to writing in sentences. A few struggle to master the concept of paragraphs. They can use the computer to word process their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils investigate compound words and use dictionaries well to discover word definitions. They understand what an acronym is and can give examples. They know that there are different styles of writing and can compare and contrast writing that informs and persuades. They produce their own writing in this style. Pupils' presentation of their work in their workbooks is good, and shows that they enjoy and take pride in what they learn. They are helped in this by the good evaluative marking and written comments made by teachers.

Teachers give homework regularly to support learning and it is targeted well at raising achievement in reading and spelling in particular. Pupils are motivated well in their work by the use by teachers of reward schemes such as stickers, smiley faces, and the award of 'Golden Time' that gives recognition to work well done. Pupils with SEN make good progress because teachers use individual educational plans and targets effectively to guide pupils' learning. They also delegate well to teaching assistants so that these pupils get extra support.

52. Teachers work closely with one another, and with teaching assistants, parents and other voluntary helpers. Planning is generally good. Work is set appropriately for the mixed aged groups in each class. Assessment information is carefully gathered and recorded. However, planning would be more effective if assessment information were used more precisely to focus on what individuals need to learn next. This would identify the learning that needed to occur to enable pupils to move from an average National Curriculum level to an above average level. The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively across the school and is well supported by other literacy initiatives. A strong feature of some teaching is the effective use of ICT, especially electronic whiteboards. A less successful feature of teaching in some lessons is where pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively and there are constant minor distractions amongst some pupils, particularly boys. This reduces concentration and effort, which in turn affects progress.

53. Leadership of the subject is good. Resources are good and are used well. There is a good library for such a small school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

French

54. Although there is not enough evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision in French, it is clear that this subject makes a good contribution by enriching the curriculum. It is taught in weekly lessons to Years 2 to 6. Good inter-school links mean that pupils are expertly taught by a specialist teacher from the local high school and begin to form relationships that will stand them in good stead when they transfer to their next school at age 11. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the one lesson seen, which was taught very well and featured a wide range of activities to motivate both boys and girls. All the pupils increased both their vocabulary and their confidence in speaking French during this brisk lesson. They use good conversational phrases. The evidence from workbooks in Year 6 shows that pupils make good progress and achieve well in their written French. They can follow written instructions and know how to write and spell the vocabulary for time, types of meals, and parts of the body.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Literacy and language skills are used well in all subjects. Pupils can describe their actions, ask sensible questions and give clear answers. for example in physical education and music lessons. Pupils write good descriptions of their investigations in science and of their research into history and geography topics.

Mathematics

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson organisation for the wide age and ability range is good.
- To raise standards further, assessment needs to be more rigorous.
- Teaching assistants give effective help and support to pupils.
- Problem solving and the analysis and interpretation of data are weak areas.

Commentary

56. Standards in mathematics throughout the school are average. The pupils with SEN receive good support and the work is adapted and modified effectively for them. As a result, they make good progress with their learning.

57. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. In the best lesson, the pace was lively, clear instructions were given for practical tasks on symmetry, and time limits were set for pupils to complete their work. Since the last inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well; this is providing a good structure for teachers to plan their lessons. Teachers' planning is good, in that it addresses the learning needs of the wide age and ability range in each class. Learning objectives are written clearly on the board, shared with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson, and reinforced in the review at the end of lessons. Assessment is satisfactory, and the school has gathered a great deal of information about pupils' individual progress.

58. The use of ICT is developing satisfactorily; a good example of the digital whiteboard was observed in Years 2 and 3, where it was used to teach mental addition and subtraction strategies. The pupils' books are well presented and the marking of their work is effective; teachers' comments are helping pupils to improve their work. The curriculum is covered satisfactorily, but weaker areas of pupils' learning are problem solving and the analysis and interpretation of data. There was limited evidence of graphs and spreadsheets being used for data analysis. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons. They know the pupils well and are confident when working with individual and small groups of pupils.

59. Subject leadership is satisfactory, but there is no time allocated to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Apart from mathematics, the co-ordinator has many other curriculum responsibilities, which mean that the time she can give to this subject is limited.

60. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in other subjects, for instance in the classification and matching of different materials in science and the use of tables to record the results of investigations.

Science

The provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with SEN achieve well and receive good support.
- A new scheme of work is helping teachers to plan more effectively for the wide age and ability range.
- Pupils' skills in carrying out investigations are not well enough developed.

Commentary

62. Inspection evidence found current standards throughout the school to be average. When the school's results in national tests are compared to those of similar schools nationally, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels is below average. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in science. They are well supported.

63. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. In this, the pupils were enthusiastic and found the lesson exciting and fun. Good planning and sound teaching were helping the pupils to understand different forces, and the work was effectively linked to design and technology. The scrutiny of pupils' work across the school shows that teaching is satisfactory, with adequate coverage of the curriculum. However, there are weaknesses in the investigative work. Pupils' skills of enquiry are underdeveloped; for example, their written responses lack depth when predicting and recording.

64. A newly introduced curriculum plan reflects the strong efforts that are being made to improve the provision and to raise standards in science. This is helping teachers to plan in more detail for the wide age range and ability in each class. The use of ICT is developing satisfactorily; interactive whiteboards are being used, there are examples of ICT being used for research, and equipment has been purchased for data logging. The marking of pupils' work is good; the best examples explain to pupils how they can improve their work. The location of the school provides very good opportunities for environmental science.

65. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to improve the quality of the investigational work and assessment. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory, the school needs to use the data more effectively to inform teachers' planning. Currently, no time is allocated to monitor teaching and learning. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

The provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are satisfactory in Year 2 but unsatisfactory in Year 6.
- The use of ICT is improving, particularly the use of digital whiteboards for teaching, planning and display.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to guide planning and check pupils' progress.

66. Standards in Years 1 to 3 meet national expectations. However, standards in the upper part of the school are below expectations. This is because pupils have limited access to computers and aspects of the curriculum have not been taught in sufficient depth. Until recently, ICT has not been taught on a regular basis, and this has affected the overall progress of pupils, especially those in Years 4, 5, and 6. Although achievement is good in Years 1 to 3, it is only satisfactory in Years 4, 5 and 6. The school has acknowledged this and pupils in these years now have regular lessons in the subject; there are also additional plans for improving provision.

67. Teaching sampled during the inspection was good and pupils made good progress in these sessions. However, older pupils are currently not working at the expected levels; they are learning skills that should have been taught in previous years. Evidence in pupils' work books shows that standards and teaching are beginning to improve under the guidance of the ICT co-ordinator. The digital whiteboards are being used to good effect; digital photography is used well to record achievement, and teachers are using ICT effectively for planning their work and to enhance classroom displays. However, not all aspects of the curriculum are being taught. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 need more time in areas such as control, databases and spreadsheet modelling.

68. The management of ICT is satisfactory. The headteacher recognises the importance of ICT and is working hard to raise the profile of the subject and to train staff. New equipment and a newly developed scheme of work are examples of this commitment. However, there is still much to do, notably the implementation of an assessment system to confirm standards. There are issues associated with the accommodation that are very difficult to resolve in a small school. To overcome

the lack of space, the school is planning to introduce a wireless network. Although resources have improved recently, pupils are not getting enough 'hands on' experience with computers. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in respect of equipment and staff training.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of ICT in different subjects of the curriculum is developing satisfactorily and has improved since the last inspection. During the inspection, a small group of pupils were using computers in a mathematics lesson to determine lines of symmetry. The scrutiny of pupils' workbooks showed that email is being used to correspond with a school in France, and older pupils are developing Internet research skills, for instance for their work in religious education, geography and history.

HUMANITIES

70. No lessons were seen in history or geography, and therefore no judgements about provision can be made. Samples from pupils' workbooks were analysed along with work displayed in classrooms and around the school. These indicate that pupils are making good progress in their achievements in each year group.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 show good understanding and present their work well.
- Pupils in Year 1 cover a wide range of work which helps them to achieve well.

Commentary

71. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some very good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 gained pupils' interest and led them to debate some fundamental questions, such as: 'Why can't we see God?' Pupils in this class present their work very carefully in topics on community and patterns in life. Teaching in Year 2 and 3 is only satisfactory, as the range of opportunities for learning is limited over the year. This is because lessons focus mainly on aspects of personal and social development without linking these ideas to religion. For example, Year 2 pupils have explored feelings and ideas but have not related these to Christianity or any other religion. Pupils lack confidence in discussing Christianity and any other religion in any depth.

72. In Year 1, good teaching helps pupils cover a wide range of topic, so that they achieve well. The work is set out in a variety of ways which help pupils' understanding and also support their literacy skills. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed playing a game in which they discussed ideas about God, such as 'God is kind'.

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**.

73. In **history**, pupils in Years 2 and 3 learn about key events and personalities, such as the story of Florence Nightingale, Guy Fawkes and the events of the Great Fire of London. In Years 3 to 6, pupils study the lives of the Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlers. They visit a local reconstructed

Anglo-Saxon village. They draw and write about Anglo-Saxon homes and construct very good three-dimensional models of an Anglo-Saxon house, in a good link with art and technology. They produce good topic work based on their own research about the Aztecs and the Ancient Greeks, in particular making comparisons between the different styles of clothing, jewellery and architecture.

74. In **geography**, pupils in Years 2 to 3 contrast and compare similarities and differences between the lives and environment of people living in their own locality and those found on the imaginary island of Struay. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make a study of the town of Woodbridge; learn the names of countries when exploring the map of Europe, and learn to recognise map symbols. Pupils present their work well in both these subjects, taking pride in their achievements. There is evidence of the use of the internet for research in the humanities subjects and the use of good literacy skills. The work sample shows evidence of good understanding and good progress over time, and this is indicative of good teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Only one lesson was seen in physical education and one in music; none was seen in art and design, or in design technology. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about provision or standards.

76. In **physical education** there is currently an excellent joint venture between the school and the local area Sports Coordinator and Partnership Scheme. The lesson observed had very good collaboration between the class teacher and a specialist physical education teacher from the local high school, provided by funding from the partnership. As a result, pupils received expert tuition in a range of activities and exercises to raise their competencies in ball handling skills and in working as a team. The lesson culminated in a game of rounders, in which pupils showed that they understood the rules of the game and put their ball and team skills to the test. The subject co-ordinator has close liaison with county advisers and support from the Partnership Scheme. She has attended many courses to increase her skills and knowledge. These are helping to inject variety and expertise into the subject. There is full coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is despite the lack of physical space in the school building for activities such as gymnastics and dance. Resources are adequate and the school is fortunate in having a good outside space for team games and athletics.

77. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 attend weekly swimming lessons in the autumn term at a local college. A residential trip each year provides experience for older pupils to participate in sports such as orienteering and climbing. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting tournaments against other schools, for instance in basketball, and there is an annual school sports day. A range of after-school clubs further enhances the subject. One of these is held at a local leisure centre and offers a variety of sports activities. There is a close link maintained by the subject coordinator with the school's involvement in the Health Schools Initiative.

78. In **art and design**, the work sampled in pupils' sketchbooks and their work displayed around the school shows that pupils make good progress in their achievements and enjoy expressing themselves in what they do. Pupils in Year 1 can draw very good self-portraits. They successfully use a range of types of pencils for line work and make excellent pictures of fireworks, using oils. In Years 2 and 3 pupils create various pieces of art in the style of Australian aborigines, such as dream sticks and didgeridoos. They make very good three-dimensional clay models in the form of miniature vegetable gardens after listening to the story of the 'King and Queen's Garden' in a very good link that supports their literacy skills. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils' sketchbooks show good achievement and progress in drawing still life in pencil, and painting colours and shapes in the style of famous artists such as Matisse. There is a good link with ICT when pupils use a paint program to reproduce pictures, using the Pointillism style. All pupils' work is marked and commented on by

teachers. Pupils take great care with their work and it is neat and well thought out. Teachers place high value on pupils' achievement, and much of the pupils' completed work is displayed to very good effect around the school. There is a good range of curriculum activities for each year group, and the overall standard of pupils' work is above expectations for Years 2 and 6.

79. In the one lesson observed in **design and technology**, pupils in Years 2 and 3 enjoyed cutting out the parts of a cardboard figure and joining them together with split pins. This was closely linked to current work in science. Pupils in Year 1 show above average standards when they design and make very good models of playground equipment from card and balsa, and they enjoy investigating construction when making a house for a favourite toy.

80. In **music**, the lesson observed was an example of very good teaching of singing for the whole school. Accompanied by the school secretary on the piano, the pupils sang a range of hymns beautifully and enthusiastically. They showed good timing and pitch in singing 'two-part harmony', with many of the older pupils knowing the words by heart. In the two after-school recorder clubs, pupils make good progress and play accurately, using good pitch and tone. Pupils learn to play tenor, descant and treble recorders and rehearse for public performances. Written work in pupils' workbooks in Years 4, 5 and 6 shows good progress. Pupils draw and write about the experiences and feelings that music creates in work on 'painting with sound'. They define musical terms and elements, understand notation and musical scales, and write about the lives and work of famous composers, such as Felix Mendelssohn. Pupils visit another school to play and learn about the Gamelan as part of a series of 'percussion days'. They take part in several musical performances in school, such as 'Peter Pan', and in school concerts. Visiting county peripatetic teachers offer weekly lessons in violin and clarinet. The subject coordinator is well organised and has increased the range and quality of resources.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

81. No lessons in PSHE were seen. There are separately timetabled lessons for PSHE for each class. Pupils also complete work on relationships and personal development skills in 'circle time'. In Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils draw a 'friendship web' and discuss 'what is a real friend' and key elements of what it means to care. In Years 2 and 3, pupils discuss and draw up class rules. They learn about how to take care of the environment through recycling and looking after the welfare of wild animals and plants. They take part in the Healthy Schools Initiative and discuss healthy eating. Pupils are currently engaged in campaigning for their chosen candidates for the school council, making 'vote for me' posters. Assemblies give very good support to PSHE and often have themes about friendship, relationships and the responsibilities of living in a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
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 (Ethos)	3
Attendance	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).