

# INSPECTION REPORT

**MELLIS C OF E VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Eye

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124737

Headteacher: Mr R Cattermole

Lead inspector: Mr A J Dobell

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267305

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 115  
School address: Yaxley Road  
Mellis  
Eye  
Suffolk  
Postcode: IP23 8DY  
Telephone number: (01379) 783 376  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Dr B Box  
governors:  
Date of previous November 1998  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small, voluntary controlled primary school draws its pupils from a wide area since almost half come from outside its immediate area, because parents choose to have their children educated in this school. Pupils come from a mixed range of housing and their socio-economic circumstances, whilst covering a wide range, are above average overall. Children's levels of understanding and learning skills also cover a wide range when they enter the Reception Year, but, again, are above average overall. Most pupils are from white, western European backgrounds, and none speaks English as an additional language.

The school has 115 pupils on roll, including 14 in the Foundation Stage. All attend full time. There are 14 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, and, at 13 per cent, this proportion is average. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, and, again, this proportion is average. The nature of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In recent years, the school has gained a School Achievement Award and an International Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education
19374	Mrs W Sheehan	Lay inspector	
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
15011	Mrs M Wallace	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school giving very good value for money. Standards are well above average overall because the quality of teaching is now very good. The headteacher is providing very good leadership and the school is innovative and forward looking.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is very good overall.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning because they feel valued and secure in the school.
- The headteacher, very well supported by the governing body and all adults in the school, is providing very good leadership.
- The school provides its pupils with a curriculum of very good quality enhanced by very good opportunities for enrichment out of class.
- Provisions for tracking pupils' progress are not consistently sharp enough.
- The outdoor provision for children in the Reception Year is unsatisfactory.
- Parents support learning very effectively both in school and at home.
- The school hall is too small for physical education and toilet facilities for staff are grossly inadequate.

The school has improved well since its previous inspection and the key issues from that inspection have been dealt with well. The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

### 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	C	C	E
mathematics	A*	C	A	A
science	A	A	B	D

*Key: A\* – in the top five per cent; 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.*

**Achievement is good overall.** Children enter the Reception Year with levels of understanding and learning skills which are above average overall. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and already exceed the standards expected in the early learning goals at the end of the Reception Year, except in physical development, where their progress is held back by deficiencies in provision. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards are now well above average in Years 2 and 6 in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In English, standards are well above average in Year 2, but above average in Year 6 because of a tendency to carelessness in spelling and the use of grammar. This carelessness has resulted in a marked decline in standards over the last two years and standards are now well below those found in similar schools.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good.** They behave very well both in class and at play and have very good attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides an education of very good quality. Teaching and learning are very good** and teachers make lessons interesting and often exciting. Because of this, pupils try hard in lessons and are keen to offer ideas and respond to questions. Teaching assistants support learning very well. There are satisfactory systems in place to monitor and track pupils' learning, but the school recognises that there is scope for them to be made still more consistently effective.

The school provides a curriculum of very good quality and there are very good opportunities for enrichment out of class. There are very good links between subjects to make learning more meaningful. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is very well managed and they achieve very well. Pupils are well cared for overall. They feel valued for what they can offer and so are confident to contribute to learning and so achieve well. There are very good links with parents, the community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher is providing very good leadership and is receiving very good support from all adults in the school. All have a clear vision for the school. In essence, this is to enable all pupils to succeed academically while developing into confident and caring young citizens. This vision is practised effectively throughout the school. There is a very good commitment to equality of access to all that the school offers. Management is very good and the school has the continuing professional development of staff as a high priority so that pupils continue to receive an education of high quality. However, systems to track the progress of pupils and to plan their future learning are not sharp enough. Finances are managed very efficiently and the principles of best value are practised very effectively. Governors have a very clear appreciation of the school's strengths and potential for development, and ensure that it meets legal requirements.

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

Overall, parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. In particular, they agree that children enjoy school, make good progress and behave well. All parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that teaching is good, that staff encourage maturity and independence, and that the school provides interesting activities. All agree that the school is led and managed well. Inspectors support these positive views. A minority of parents have concerns about bullying, information about their children's progress, valuing parents' views and arrangements for induction. Inspectors found no reasons to support these concerns. The high number of parents choosing to have their children educated in this school, although they live nearer to other schools, is clear evidence of their positive views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- improve systems for tracking pupils' progress so that achievement can be promoted systematically;
- develop the outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage further; and
- improve the provision for indoor physical education and adult toilet facilities.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is good throughout the school and very good for pupils with special educational needs. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are well above average in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are well above average in mathematics, science, and information and communication technology, and above average in English. Children in the Reception Year are well ahead of expectations in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, ahead of expectations in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, and at the expected level in physical development.

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

- Standards in Year 2 have improved well since the previous inspection because learning activities excite pupils.
- Whilst learning is managed very well overall, assessment does not focus sharply enough on managing pupils' progress in the short term.
- By Year 6, standards in English are not as good as in mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- The headteacher, fully supported by his colleagues, has a very strong commitment to raising standards.

#### **Commentary**

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments for science judged standards to be very high – i.e. in the top five per cent of all schools in the country. When compared with schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Results in the national tests were also well above average or in the top five per cent of all schools in the country in 2002 and 2003. Since children enter the Reception Year with levels of understanding and learning skills which are above average overall, this represents good achievement. Boys and girls achieve equally well. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.
2. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004, standards were average in English, above average in science and well above average in mathematics. When compared with schools which had similar standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, these results were well below average in English, below average in science and well above average in mathematics. Standards in English were adversely affected in 2004 because of a high incidence of dyslexia in the year group. In 2004, girls were significantly more successful than boys in the national tests. However, a careful comparison of the results of pupils in this year group in 2000, when they took the national tests at the end of Year 2, and in 2004, shows that they all made at least satisfactory progress, with about 40 per cent making above average progress overall.

Even so, standards in English have declined markedly since 2002 because pupils are careless in their use of grammar and their spelling.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (18.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.3 (16.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (19.0)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.0 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. When interpreting these tables, it is important to note that the school has relatively small year groups so that small variations in performance from one year to another can have a significant effect on percentage figures. For example, one or two more below average pupils in a year group can give the impression that standards have declined markedly.
4. Since the school's previous inspection, standards have improved well overall. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because they put an impressive amount of effort into their work. They have very good attitudes to learning because they find their lessons interesting and often exciting. This is because teachers are very skilled in planning learning activities which fully engage pupils' attention. For example, the 'zapping contests' in the mental mathematics sessions in Years 3 to 6 have an element of competition which creates an air of excitement to which pupils respond with great enthusiasm. Teachers are careful to ensure that questions are graded to enable pupils at different stages of learning to be successful. These activities are helping to maintain the school's high standards in mathematics.
5. The very good use of information and communication technology to support learning is helping pupils to achieve well. All classes use the computer suite regularly and there are excellent and very good examples of its use in supporting learning very effectively. Teachers also use the computer-driven whiteboards in classrooms very well to clarify what pupils are to learn. As a result, they get on with their work without fuss or disruption and so achieve well.
6. Learning is managed very well overall by subject leaders and this has enabled the school to raise standards since its previous inspection. There are satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' progress, but the school recognises that there is scope for their use to be made more effective. For example, standards in English in Year 6 are not as high as in mathematics and science because pupils make too many

careless errors in spelling and their use of grammar. The headteacher accepts that assessment systems do not monitor this systematically in order to improve pupils' technical competence in writing. Whilst the recently appointed subject leader for English has begun to tackle this, there is a need to make assessment more rigorous by setting short-term targets for improvement, monitoring progress towards them, and then setting further targets once they are achieved.

7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their previous levels of attainment because their individual needs are recognised and reflected in their individual education plans. Their learning is sensitively but effectively supported by teaching assistants. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because they are well taught and effectively challenged. They are already working at National Curriculum levels when they enter Year 1 and so are in a strong position to continue to achieve well and make good progress.
8. Evidence from the inspection is that pupils attain standards which are well above average overall at the end of Year 2, and above average standards at the end of Year 6 because the headteacher and his colleagues are strongly committed to improvement. They are ambitious for pupils to reach their potential academically and the school has a clear tradition of high expectations for its pupils. Because of this, the school is in a strong position to build on its history of success and reach still higher standards.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance and punctuality are well above average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good, creating a very positive learning environment.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, helping pupils to develop very good personal and social skills.
- Attendance is well above average.

### **Commentary**

9. The school has a very friendly, purposeful ethos. In lessons, pupils work with very high levels of sustained interest and concentration. They settle quickly in class and are very eager to respond to questions and to participate in discussions. Because of the very good relationships which exist throughout the school, pupils are not afraid to 'have a go' and all responses are valued equally by staff. Pupils support each other very well in paired and group work. For example, in an excellent English lesson in the Year 3/4 class, pupils excitedly shared their ideas on how to create a rap poem and listened very carefully to each other's suggestions. Pupils are willing to take their own initiatives to support their learning without being asked, for example, by drafting ideas on whiteboards. Pupils who have special educational needs are given very good support so that they feel confident and have very good attitudes in lessons.
10. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school day and playtimes are friendly, social occasions with pupils sharing playground equipment sensibly. In the lessons observed, no pupil needed reminding about how to behave and this ensured that lessons could be delivered at a very good pace. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that behaviour was good. No bullying was observed during the inspection and, in discussion, pupils felt that

staff dealt with any instances, which were usually no more than friends 'falling out', quickly and sensitively. There have been no exclusions in recent years. These very good attitudes ensure that pupils learn very well in a positive atmosphere.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage have very good attitudes to learning and achieve well. They settle quickly into the school and soon develop the confidence to participate in learning. As a result, they are on course to exceed the standards expected nationally in their personal, social and emotional development.
12. Pupils' spiritual development is good and is supported effectively by close links with the church and the good opportunities taken in lessons and assemblies to raise their self-esteem and self-awareness. For example, in a good history lesson in the Year 2/3 class, pupils were eager to share their new knowledge about Viking history; "I didn't know about Thor and the God of Thunder!" one boy exclaimed excitedly. This was a good example of pupils developing a feeling of excitement about what they were learning. Pupils have a very secure understanding of the difference between right and wrong and a very clear appreciation of the possible impact that their behaviour might have on others. Social skills are developed very effectively so that relationships between the different age groups and all adults are very good. The high level of participation in extra-curricular clubs, and tournaments against other primary schools in the area, also promote pupils' social development very effectively. Pupils have a very good appreciation of their own cultural traditions through art and museum visits and musical activities, and have good opportunities to appreciate the diverse cultures around the world. For example, work in music and art and design has provided pupils with very good opportunities to explore different cultures. The whole-school bi-annual trip to London provides very good enrichment with visits to the Houses of Parliament, the Cabinet War Rooms, museums and the theatre.

## Attendance

13. Attendance levels are well above average for primary schools. For the autumn term 2004, attendance levels were very high. The majority of pupils have very good attendance records. The school tries hard to minimise the number of parents taking pupils out of school for holidays during term time. The school's administrative assistant monitors registers very carefully and contacts parents swiftly on a pupil's first day of absence, should the reason for absence not be known. The majority of pupils arrive on time, although on occasions the odd pupil drifts in just past the bell. The headteacher is in the playground to greet parents and pupils each morning and this actively encourages punctuality and promotes very good relationships.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning have improved well since the school was inspected previously. Pupils feel secure and valued in the school and therefore they achieve well. This is because all adults in the school promote positive attitudes to learning so effectively.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides an education of very good quality. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and these pupils make very good progress. Pupils benefit from a curriculum of very good quality and their learning is very well supported by parents. There are very good links with other schools and with the community. Pupils are well cared for overall but a concern about safety has been reported to the headteacher and governors.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Systems for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting so that pupils learn with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning mean that they co-operate very well in all parts of the lesson.
- Systems for assessing pupils' progress are satisfactory but need to focus more sharply on helping pupils to make further progress.
- Teaching assistants offer very good support.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception Year and achieve well because they are taught well.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3	12	10	2	0	0	0

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

15. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers are very ambitious for pupils and want them to learn successfully. Teachers go to considerable lengths to make lessons interesting and exciting for their pupils. Because of this, pupils often work with real enthusiasm and with high levels of interest and concentration. Learning activities are very carefully planned so that pupils at different stages of learning are challenged and can appreciate that they are making progress by building on their previous learning. Teaching methods are imaginative and resources for learning are used very effectively. In particular, information and communication technology is used very well to support learning. Very skilful use of computer-driven whiteboards in classrooms engages pupils' attention so that they understand precisely what they are to learn. The computer suite is also used very well to support learning in different subjects. Because they are interested in their work, pupils work productively and so achieve well.
16. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning because they know that they are valued for what they can offer. This means that relationships are very good in lessons throughout the school and pupils co-operate fully in all aspects of the lesson. In whole-class discussions, they listen attentively, and they move quickly to new activities so that learning continues without interruption. Pupils have a very good capacity to work individually but also support each other very well in paired and group work. Very good attitudes to learning contribute very significantly to pupils' good

achievement. Pupils are keen to do well, but systems for tracking their progress and setting short-term targets to help them to make further progress are not sharp enough. Because of this, for example, a tendency to careless spelling and use of grammar has not been identified specifically as an area for improvement quickly enough.

17. Teaching assistants support learning very well, mostly, but not exclusively, with pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils are given extra support to enable them to be fully involved in all activities. Teachers plan work which is very well matched to their individual needs. Sensitive support from teaching assistants then enables them to make very good progress in their learning. Teaching assistants are thoroughly briefed and are alert to the needs of all pupils. They show good initiative in moving around the classroom to support pupils whenever a need arises.
18. Children entering the Reception Year are placed in the class which includes children in the Reception Year and pupils in Year 1. The teacher's skilful teaching enables them to settle quickly and to achieve well. She successfully adapts her teaching to serve the needs of the two age groups. This enables children in the Reception Year to quickly attain the standards expected nationally in most of the early learning goals designed for this age group, and to begin to work at levels beyond these goals. The area of learning where children are unlikely to exceed the early learning goals is physical development. This is because deficiencies in accommodation and resources make it difficult to teach all aspects of this area of learning effectively.
19. The quality of teaching has improved well since the school's previous inspection so that learning is now exciting and of very good quality. This is because the headteacher has developed a very effective team of colleagues throughout the school, all committed to giving all pupils the opportunity to learn successfully. This commitment places the school in a good position to improve standards further.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum is very good, being broad and balanced and effectively meeting the needs and interests of all pupils. It is greatly enhanced by the wide range of opportunities, including extra-curricular activities, which extend beyond the school day. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet pupils' needs. Learning resources are good but accommodation is unsatisfactory. All statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Innovations introduced to the curriculum since the previous inspection have made it more interesting, so promoting pupils' achievement.
- There are very good enrichment opportunities, which add a great deal to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Information and communication technology is used very well to support learning in other subjects.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory because the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage inhibits physical development, the hall is too small for physical education and toilet facilities for staff are grossly inadequate.

### **Commentary**

20. The school has successfully dealt with the key issues relating to the curriculum from the previous inspection. For example, provision in the Foundation Stage has been improved well so there is a better balance between the six areas of learning. There is more emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and they now achieve very well in this aspect. The provision for information and communication technology has been greatly improved, with the creation of a very well equipped computer suite. All pupils are timetabled to use the suite for three hours each week and, as a result, make very good progress and achieve standards well above those expected nationally. Information and communication technology is now planned into the curriculum very well to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
21. Innovations have added a new dimension to pupils' learning, making the curriculum more interesting and relevant to their needs. There are now 'curriculum fortnights' each year, in which all pupils' activities are linked to one topic which can be taught in depth. Some subjects are now taught intensively, which allows pupils a major period of study in the subjects chosen for that half term. For example, geography might be taught in depth for half a term, with history then being the focus for the following half term. There are more effective links between subjects so that pupils can use the skills acquired in one subject, to support their learning in others. Careful planning means that these initiatives successfully ensure that the skills required by the National Curriculum are still taught in a progressive and systematic way in all subjects. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the curriculum, particularly enjoying the 'curriculum fortnights' and their activities in information and communication technology.
22. Very good opportunities for enrichment mean that all pupils are able to take part in a wide range of experiences of good quality in art and design, drama and music. They are able to work with visitors, such as artists, musicians and theatre groups, to develop their skills through a broad range of activities. Pupils are also able to participate in a wide range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. Of particular note, is the way that staff and parents work well together to provide such experiences. These add further significant learning opportunities for pupils to enjoy so that they develop very well as individuals.
23. The curriculum has been thoughtfully planned to ensure that each pupil has equal access to all learning experiences. Within this framework, pupils' personal development is promoted very well. This is exemplified by very good support for those pupils with special educational needs. Their individual educational plans are monitored carefully, and modified as necessary, so that their individual needs are met. The high quality support of teaching assistants in lessons contributes positively to these pupils' learning. Throughout their time in school, all pupils are prepared very well for the next stages of their education.
24. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum and the way they work so well together mean that pupils' needs are very well met. Resources are of good quality and plentiful in all subjects, effectively supporting pupils' learning.
25. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. There are good features. For example, the new information and communication technology suite is very well equipped and has been a very effective addition, improving learning in information and communication technology and other curriculum areas. Outdoor areas are well maintained. However, the outdoor area for the Reception class is small, and restricts learning opportunities in physical development for children in the Foundation Stage. Most classrooms are of a suitable size for the delivery of the curriculum. However, the hall is far too small for the effective delivery of physical education lessons, particularly gymnastics and dance, and this inhibits pupils' achievement. Additionally, the hall is cluttered with tables and equipment, making movement for pupils in physical education potentially hazardous. The single staff toilet is grossly inadequate for the number of

adults working in school, particularly as the school is fortunate to have many volunteer helpers supporting pupils' learning throughout the week.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Good levels of support and guidance help pupils to develop into confident young people. The school involves all pupils well by seeking and acting on their views. Procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships ensure that all pupils are cared for and supported effectively and know that their opinions are valued.
- Good procedures for induction help pupils to settle in well.
- Pupils' academic and personal development is monitored well but targets set for further improvement are not sharp enough.

### **Commentary**

26. All adults in the school contribute to a very friendly and supportive atmosphere in which pupils flourish both personally and academically. All adults provide very good role models for pupils and this leads to a purposeful learning environment. Throughout the school, pupils are friendly and supportive of others, so that all have the confidence to ask questions and to raise issues in lessons. The recently re-launched school council is keen to discuss ideas to improve the school. Already, they have been discussing ways of improving the house-point system and to organise a fundraising event for 'comic relief'. Prior to the school council, an 'eco-committee' was active in improving the school's environment.
27. There are good procedures to enable the school to identify those pupils with special educational needs who need extra support, at an early stage. Ongoing assessments by teachers and teaching assistants contribute well to the regular reviews of these pupils' progress and guide the setting of new targets successfully. The school liaises well with outside agencies when extra support is required to meet the needs of these pupils.
28. The school ensures that regular health and safety checks are carried out and the governing body is involved in supporting these arrangements. Thorough procedures, including risk assessments, are firmly in place to promote a safe learning environment. However, during the inspection, a concern regarding safety was raised with the headteacher and the governing body. The school has addressed the problem. Through the personal, health and social education programme, there are very good opportunities to ensure that pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. Child protection procedures are well established, and the school is diligent in monitoring the welfare of its pupils.
29. Good induction procedures enable children to enjoy a smooth transition into the Reception class. The school has developed good links with the pre-school providers, particularly with the pre-school group that shares the school's site. Parents' questionnaires make it clear that they agree that procedures for induction are good, although there were some concerns over the procedures for termly entry into the Reception class. Prior to starting school, children are provided with weekly



opportunities to attend the Reception class and parents are provided with a helpful booklet about their child starting in school. This helps children to make very good progress in their learning from the start.

30. Day-to-day marking is thorough. All staff have a good knowledge of pupils' standards, and, given the very good relationships with pupils, there is a positive environment where pupils want to achieve well. Targets to help to guide pupils' personal development are often included in pupils' books and help to promote effective support. Academic targets are included in pupils' work in English, mathematics and science to help to guide their learning. However, they are sometimes not sharp enough to be fully effective. For example, pupils are not given specific targets to improve standards in writing and for recording the findings of their experiments.
31. The school's provision for pupils' care, guidance and support has remained good since its previous inspection. Good levels of care are central to the school's ethos and are a major factor in pupils' good achievement.

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

The school's partnership with parents is very good. Links with other schools and the local community are also very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' views of the school and their level of involvement are extremely favourable, although a minority of parents have some concerns.
- Links with the local community, and with primary and secondary schools, are very good.
- Parents are very well informed about school activities and their children's progress.

### **Commentary**

32. Parental views, collected through the parents' meeting and parents' questionnaires, show they are impressively pleased with most aspects of the school. Parents regularly and willingly offer their services to the school. A large number of parents and volunteers help on a daily basis to listen to pupils read and this helps pupils to make good progress. Parents also enjoy assisting with extra-curricular activities. In addition, during some weekends, parents help to improve the environment for pupils; for example, considerable effort has gone into improving the Reception class's outdoor area. This reflects parents' commitment to supporting the school's efforts. The MSPA (Mellis School Parents' Association) is very active in fundraising and providing opportunities for the school and community to work together.
33. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in their children's learning and this supports their progress effectively. Parents are kept fully informed of their progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and involved in setting new targets.
34. The school has developed very good links with the community. Local residents are invited to talk to pupils about their neighbouring community and a good partnership exists with the nearby churches. Although limited opportunities exist, local industries and farms are involved in supporting the school's learning. The school is involved in

village life, for example, in the fete and the parish magazine. Very good links exist with the secondary school, to which most pupils transfer, and with the other primary schools within the cluster. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to mix with those from other primary schools in the cluster through sporting competitions and other activities. Before moving to secondary school, the feeder primary schools are invited to a residential camp. This helps pupils to make many new friends before they transfer.

35. The school provides parents with information of very high quality. The very detailed and well-illustrated prospectus provides clear and helpful guidance. Newsletters are sent out regularly and provide useful information on events and activities. Termly topic advice included in newsletters is detailed and provides parents with useful information to enable them to support their children's learning. Pupils' annual reports include an appropriately detailed analysis of their progress and targets for improvement. They include very detailed information on pupils' attainment against national averages, enabling parents to understand their children's progress clearly. The school provides regular curriculum evenings, for example, on mathematics, and on understanding the testing procedures at the end of Years 2 and 6. This high quality regular information ensures that parents are fully involved in the school and in their children's learning. The headteacher is available to parents at the start and end of the school day, and parents appreciate the opportunity to chat to him informally and to raise any issues or concerns.
36. Links with parents have been maintained at a very high level since the school was inspected previously and are a significant element in supporting pupils' learning. Parents hold the school in very high regard, as is clear from the fact that many families are from out of the school's immediate area and choose to have their children educated here.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and his colleagues are providing very good leadership and the governing body is very effective.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's very good leadership has created a positive, forward-looking and innovative school.
- The school is successful because pupils and adults all feel valued.
- Learning is managed very effectively overall.
- Governors have a very secure grasp of the school's strengths and potential for development.
- Finances are managed very well and the school applies the principles of best value very effectively.

### **Commentary**

37. The headteacher's very effective leadership has enabled the school to improve well since its previous inspection. The key issues from that inspection were dealt with effectively and, since then, the school has improved its facilities and resources well. In particular, the development of the computer suite and the introduction of computer-driven whiteboards into classrooms have enabled teachers to plan lessons which interest pupils and engage their attention, so that they work with sustained

concentration and, often, with real enthusiasm. This enthusiasm is also evident when pupils discuss the 'curriculum fortnights'. Each year, the school devotes two weeks to a particular area of the curriculum, for example, design and technology, so that pupils can work in depth, supported by parents and visiting experts. This is a very good example of innovative leadership offering pupils learning experiences of high quality.

38. All adults in the school support the headteacher's vision for the school, which is to offer all pupils the opportunity to be successful in their learning while developing into confident and caring young people, able to take their place comfortably in society. This ambition for pupils to be successful means that standards are generally well above average in the national tests at the end of Year 2, and above average overall at the end of Year 6. Over the last five years, the school's rate of improvement in these tests has exceeded the national average. The headteacher rightly recognises that his teachers and teaching assistants are his major resource. He has created very effective teams of adults which support learning very well. They are willing to give of their best because they feel valued in the school. In turn, they ensure that all pupils feel valued for what they can offer. This means that the school has a cohesiveness and unity of purpose which create a positive and challenging environment for all pupils so that they achieve well.
39. With a small number of teachers, individuals carry responsibility for more than one subject. Further, recent staff changes have disrupted arrangements for subject leadership. Very effective leadership and management have meant that these changes have not had an adverse effect and subjects are managed very well. For example, the relatively new English subject leader has analysed difficulties in the subject, for instance, regarding the accuracy of pupils' writing, and is putting strategies in place to deal with them. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are also very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that pupils who need extra support are identified early and ongoing assessments of their progress are used well to meet their needs. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring pupils' progress. However, the headteacher recognises that there is scope for these to be used with greater focus on the needs of individual pupils to set regular short-term targets to help them to make further progress.
40. Governors have a high profile in the school and a number visit and support learning regularly. As a result, governors have a very good appreciation of the school's strengths and potential for development. Because they know the school well, they ensure that it meets legal requirements. Governors are involved in the strategic development of the school by monitoring the progress of the school improvement plan. However, they and the headteacher recognise that this probably contains too many objectives for a school of this size and that this needs addressing by dividing objectives into short-term ones for completion in the current year, and longer-term ones for future years.
41. Governors are also aware of the need for the school to manage its finances well in order to give pupils an education of high quality. Finances are managed very effectively on a day-to-day basis by the school's administrative assistant. Arrangements for purchasing and paying for resources are straightforward and effective. The school had a large carry forward figure at the end of the last financial year because substantial sums were received towards the end of the year. These have been used very sensibly for planned building work and further developing information and communication technology resources. Governors are very aware of

the importance of practising the principles of best value. With this in mind, they have planned for an increased number of teaching assistants, improvements to the school's accommodation, and upgrading information and communication technology resources. They rightly believe that this is ensuring that pupils receive an education of very high quality. This is very good implementation of the principles of best value.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	317,102
Total expenditure	348,111
Expenditure per pupil	3,193

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	77,473
Balance carried forward to the next year	46,464

42. Given pupils' good achievement, their very good personal development, very good teaching and learning, and very good leadership and management, the school gives very good value for money, even though its costs per pupil are slightly above average. This is because the headteacher's innovative and purposeful leadership has created an impressive unity of purpose throughout the school. This means that the school is in a good position to improve further.

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

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

Provision for the 14 children in the Reception Year, who share a classroom with 15 Year 1 pupils, is good. The school has three intakes per year and three more children will join the class after Easter. No children in the Reception Year have special educational needs or speak English as a second language. Attainment on entry to school in the current year is above average. The majority of children enter school already achieving most of the expected goals in all areas of learning. Children make good progress, building well on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding. They are already achieving the goals that are expected nationally for their age in all areas except physical development, and are able to work on National Curriculum levels.

The quality of teaching and learning for these children is good overall with very good teaching in communication, language and literacy, and satisfactory teaching in physical development. This is because of deficiencies in the provision. Good progress has been made in addressing a weakness in planning. As a result, all learning experiences are now linked effectively to national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. The overall learning environment is good.

Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall. There is a qualified teacher and two teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to children's learning. Provision for the transition from home to school is very good and procedures to monitor children's progress are good. The school has excellent links with the local pre-school playgroup which the majority of children attend. Good progress has been made in addressing a previous weakness in planning. All learning experiences are now well linked to national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. However, whilst the school has developed the outdoor area since the previous inspection, it is still unsatisfactory. There are no opportunities for climbing, swinging, sliding and balancing in the outdoor area, and there is a lack of challenging play activities. However, on occasions, children in the Reception Year have opportunities to use a nearby area for some climbing and swinging activities. A few bikes and a scooter have been bought and children enjoy using these, but some are too small to challenge the children and extend their physical skills.

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The co-ordinator has completely re-designed the classroom and the school has made good progress in addressing the key issue identified in the previous report regarding planning their personal, social and emotional development.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- The quality of teaching is good, and as a result, children achieve well and make good progress.
- Children form very good relationships with adults.

## Commentary

43. The majority of children enter the school with mature personal and social development for their age. They continue to build well on their prior attainment and the majority are already exceeding the expected goals. Good planning and organisation ensure that children experience enjoyable and challenging activities which promote this area of learning very effectively. All children have a positive attitude to school life because they establish a very good relationship with adult helpers. They work well alongside others and develop a sensitive awareness of the needs of others, sharing and taking turns. Good teaching ensures that children have good opportunities to consider the feelings of others. They are able to suggest ways to make other children happy, for example, by inviting them to play with them in the playground. There are good opportunities for children to develop independence and decision-making skills, for example, by suggesting possible ideas for the Cinderella drama role-play. Behaviour and attitudes are very good because all adults communicate clear guidelines and the class's 'golden rules' are clearly explained.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a very positive attitude to books and make good progress in learning to read because teaching is very good.
- There are very good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.
- Drama activities are used well in communication skills.

## Commentary

44. The majority of children are already achieving the expected goals but very good teaching and learning ensure that they continue to build effectively on their prior attainment. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are very good. Children are encouraged to articulate their feelings and they are all able to speak confidently and competently for their age, explaining reasons why things are as they are. For example, "I feel happy because I am going to football tonight." When challenged to explain how Cinderella was feeling, they were able to identify that she felt sad and gave reasons why. They are eager to contribute to discussion and use a wide range of vocabulary, including words such as 'opaque', 'hypothesis' and 'impressive' in the correct context. Children respond very well to visitors and answer questions confidently, speaking in the past tense when talking about things that have happened in the past.
45. Children have a very positive attitude to books and stories. Joy and wrapt concentration was evident on every face as the teacher read the story of Cinderella. They are all well launched in reading and make good progress in learning to read because reading skills are taught very well and there are very good opportunities for children to take books home. Parents make a significant contribution by attending regularly during the morning sessions to hear children read. Children talk about books that they have read at home and recall the events that they particularly like. For example, "I like it because it is funny." Average children talk about the characters and are competent readers. Lower-attaining children read single words and are able to

explain the events of the story. Close examination of work shows that children develop handwriting skills well and write simple sentences with capital letters and full stops.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are high and children make good progress in building on their prior attainment.
- Teaching and learning are good and children respond well to high expectations, although there is scope for greater challenge for higher-attaining children.

### **Commentary**

46. Children are already achieving the expected goals and are working on National Curriculum levels. They have a good knowledge of numbers for their age and the majority identify the components of numbers over ten. The quality of teaching is good and support staff make a very good contribution to learning. Children recognise and write numbers well. They are fully challenged in teacher-directed activities but there is scope for greater challenge in informal activities which would enrich the provision. All children recognise and identify basic shapes and have a good understanding of comparative size.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have a good knowledge and understanding of the wider world and adults build well on this prior knowledge.
- There are good opportunities to use the computer.

### **Commentary**

47. Children are already achieving the expected goals in this area of learning and good teaching builds well on their prior knowledge and understanding. There are good opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the wider world. All children have a good understanding of the passage of time. The majority are able to name their birthday day and month. They speak in the past tense when referring to events that happened in the past, for example, when talking about toys they used as babies. A higher-attaining child knew that his great grandfather had played with an old sailing boat. Children are able to identify different materials and they know that children years ago did not have plastic toys. They have a good understanding of location for their age and higher-attaining children know they live in Suffolk. The majority know that they live in Mellis. One child said, "I feel happy because the day after tomorrow I will be going to Spain for my holiday." They mention places such as Spain and Australia as holiday destinations. The computer is used well to reinforce learning and all children have good skills with the mouse and keyboard.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Opportunities to develop a broad range of physical skills are limited in the outdoor play area.
- The hall is too small and opportunities to move freely and explore space are limited.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and not as good as in other areas of learning because of the constraints of the accommodation.

#### **Commentary**

48. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and this reflects satisfactory teaching and learning overall. By the end of the year, they are all likely to achieve the expected goals because there are very good opportunities to take part in activities after school. Children all change independently for lessons in the hall, but opportunities to move freely, so developing a sense of direction, space and speed, are limited by the size of the hall, which is too small for the number of children. When all the children are in the hall they only have about a metre of space each and they are unable to stretch out without touching others. Teaching is inhibited and the teacher has to use methods inappropriate for young children because of safety aspects such as observing children performing a curled and stretched movement one at a time. This results in periods of inactivity during lessons. Standards are at the expected level for children of this age and all children link movements together, for example, a curl and a stretched movement. Opportunities to develop physical skills in the outdoor area are also hampered by the size of the space and limited range of resources. Some bikes and scooters are too small and there are no opportunities to develop aiming skills. However, children are provided with enough opportunities to increase their small-scale physical skills by using tools such as pencils, scissors and paintbrushes.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

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

- Opportunities to develop music skills are good.
- There are good opportunities to use and develop imagination in the role-play and drama activities.
- Teaching is good and children build well on their prior attainment.

#### **Commentary**

49. Children make good gains in learning to play percussion instruments and to develop their listening skills and appreciation of music. They are taught by a specialist music teacher once a week and, during these sessions, good teaching ensures that they develop their singing skills and learn a broad range of songs. They know how to play percussion instruments correctly and suggest ways to accompany the song with percussion sound and movements. Drama and role-play are used well for children to extend their imaginations. For example, they were challenged to suggest actions and phrases for the characters in the drama sketch to show Cinderella going to the ball.



Children have good opportunities to use clay and good teaching guides them well in the making of houses. There is an appropriate role-play area and children use their imaginations well in the 'estate agent's shop'.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Very good teaching results in lively, interesting lessons and good achievement.
- Standards in Year 6 are depressed by careless spelling and use of grammar and boys' standards have been well below those of girls for the last two years.
- Work is marked thoroughly, but assessment is not used sufficiently rigorously and systematically to raise standards and improve achievement.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Other subjects are used very well to develop literacy skills.

#### **Commentary**

50. In recent years, standards in reading and writing have consistently been well above average at the end of Year 2. In 2002 and 2003 in reading and in 2002 in writing, standards, as measured in the national tests at the end of Year 2, were in the top five per cent of all schools in the country. Overall, standards have been well above those found in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. In contrast, standards at the end of Year 6 in English have been average in three out of the last four years, and have generally been lower than standards in mathematics and science.
51. The quality of teaching in the subject is very good. Teachers prepare interesting lessons which fully engage pupils' attention so that they put a very good amount of effort into their work and achieve well overall. For example, in an excellent lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils were writing their own 'rap poetry'. This had totally caught their imagination so that they worked with real enthusiasm and sustained concentration. Work was carefully structured so that pupils at different stages of learning all had good levels of challenge which enabled them to build on their existing standards. Very purposeful teaching and a very brisk pace resulted in excellent achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are supported very well.
52. Very high quality teaching means that pupils contribute very well to all aspects of the lesson. As a result, their speaking and listening skills are well above average. Reading is also above average because pupils read regularly both in school and at home, and reading is very well supported by parents. Many parents support the school very well in the reading that their children do at home; in addition, a number of parents volunteer to hear pupils reading each morning in school. By Year 2, writing is generally well above average with accurate spelling and grammar. Pupils' ability to write at length is being developed systematically and there are good examples of creative and imaginative writing. Handwriting is mostly neat and legible with clear evidence of improvement over time. By Year 6, pupils write for a wide range of

purposes and, here too, there are good examples of creative and imaginative writing. Pupils' understanding of how to make their writing lively and meaningful for the reader is developed systematically. However, the standard of pupils' writing is depressed by careless spelling and use of grammar. For example, a higher-attaining pupil had spelled three commonly used words incorrectly in one brief paragraph. Further, although grammar was basically sound, the use of apostrophes was inconsistent.

53. Work is marked thoroughly and regularly, but in Year 6, there are insufficient pointers as to how pupils might improve their work. Targets for improvement first appeared in books in November. In contrast, in Year 2 books, there are very effective suggestions to help pupils to improve their work. There is scope for assessment to be used more rigorously to set short-term targets for improvement for individual pupils and to monitor progress towards these targets so that further targets can be set.
54. The subject leader has had this responsibility for less than a year. She appreciates that standards will not rise by the time that pupils leave the school until accuracy in writing is improved. She has introduced strategies to improve pupils' spelling, but, as yet, they are not used sufficiently systematically. She appreciates that, in the national tests at the end of Year 6, boys' standards have been very considerably below those of girls. She has introduced materials to create greater interest for boys with a view to improving the quality of their writing. There are signs that these strategies are beginning to have an effect, but it will take time for them to become fully effective. These sensible measures are putting the subject in a good position to raise standards.

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

55. Other subjects are used very well to improve pupils' literacy skills. Speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively in all subjects, and pupils are given frequent opportunities to read aloud and so to improve their standards. Different types of writing are practised very effectively in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education. Information and communication technology is used very well to support English. For example, in a very good lesson for Years 2 and 3, pupils were using a computer program to investigate how to present text in 'speech bubbles'. This actively created great enthusiasm so that they achieved very well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above average by the time pupils leave the school and their achievement is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school, although numeracy skills are not developed systematically in other subjects.
- Systems to check on pupils' progress are very good.
- Leadership and management are excellent.

### **Commentary**

56. Standards are well above average throughout the school and achievement is very good. Standards are also well above those found in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. All pupils from all groups and abilities are doing well

because planning takes account of their present levels of performance and monitoring identifies those who are not making the progress that they could. Clear action is taken to help these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers and they benefit from very good quality support. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

57. Improvement has been good since the school was inspected previously. The marking of pupils' work has improved significantly and there is now a good system to check pupils' progress and attainment. The school has improved the number of higher grades achieved because clear targets are set and pupils are effectively challenged. There are very good opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to attend weekend and termly courses. Resources are very good and are well used to help all pupils.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall with instances of excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are very well planned with a range of interesting and challenging activities. The main learning thrust of the lesson is shared effectively with pupils so they know what is expected of them. In the excellent lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made impressive progress in learning how to investigate the smallest and largest amounts of a fraction by using decimals. Tasks were set to challenge groups at different stages of learning within the same class and this contributed to the excellent progress made by all pupils during the lesson. In Years 2 and 3, very good teaching ensured that all pupils confidently used a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Teachers used the computer-driven white-board well to help pupils to learn to calculate amounts of money.
59. Very good teaching ensures that all pupils develop a positive and confident attitude to numeracy because they are all challenged effectively and teachers constantly reinforce and check learning. Lessons are always conducted at a brisk pace and are very well planned. Lessons are challenging with very clear explanations and skilful use of questions. Pupils are very productive, working with a good deal of enjoyment and high levels of concentration. As a result, they achieve very well.
60. The leadership and management of mathematics are excellent. The subject leader is enthusiastic, experienced and very well organised. Test results are analysed carefully and there is thorough monitoring of teaching and learning. Areas to develop are established clearly once any weaknesses are identified. Resources for mathematics are very good and easily accessible.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Mathematics is used well in all classes to support other areas of the curriculum. Many of these links involve information and communication technology. There is, however, no systematically planned development of the subject in these other areas of the curriculum. The school has identified this as an area for development.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good, helping pupils to achieve well and to reach very high standards.
- The curriculum is planned effectively to develop pupils' learning through practical activities.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils are not sufficiently rigorous.

### **Commentary**

62. In recent years, the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds have been above or well above average. Teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 have also been high. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at standards well above those expected for their age. During their time in the school, these pupils have made good progress and achieved well.
63. Since the previous inspection, the school has concentrated on improving the teaching of investigational skills in science. This has proved successful and pupils of all abilities, particularly higher attainers, are now given work which challenges them more effectively. Pupils are taught to make systematic observations and measurements and then to record their findings in a range of ways. To improve the quality of their conclusions to experiments, pupils are encouraged to discuss what their findings tell them. This was evident, for example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, in which they were challenged to distinguish between a scientific explanation for their results and a description of what had gone on. The expertise of the teacher enabled pupils to make good progress in this aspect of science.
64. Teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully to link with pupils' own experiences and to build on previous learning. Because of this, pupils are able to use their existing scientific knowledge and understanding to support the learning of new ideas. These ideas are explained and demonstrated well so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to set about their work. This was evident, for example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 2 and 3 on learning about how muscles in the human body help us to move. The activities were interesting and questioning was effective in developing pupils' appreciation that muscles work in pairs. Pupils are encouraged to use accurate scientific terminology when answering questions and communicating their ideas. This extends their personal and their scientific vocabulary well. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive a high proportion of direct teaching. When linked to the high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance, this results in them having a good work rate and being productive. Pupils clearly enjoy their work in science and have very positive attitudes to their learning, which contribute to the good progress that they make.
65. The work of the subject leader has had a very positive effect on the improvements made in the teaching of investigational skills. She has helped colleagues to develop pupils' logical thinking skills during their experiments. Curriculum planning has been improved so that higher-attaining pupils are now involved in activities which enable them to gain the higher levels in the subject. This is reflected in the much higher standards being reached by pupils in Year 6. The curriculum also makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as they are often given good opportunities to work collaboratively during their experiments. The 'curriculum fortnight' initiative enhances learning in the subject, with the latest whole-school topic being a scientific one, centred on healthy living. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and to refine their literacy and numeracy skills. Information and communication technology is also used very well to enable pupils to enhance and support their scientific learning. Assessment procedures are secure but not exact enough to enable

the school to track the progress of individual pupils precisely and to set regular targets for improvement.

66. Since the previous inspection, there has been very good improvement, particularly in developing the curriculum to enable higher-attaining pupils to achieve to their full potential. The school has the capability to build further on this success.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and this helps pupils to achieve high standards.
- The computer suite is used very well to develop information and communication technology skills and to enhance learning in other subjects.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Assessment procedures to track the progress of individual pupils and set targets for future progress are not yet precise enough.

### **Commentary**

67. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards well beyond those expected for their age. This shows that they achieve very well and make very good progress during their time in school.
68. The school has successfully dealt with the key issue from the previous inspection for improving provision and raising standards in ICT. Central to this improvement has been the creation and very effective use of a computer suite. All pupils are timetabled to use the suite for at least three hours a week. One session is to develop specific ICT skills, while the other two are aimed at using ICT to enhance work in English and mathematics. Training has been provided to improve the expertise of staff in teaching the subject. Because of these developments, pupils' progress has accelerated and they now achieve standards which are well above those expected.
69. Basic skills are taught very well, with good subject knowledge enabling teachers to demonstrate new ideas and techniques in a confident manner. In so doing, they use the computer-driven whiteboard in the suite very well during the introductions and conclusions to lessons. This provides pupils with a good visual focus and a clear understanding of what they are to do. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together so that all pupils have a high proportion of direct teaching. As a result, pupils have a high work rate and are productive when using computers. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, when they were learning how to make information in databases more visual. The lesson built effectively on previous work on databases. This enabled pupils to use existing knowledge to make very good progress in creating a range of multi-coloured graphs and charts to present the information. Lessons are planned very well to maintain pupils' interest and concentration and to support work in other subjects. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in the computer suite for pupils in Years 2 and 3. The teacher's expertise and the challenging computer program used helped pupils to make very good progress in understanding how to add money and to record their findings. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra support, which enables them to have full access to all activities.
70. The subject leader's teaching provides a very good role model for others and her expertise enables her to give effective support and advice to colleagues. The curriculum is planned very well so that ICT is integrated effectively into the teaching and learning of other subjects. Resources have been greatly improved and are now good. There are plans in place to add three more computer-driven whiteboards in classrooms and to double the number of computers in the suite. Assessment arrangements are good but are not precise enough to enable the school to track the progress of individual pupils effectively and to set them targets

for improvement. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and show a lot of interest and enjoyment when working on computers. This is an important factor in the very good progress that they make.

71. It is evident that improvement since the previous inspection has been very good and that the school has the potential to improve further on its existing good quality provision.

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

72. There are very good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects. In English, pupils use word processing packages to add interest to their writing, varying the style, size and colour of font. In history, the Internet is used well to research information. PowerPoint presentations are used well in geography, for example, in the work of pupils in Year 6 when illustrating their studies of the River Ganges. In mathematics and science, pupils confidently create a range of graphs to help them to present their findings.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

The provision in geography is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above those expected for pupils of this age.
- The subject is well planned and very good use is made of other curriculum areas to enrich learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

#### **Commentary**

73. Standards are above those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. During the inspection, very good teaching was observed. Since the previous inspection, standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved from average to above average.
74. The planning of learning is very good and, because of this, pupils make good gains in developing their geographical skills. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 develop their map work skills very well in finding out about settlements, for example, identifying Ordnance Survey symbols and creating their own when they make their own maps. They are able to use maps and globes well to locate the position of Mellis, Suffolk, England and Europe on world maps and globes.
75. Very good teaching contributes to the standards achieved. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use time well. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teachers' enthusiasm was reflected in pupils' very positive response to the lesson.
76. Other subjects, for example, literacy, mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, and personal, social and health education and citizenship, are used very well to enrich learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigated the local area and used the Internet to find out names of villages and towns near Mellis such as Bury St Edmunds. Pupils have used PowerPoint programs to 'tour' Mellis and find out about land use. There are very good opportunities for pupils to suggest how the land can be used. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have

investigated the views of the people of Diss on possible changes to their town. Pupils in Year 6 have completed a PowerPoint presentation showing the development of rivers.

77. The leadership and management of geography are good. There is a clear plan to develop the subject and the subject leader has worked hard to develop the range of resources. The subject contributes well to pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy.

## **HISTORY**

The provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above those expected for pupils of this age.
- The subject is well managed and very good use is made of other subjects to enrich learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

### **Commentary**

78. Standards are above those expected for pupils of their age in Years 2 and 6, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. History features well in the curriculum and the planning of learning is very good. As they move through the school, pupils progress through a carefully-planned curriculum, which enables them to learn about significant people, places and events from both the recent and more distant past, and to use different sources of information to help them to investigate the past. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was either good or very good in the lessons observed. Since the previous inspection, standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved from average to above average.
79. Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school. Year 1 pupils have a good understanding of why certain materials were used to make toys years ago and why no toys were made of plastic. Design and technology is used well to enhance understanding, and pupils have enjoyed making peg dolls to show how poorer people made their own dolls in the past. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 used their literacy skills well to prepare a display of Viking artefacts for a museum. They wrote about the tools and clothes used and explained facts about Viking crafts, pottery, clothes, trades and trading activities. Information and communication technology is used well to research information. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used the Internet to research information about the Tudors.
80. There are attractive history displays around the school and artefacts and resources enhance the displays. Visitors into school and visits to places of interest are planned well to enrich learning. The subject leader manages the subject well. There is a clear action plan to develop the subject and the school has worked hard to improve the resources and artefacts available.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show respect for different religions but do not have opportunities to get direct experience of faiths other than Christianity.
- The use of information and communication technology and literacy to enhance learning is developing well.
- Leadership and management are good.

### **Commentary**

81. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are typical of those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, and achievement is satisfactory. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Since the previous inspection, standards and the quality of teaching and learning have been maintained.
82. Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. An analysis of pupils' work shows a sound balance of learning about Christianity and other major faiths. Pupils develop a basic understanding and sensitivity to different religious beliefs and show respect for other people's religions. In Year 1, pupils learn to recognise kindness and suggest ways be kind to each other. They know that the Bible contains rules and guidance to help us to live our lives. In Years 3 and 4, pupils made very good gains in their learning about the festival of Divali because the teaching was very good. Pupils in Year 6 have a basic knowledge of other faiths and discuss differences between Christianity and Islam satisfactorily. Group work is used well; for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced posters to show the five pillars of Islam. They know that Muslims wash before reading the Qu'ran and remove their shoes before entering the mosque. Pupils in Year 6 discuss differences in places of worship, festivals, food and prayer satisfactorily. They have a sound knowledge of the life of Jesus Christ.
83. Good teaching ensures that other subjects such as literacy, design and technology, and information and communication technology are used well to enhance learning. Pupils have used the Internet to find out about other religions. Learning is related soundly to their own lives and pupils have written about their own 'milestones in life'. There are visits to the local church but visits to a range of different places of worship are limited. There are currently no visitors from other faiths.
84. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and has worked hard to improve the range of resources and artefacts since the previous inspection.

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

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled.



## **Art and design**

85. The subject has a high profile in the school. This is illustrated by the way the subject leader was asked by the local education authority to submit work for a case study of good practice for a government publication. Evidence from work on display shows that pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is enriched because pupils have opportunities to work with local artists. In so doing, pupils have used a range of materials to create very good quality multimedia images, for example, of the pond on Mellis Common. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' artistic ideas by studying the work of famous artists. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have created geometric compositions based on the work and style of Kandinski. There are good links to other subjects, with art packages in information and communication technology being used effectively to develop pupils' skills. The displays of artwork around the school are of very good quality. This is a reflection of the care that pupils take in their work and the way that staff value their efforts.

## **Design and technology**

86. The curriculum is planned well to give pupils opportunities to design, make and evaluate a wide range of products. They are encouraged to practise finishing techniques to improve the quality of their product and are allowed to experiment with different ways of joining materials. This is seen, for example, in the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have used topstitching to add felt animal motifs to their drawstring bags. There are good links with other subjects, particularly science. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used their scientific knowledge and understanding of simple electrical circuits to design and make a torch. In so doing, they have incorporated a contact switch to turn the bulb on and off. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning, for example, by using a digital camera to photograph and chart the different stages of the design and making process. Pupils have access to a wide range of materials and equipment when carrying out their activities.

## **Music**

87. Music has a high profile in the school with pupils being given opportunities for regular performances. In addition to prestigious public performances such as the recent visit to the festival at the Snape Maltings, pupils perform confidently in the whole-school assemblies each Monday. Instrumental groups, including recorder groups and the choir, are supported well by staff and parents. Whole-school singing in assembly is enthusiastic and mostly tuneful, although some have a tendency to get ahead of the beat. Both gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs are very effectively supported by a visiting teacher in extending their musical skills. Pupils have very good opportunities to combine music with drama and dance. They experience some music from non-western cultures, for example, Caribbean music, and have some resources which represent music from different cultures. The use of a commercial scheme ensures that the National Curriculum is covered and there is good use of information and communication technology to support learning. Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum in music.

## **Physical education**

88. Standards in swimming are above average and pupils have a range of opportunities in physical education both within the National Curriculum and in clubs after school. There are opportunities for competitive experience against other local schools and some external coaching, for example, in rugby. The school is part of a national initiative for physical education with the local high school, and this enhances pupils'

experiences. Parents support after-school clubs well, which gives pupils further opportunities for physical activities of good quality. The subject is very well resourced and pupils have access to equipment at play times and lunchtimes. There is a good hard play area for outdoor physical education and a good field, although this soon becomes too muddy to use in winter. The hall is much too small for gymnastics or dance and a health and safety issue arises with other equipment, for example, photocopiers, being sited there. Plans are in place to replace the hall, but no date has yet been set.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The timetabled programme makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop fully their personal and social skills, self-awareness and understanding of citizenship.

### **COMMENTARY**

89. Personal, social and health education and citizenship is seen as a central part of the curriculum. The subject is led and managed very well and the subject leader has a full overview of the school's work in this area. Teachers' plans have been monitored and some sampling of pupils' work has taken place. As a result, the subject leader knows clearly how well the subject is being delivered. Regular personal, health and social education lessons are timetabled with good opportunities for whole-class discussions. Religious education lessons support the development of personal, health and social education well. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss issues with spiritual, moral, social and cultural implications and so become sensitive to the views of others. They appreciate that these views need to be treated with respect even though an individual pupil's views may be different. Lesson planning appropriately includes sex education for older pupils, in which they learn about body changes in puberty, the importance of relationships, and of the dangers of drugs and other substances. Topics discussed in lessons help pupils' personal development by enabling them to understand that others have views, which need to be valued and respected. In a Year 5/6 lesson, for example, pupils learned how to recognise the risks present in a particular situation, and discussed them sensibly, valuing each other's views.
90. The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Regular opportunities for whole-class discussions successfully promote pupils' speaking and listening skills and help them to appreciate and respect the views of others. Their opinions and views are valued and taken seriously so that they develop confidence and a positive self-image. For example, a Year 2/3 personal, health and social education lesson on managing friendships was well delivered and pupils openly discussed the issues. The school council and the many opportunities to take responsibilities around the school enable pupils to develop very good citizenship skills.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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