

INSPECTION REPORT

**SIR ROBERT HITCHAM'S CHURCH OF
ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Framlingham, near Woodbridge

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124775

Headteacher: Mrs J Elphick

Lead inspector: Mr N Sherman
Dates of inspection: 28th February – 3rd March 2005

Inspection number: 267672
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	305
School address:	College Road Framlingham Woodbridge Suffolk
Postcode:	IP13 9EP
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend M Vipond
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sir Robert Hitcham's Church of England Primary School is in the centre of Framlingham, a market town in the county of Suffolk. Most pupils come from families who live within the parish, although some pupils come from other small villages further afield. With 305 pupils on the school roll, this school is larger than the average primary school. Numbers have increased since the previous inspection. The school benefits from generally favourable social circumstances. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average, as is the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none of these pupils needs additional assistance with learning English. This is low in comparison with other schools nationally. The annual turnover of pupils is low. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002 and an award for the Best Practice in sharing information and communication technology (ICT) in 2004. Overall, attainment on entry to the Nursery is just below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16493	Neville Sherman	Lead inspector	Mathematics, ICT, art and design, English as an additional language.
9163	Geoffrey Humphrey	Lay inspector	
30573	Sonia Bosworth	Team inspector	Science, Foundation Stage curriculum, music, design and technology, physical education and personal, social and health education and citizenship.
29688	Mike Brammer	Team inspector	English, history, geography, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It provides the pupils with a very high quality of education. By the time pupils leave the school standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is very good. High achievement is a result of very good teaching and a rich and varied curriculum. The school is very well led. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in many subjects.
- Teaching is very good overall and basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught extremely well.
- Provision for ICT is excellent and pupils have a first-rate understanding of the part new technologies increasingly play in their daily lives.
- The school is very effectively led and managed by the headteacher, and the pace of change since the previous inspection has been marked.
- Pupils are very good learners and respond well to teachers' high expectations
- The curriculum is very well planned and supplemented extremely well by rich and varied activities beyond the classroom.
- There are a small number of health and safety issues that need to be tackled.

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. The key issues from the last report have been effectively tackled. In addition, the school has significantly raised the standards and the level of achievement by pupils in a considerable number of subjects. Further significant improvements have been made in teaching, the curriculum and in how ICT is used to support pupils in their day-to-day learning. Provision for ICT is outstanding. The school is very well placed to maintain its high level of provision and improve still further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

Key: A* - very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

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

Overall, achievement is **very good**. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are average. Standards in ICT are well above national expectations.

The table above shows that at the end of Year 6 in 2004 standards were very high in English and in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. In mathematics and science, standards

were well above average. When the results are compared with schools whose pupils performed similarly in national tests when they were in Year 2, the pupils' performance was well above average in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings indicate that standards are well above average in all three subjects. Overall achievement is very good. Standards in ICT are very high and far above those expected for 11-year-olds. Standards in art and design and music are well above expectations and above expectations in history. Pupils achieve very well in these subjects.

Provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Spiritual development is excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and work well with one another. Behaviour is very good and pupils relate well with one another. Attendance is well above average and punctuality levels are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Pupils are provided with a **very good** quality of education. Teaching is **very good** overall. It is very rarely less than good and there is a high proportion of very good teaching evident in all year groups. Basic skills are taught extremely well. The school makes creative use of ICT to extend pupils' learning. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and work hard to apply their skills. Assessment procedures are detailed and the information is used well to guide and support pupils' learning. The curriculum is very good and teachers plan a rich and varied programme of extension activities in the form of trips, visits and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for on a day-to-day basis and all staff have a good knowledge of them on a personal level. There are, however, a number of health and safety issues that have not been tackled sufficiently by the governors. Links with the wider community are very good and play a valuable part in the high levels of achievement at the school. The links with the school's educational partners are excellent. The school enjoys the full and broad support of the parents and links with parents are good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

There is **very good** leadership of the school. The headteacher knows the school very well and all who work with her share her high aspirations for the pupils. Her very effective yet sensitive leadership of the school has secured many improvements since the previous inspection and her enthusiasm for seeking ways to continually to improve the school is infectious. The management of the school is good and all staff have a good understanding of the day-to-day routines. The leadership of key staff is good. The work of the school is regularly monitored, although there is scope to provide more regular opportunities for the co-ordinators for English and mathematics to directly monitor day-to-day teaching. The governance of the school is good and the governing body has effective procedures in place to enable it to get a clear idea of what the school provides for pupils. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have generally positive views of the school and many support their children in their learning at home and in school. Although a number of parents expressed some concerns about the way in which the school deals with issues in respect of bullying and in the degree of information provided for them about their children's progress, inspection evidence points to a much more favourable provision in these areas. However, inspectors do agree with parental perspectives in terms of various matters with regards to the health and safety of the pupils and these have been brought to the attention of the governors. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about what the school provides for them and the very high participation rates in the extra-curricular life of the school are testimony to this.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are very few areas for improvement that the school has not already identified in its school improvement plan. However, the issues brought to the attention of the governors in respect of certain health and safety issues need to be tackled.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, and subjects

Overall, the pupils' achievement is **very good**. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and very good overall in Years 3-6. Standards at the end of Year 6 are **well above average** in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in ICT is **very high** at both key stages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school.
- Boys perform far better in English than in other schools nationally.
- Pupils are very confident speakers and listeners.
- Standards in ICT are particularly high.
- The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in raising standards.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Children's attainment when they join the school in the nursery is just below average, and stronger in relation to their overall social development. The children achieve well in the nursery and are well prepared for full time education when they join the reception class.
2. The children continue to benefit from good teaching in the reception class. By the time they leave the Foundation Stage they achieve beyond the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development as well as their general knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development, the children reach the levels expected for children of this age. Overall achievement in the Foundation Stage is good.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.1 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.6 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The 2004 end of Key Stage 1 national test results show that pupils' attainment is above the national average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. When the results are compared with similar schools, the results are below average in all three aspects. The 2004 teacher assessments show that standards in science were very high with all pupils reaching the expected Level 2. While the trend of improvement

in how well pupils have performed in national tests has been below that seen nationally, standards have been generally above average over the last few years, with the strongest features of attainment being in reading and writing.

4. The findings from the inspection generally mirror the results of the 2004 National Curriculum tests and standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are average and this reflects the attainment of the current cohort of pupils. Standards in ICT are very high and the pupils are often performing at a level far higher than is usual for seven-year-olds nationally. Given that the pupils enter the school below average their overall achievement is good.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.7 (30.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.9 (26.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.3 (29.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The 2004 end of Key Stage 2 national test results show that pupils' attainment is very high in English and in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. In mathematics and science, standards were well above the national average. Compared with schools whose pupils attained similarly in the Year 2 national tests, the pupils' performance is well above average in all three subjects of English, mathematics and science. The trend of improvement by pupils in national tests has been better than that seen nationally. Over the past few years standards have been consistently good, particularly in English where standards for the past two years have been very high. This is due in part to the performance of the boys, which matches that of the girls and exceeds that of boys seen nationally. Overall, in English, the boys leave the school approximately one year ahead of other boys in the country.
6. The inspection findings indicate that while standards are not as high as in previous years in English, they are still well above average. The difference is explained by the natural difference in cohorts as fewer pupils in the current Year 6 group are expected to reach the higher Level 5 in English than in the 2004 tests. The high standards in English are aided by the very good performance of the pupils in terms of their speaking and listening skills. Many are very able talkers who value discussing issues with both their friends and other adults. Standards in mathematics and science are well above average, aided by the good skills many pupils demonstrate in solving problems of an open-ended nature.
7. Standards are above national expectations or better in a large number of other subjects. Standards in ICT, for example, are very high and pupils are highly confident in using a wide range of ICT equipment and associated software including digital drum kits and cameras as well as musical keyboards and robotics. Standards in art and design and music are well above expectations and standards are above expectations in history. Given the high standards many pupils reach in a large number of subjects by the time they leave the school, achievement is very good overall. Those with particular needs including pupils with special educational needs, higher-attaining pupils

and those with particular gifts and talents achieve equally highly. This is due to the good care and attention that the school pays to ensuring that their learning needs are well met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and know how to behave.
- Pupils have excellent levels of confidence and self esteem.
- Pupils' spiritual development is excellent.
- There are very good levels of attendance.

Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes towards school are very good. They say that they really enjoy school and find the work interesting and challenging. In lessons, pupils demonstrate a good work ethic and, as their thinking skills mature, they develop a lively and enquiring approach towards their learning. They are very confident and are not inhibited if they make a mistake or do not understand something. Pupils are supportive of each other and work and play well together. They also develop the ability to work independently with sustained concentration and determination to complete tasks they are given. The positive attitudes reported at the previous inspection have not only been maintained but have been further developed.
9. Behaviour is very good. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils say the school is a friendly and welcoming place and that they like their teachers. They demonstrate care and consideration towards each other, particularly older pupils towards younger ones, and there are high levels of mutual respect and trust between pupils and adults. Pupils understand the school rules and consider them to be just and fair. Although some parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concerns about bullying the pupils say that the rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with quickly and sensitively. The implementation of the behaviour policy is consistent throughout the school. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
10. Pupils are encouraged to take on many responsibilities around the school and are provided with good opportunities to develop leadership skills. There is a school council and councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and exercise a significant influence on the life and work of the school. There is a house system, led by house captains and vice captains, with a weekly cup awarded for the house whose members have earned the most points for effort and achievement. Year 6 monitors assist with the day-to-day organisation of the school and older pupils help the younger ones during lunch and play times.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. The spiritual dimension of the curriculum is particularly well planned. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to explore their own values, feelings and emotions through literacy, religious education, history, art and music. Personal and social values are strongly promoted through assemblies and the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme. The school provides a very clear moral code with a strong emphasis on the principles of equality, inclusion

and diversity. Pupils are capable of acting in accordance with their own principles and are well equipped to challenge injustice and discrimination.

- The cultural and multicultural dimensions of the curriculum are very well developed. Pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of their British cultural heritage and traditions. Although there are only a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, the curriculum includes a wide diversity of experiences and information about other cultures and historic traditions. As a result pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures and the multicultural nature of many communities in Britain are very well developed.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.6	School data:	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.

- Attendance is very good and well above the national median. Pupils come to school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning are **very good** throughout the school. Pupils have access to a **very good** curriculum, with **excellent** extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils are **well** cared for and the school provides **good** support, advice and guidance for them. The school maintains **good** links with parents, **very good** links with the community and **excellent** links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** overall. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3-6. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the Foundation Stage have a good understanding of how best to support the children's learning.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good overall and pupils achieve very well as a result.
- All teachers have a good understanding of the craft of teaching.
- The teaching of ICT is excellent and teachers make very creative use of the school's website to enhance their teaching.
- Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are very good and the information is used well to plan pupils' learning.

Commentary

14. Teaching is very good overall. The quality of teaching at the last inspection was judged to be good. There has been much improvement since then resulting in much more effective teaching with a far higher proportion of very good teaching. During the current inspection, the vast majority of lessons were good and over half of lessons were very good. In all classes and year groups all teachers have a good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and many effectively demonstrate these features in their lessons. Teachers are enthusiastic about their teaching and the pupils themselves, who are keen and eager learners, often catch this enthusiasm.
15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is frequently good with some very good features. The teachers have a good understanding of the most effective ways to support the children in their learning and a good balance is achieved between teacher directed activities and those that give the children scope to explore their learning for themselves through their use of imaginative and structured play. Effective use is made of learning support assistants who are well briefed by teachers on how best to support the learning of those with whom they work.
16. There is very effective teaching of basic skills in Years 1 to 6. In many lessons, for example, teachers provide the pupils with frequent opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Many pupils, including those in the Years 1 and 2 are confident in speaking aloud to a wider audience and listen appreciatively to the views of others. Basic skills of handwriting, spelling and presentation are taught equally well and many pupils are aware of how the presentation of work has a strong influence on those who may read it. Lively and interesting openings to numeracy lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to flex their mental skills and such strategies provide a good foundation for the remainder of the lesson.
17. The teaching of ICT is exemplary. Teachers make highly effective use of interactive whiteboards that are in all classrooms to demonstrate particular teaching points, thereby giving the pupils a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve by the end of a lesson. Many teaching materials, that include examples of the pupils' own work, are included on the school's web site. Teachers skilfully draw upon these to show pupils the steps needed to complete work. Works of art, for example, not only of famous artists and craftspeople but of the pupils themselves, are used to demonstrate how artists use line, tone, shade and colour in their work and provide a suitable stimulus for pupils to produce high quality pieces of work. There is much good teaching in many other subjects including art and design, music and history.
18. The quality of teaching effectively ensures that pupils make confident and assured gains in their learning. Creative use of learning materials in mathematics, science and design and technology provides pupils with suitable opportunities to experiment, explore and visualise the concepts they are being taught. Pupils discover that an important part of learning is that it is perfectly acceptable to make mistakes and that a greater amount of learning can come from the errors they may make. Teachers provide pupils with every encouragement to work with others, negotiate ways forward and to discover for themselves how best to present the results of their findings.
19. There are many common features to the teaching seen in many classes. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and this often translates to devising interesting and challenging activities for the pupils to explore. Teachers devise creative and meaningful links with other subjects of the curriculum that help to arouse and maintain pupils' curiosity. Pupils are well managed and the interjection of a sprinkling of humour helps to keep the lessons moving at a brisk and lively pace. In one Year 5

mathematics lesson on probability, for example, the pupils were asked to indicate the likelihood of the headteacher appearing in the classroom dressed as the school's lollipop lady. Rightly, many of the pupils answered 'extremely unlikely'. However, when the headteacher suddenly appeared dressed as the lollipop lady, this added light relief but also vividly demonstrated to the pupils that when exploring probability, 'highly unlikely' can quickly become 'quite probable.'

20. Assessment of pupils' progress is good overall and very good in English, mathematics and science. Equally strong assessment procedures are in place to monitor the children's progress in the Foundation Stage enabling the teachers to get a clear idea of how well pupils are achieving. Teachers regularly assess the pupils' progress and discuss as a staff how well groups and individual pupils are progressing. This information is used well to organise pupils into sets of different abilities for English and mathematics. Assessment procedures in other subject areas are satisfactory overall.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	20 (47%)	21 (49%)	1 (2%)			

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**. There are **excellent** opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences through extra-curricular activities. The school's accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective organisation of the curriculum contributes very well to pupils' achievements.
- An excellent range of visits, visitors and club activities increases pupils' interest and enjoyment in their learning.
- The excellent use of Information and communication technology is carefully planned across the curriculum.

Commentary

21. The school has maintained the very good quality of the curriculum since the last inspection and it meets all statutory requirements. A strong focus on literacy and numeracy has improved curriculum provision in these subjects. This has contributed very well to improving standards. To increase pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy, the school employs additional teachers and effectively sets pupils into ability groups from Year 1 to 6. Pupils' achievement is reviewed regularly and movement between sets is made in accordance with the current needs of each pupil. The school uses teachers' particular expertise and skills very effectively to enhance pupils' learning, for example, in science and music. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good and there are suitable arrangements in place for good quality support for sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. The curriculum is extended very well for the mixed-age Years 5 and 6 classes as they begin to learn French. However, at present the single-age Year 5 class does not have this valuable opportunity.

22. In the reception and nursery classes, there is a very good balance between activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children. All the required areas of learning are linked together very well and this makes good use of the time available. There is very good emphasis on communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development at levels suited to the children's needs, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
23. An excellent and exciting array of visits, visitors and club activities stimulates pupils' enthusiasm for learning and links their knowledge and skills to those in the 'real world'. Visits are carefully linked to the current areas of learning, or are used very effectively to extend pupils' perceptions of a subject. Visits include such places as the local supermarket, Colchester Castle, Bressingham Steam Museum, the National Gallery and the National Opera House in Covent Garden. The Year 6 visit, under canvas, to Whitwell Hall in Norfolk extends pupils' social skills as they live and work together, as well as gaining geographical knowledge and participating in outdoor activities. The school has excellent links with the local community through visiting speakers such as the dentist, vicars, emergency services and musicians. Pupils' interest is motivated greatly by cross-curricular activities such as 'Environmental Week', 'Silver Day' and 'Asian Week'. There is a very broad programme of extra-curricular activities with clubs running every day after school and some in the lunch hour. The school promotes high participation in sport, with competition within school and with other local schools.
24. A particular strength of the school's provision is in the use of ICT as a learning tool across the whole curriculum. The school encourages pupils to develop new ways of learning, both co-operatively and individually using relevant technology, for example computers, wireless laptops, interactive whiteboards and videos. This excellent provision has been recognised by the Department for Education and Science and aspects of the school's work have been filmed and are used in training materials for schools nationally.
25. The building has recently been extended further to allow more creative use of space within the whole school. The accommodation is good and maintained well. At present, apart from class bases, there is a valuable music room and a room for an additional teacher for mathematics. The school uses other non-class based spaces effectively for other subjects. The school has pleasant grounds with some climbing equipment and an outdoor area for Foundation Stage children. Playground space is adequate and 'quiet areas' have been created for those who do not wish to play games. The school has a good playing field a short distance from the school with a sports pavilion, and has plans to create an outdoor classroom to improve learning opportunities. The school has very good resources in all subjects, particularly in music and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. Pupils' involvement through seeking their views and valuing and acting upon them is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are well cared for and the level of pastoral support is very good.
- There are excellent relationships and high levels of mutual trust and respect between pupils and all adults.
- There are very good procedures in place for child protection.

- The school has very good procedures to respond positively to pupils' views and opinions.
- There are some health and safety issues that need to be tackled.

Commentary

26. The welfare and pastoral support provided by the school is good. Staff know their pupils well and create an environment within which everyone is encouraged to work hard and achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils are given very good advice and guidance based on a range of assessment and monitoring procedures. There is very good awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families and the arrangements for child protection are very good. Those responsible for child protection are experienced, well trained and vigilant. The school has good links with social services and other external agencies and draws on their support as and when it becomes necessary.
27. There are satisfactory arrangements for ensuring that the school environment is healthy and safe. An experienced health and safety committee oversees the implementation of the school health and safety policy. Good health and safety practice has recently been confirmed by a local education authority audit of all health and safety documentation and procedures. During the inspection inspectors raised a number of health and safety issues and the school immediately agreed to conduct further risk assessments of the areas of possible concern. There is good provision for first aid. Pupils are well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely. The personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils observe high standards of hygiene and have a very good understanding of the value of pursuing a healthy lifestyle. The school is cleaned and maintained to a very good standard.
28. There are excellent relationships and levels of mutual trust between pupils and staff. Pupils say they are very confident that should they have any concerns or need to seek help that staff will listen and provide high quality advice and support. The school council has a significant influence on the life and work of the school and provides a very effective consultative link between the wider pupil body and the school senior management team.
29. There are very good arrangements for welcoming new arrivals into the reception class. The arrangements for supporting pupils when they transfer into secondary education are also very good. Overall the welfare and pastoral care afforded to pupils has been well maintained since the previous inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has created a **good** partnership with parents. The school has a **very good** engagement with the wider community and has established **excellent** relationships with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully involves parents in their children's learning.
- Parents hold positive views about the school and what it provides for their children.
- The very good links between with the wider community have a strong influence on pupils' learning.

- There are excellent links with other schools and colleges that successfully enrich pupils' learning.

Commentary

30. The school works hard to establish a close relationship with parents that enables them to support and participate in their children's learning. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of pastoral care and education provided. Effective two way communication between the school and parents ensures that their views and opinions are noted and concerns dealt with effectively. The concerns raised by a small minority of parents through written comments and the pre-inspection questionnaires were reviewed by inspectors. The school has agreed to reassess the health and safety issues included among these concerns. The other concerns relating to bullying and the provision of information were not supported by the inspection evidence.
31. The annual progress reports provide a good overview of pupils' personal and academic development with a clear indication of their progress, effort and attainment. These reports together with consultation and review meetings ensure that parents have a good understanding of their children's progress and what the children need to do to improve their learning. There is regular provision of information about the curriculum, topic work and other school events through newsletters and inclusion of up to date news on the school website. The school also provides curriculum workshops for parents and has successfully run family learning courses on numeracy and literacy. The Friends of the School Association supports the work of the school through the organisation of fund raising and other social events and these frequently attract interest from the wider community.
32. The outreach of the school into the wider community is very good. The school premises and sports field are used by many community organisations including the town council. The school's hand chime, maypole and country dancing teams perform at many local community events. The school choir recently won a community award for its work with a local home for the elderly. There are strong links with the local church and many of the surrounding village churches. Representatives from these churches provide a variety of different speakers for the weekly visitors' assembly. Through these many connections the school has successfully placed itself at the heart of the community that it serves.
33. There are excellent links with other schools, colleges and universities. The school offers its sports and computer facilities for use by some of the smaller rural primary schools who lack such high quality facilities. There is very close liaison with the local pyramid of schools with excellent opportunities for the sharing of good practice and the organisation of joint professional development programmes for both teachers and teaching assistants. The school has led many initiatives locally and nationally into the research and development of the use of ICT across the curriculum, particularly in music, art, special educational needs provision and for enhancing the teaching and learning of very young children in nursery and reception classes. The school also provides places for teacher training. Although no longer enjoying Beacon status, staff from other schools still regularly visit the school to share in some of the very effective teaching and learning practice that the school provides.
34. The arrangements for supporting pupils during transfer from the primary into the secondary phase of their education are very good. Pupils are given good opportunities to get to know the receiving school before they transfer, and care is taken to maintain friendship groups and to assess the high level of ICT and other skills that most pupils have by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Overall the good partnership with

parents, the very good links with the community and the excellent work with other schools have been well maintained since the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership of the school is **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership of the senior staff is **good**. Management throughout the school is **good**. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership of the school and has created a very effective team.
- The deputy headteacher and other senior staff are committed and focused on school improvement.
- The management of the school is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and all pupils are fully included in what the school has to offer.
- The governing body supports and challenges the leadership and management well.
- The finances of the school are managed efficiently and support school priorities, but there is a large budget surplus.

Commentary

35. The headteacher has created an ethos within the school where all staff are dedicated and committed to providing a high quality education to enable pupils to do their very best. She sets a very good example and ensures that the school is true to its aims. She has worked very successfully to ensure that the school's performance has improved but within an atmosphere of consultative and open teamwork to which all staff contribute. This open and consultative style of leadership has secured many improvements since the previous inspection. This is to be seen in the keen and eager way the school takes on board and adapts new initiatives. The headteacher effectively encourages her staff to explore new approaches to teaching and learning, and curriculum development and to evaluate that provision. Considerable progress, for example, has been achieved since the previous inspection in exploring the most effective ways in which pupils learn, how the curriculum can support that development and the part that ICT can extend how pupils learn.
36. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. The senior management team meets regularly to discuss the school's work and how best to initiate the next cycle of the school's development. The deputy headteacher plays a key role in ensuring the smooth running of the school, while the headteacher is away on other work, and does this despite quite a heavy teaching commitment. She and the headteacher complement one another well. Other key staff are committed to improving standards in their subjects and there has been a considerable strengthening since the previous inspection in how the school uses assessment information about pupils' progress to plan further improvements. Co-ordinators give much valuable support to one another, and a strong feature of the team work evident in the school is the way in which all staff take on board the advice given by colleagues in order to improve their teaching. There is a regular programme of monitoring teaching and learning and this is done in line with the school's improvement plan. However, the co-ordinators for English and mathematics, in particular, have not monitored directly the quality of teaching in lessons for some time and this limits their overall effectiveness.

37. Daily routines are efficient and both staff and pupils are clear in their understanding of what these are. Very good arrangements for the induction of new staff and for the continuing professional development of all staff make a strong contribution to the overall very good teaching. Arrangements for the performance management of staff as well as the national arrangements for implementing workforce agreements are now securely embedded into the school's termly routines and support school improvement well. The current school improvement plan is monitored carefully so that planned priorities are achieved. A key issue at the last inspection was to improve school improvement planning. This has been done for the current year and the headteacher and the senior management team have a clear idea of the areas they would like to see identified for continued development at the school.
38. The management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The very strong commitment that the school has to professional development means that the special needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants are well trained and up-to-date in terms of teaching pedagogy in how best to support the pupils with particular needs. This also includes the provision for higher-attaining pupils and the pupils whom the school has classed as having particular gifts and talents. The very good relationships with outside agencies are well managed. The governor with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs is supportive and knowledgeable as she works in school on a regular basis.
39. There is a strong and trusting relationship between the governors and all members of the staff. The governing body effectively fulfils its responsibilities. This level of trust and commitment from the governors has contributed significantly in securing many improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of the fabric of the school and ICT. There are well-developed procedures in place to enable the governing body to get a clear idea of how well the school is achieving and what factors underpin this achievement. Members of the governing body are well informed and are able to identify the strengths of the school. They are active and understand its achievements because they are closely involved and kept regularly up-to-date with clear and well-presented information from the headteacher and the various co-ordinators.
40. The day-to-day financial management of the school is very good. The administration manager and clerical assistants make a very good contribution to the efficient running of the school. The school had a surplus at the end of the last financial year that was much higher than the recommended acceptable level. The headteacher and governors have plans in place in terms of the fabric and heating of the building and the surplus when used will be reduced significantly. Given the high levels of achievement, the quality of teaching, the curriculum and how the school is led coupled with a below average level of funding, the school provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	821 193
Total expenditure	822 650
Expenditure per pupil	2 570

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	78 930
Balance carried forward to the next	77 473

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **very good** in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage and they are well prepared for full-time education.
 - Teaching is very good and teachers have a good understanding of the most effective ways to plan the children's learning.
 - Children achieve well in all areas of their learning.
 - The quality of leadership and management is very good, and has brought about much improvement since the previous inspection.
41. Under the very good leadership of the co-ordinator, the provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is now very good because of very effective improvement of the planned programme of learning experiences since the last inspection. The leader of the Foundation Stage has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and works very effectively with the team of teachers and teaching assistants. All members of staff work very well together to ensure that the learning and well-being of the children and the management of provision for the Foundation Stage are good. When they enter the nursery, children have knowledge and skills that are slightly below average in comparison with children of a similar age, although their social skills and physical development are about average.
42. Teaching and learning are consistently good and often very good and result in at least good achievement in all areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children have reached the levels expected for their age (the early learning goals) in all of the areas of learning. Most children exceed these goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. Children with special educational needs are identified early on and are supported very well in activities. Consequently they achieve well. The very effective daily assessments of children's responses to activities, which are compiled into nursery and reception class profiles, ensure that staff know each child very well and can meet their needs in subsequent activities. The good accommodation, with good use of the attractive outside play area and larger climbing equipment in the school grounds provide children with an exciting place in which to learn. Resources for learning are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships, care and guidance make a considerable contribution to learning.
- A high priority is given to this area of learning.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Children achieve well because of the consistent team approach in both nursery and reception classes to provide a well-ordered environment. Children know the well-established routines of the classroom, and the high expectations and sensitive guidance from staff encourage them to become independent in their day-to-day activities, such as organising themselves into groups or finding a piece of equipment they need for a task. The good quality of teaching, together with the contribution of the support staff, promote this area of learning very successfully and it is planned well into most other areas of the curriculum. Adults provide good role models as they involve themselves in the activities and help children to share and play together. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to learn how to behave socially, such as taking turns in circle time or sitting still at the table and talking quietly during 'snack time'. Adults correct impolite or unsafe behaviour calmly and very sensitively, so that children understand why their behaviour is wrong. To raise self-esteem, adults use praise and encouragement in everything the children do. Children in the nursery particularly enjoy taking turns to be 'helper' for the morning. Children's self-worth and respect for one another are nurtured very well in all areas of learning. For example, in the reception class, children answered the register in different languages, to respect the language of different children's families. As a result of these experiences, children are on course to achieve their learning goals, with the majority of children exceeding them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication skills are developed well in all activities in both classes.
- Children are mostly confident, eager to learn and respond very well to opportunities to read, write, speak and listen.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good overall and often very good and learning reflects this, so all children achieve well from the below average skills on entry. There are continuous opportunities during the day for children to develop their language skills. Children are taught to listen to one another as soon as they start in the nursery and this is consistently reinforced in all activities. As a result, children's listening skills develop well and by the time children leave the reception class, they listen well to adults and other children. When they enter the nursery, some children lack clarity in their speech and many speak in single words or phrases. However, in activities such as circle time or whole class discussion, children are encouraged to make a contribution and adults constantly give very good models of speech and sentences. As a result of this knowledgeable guidance by adults and the many opportunities to practise their skills, most children enter Year 1 speaking clearly, confidently and with control.
45. Suitable emphasis is put on the step-by-step teaching of letters and their sounds from the time children enter the nursery. As they progress through the Foundation Stage, children enjoy lessons where they match letters to sounds, understand that combinations of sounds make words and work happily on related reading and writing activities. Because teachers teach the link between letters and sounds thoroughly, relating it to spelling and reading, most children quickly learn to read common words in a range of contexts and can read simple sentences independently. The most able

children read simple books fluently and with expression. Children enjoy listening to stories in class and often choose to listen to a tape and follow the story text and pictures.

46. Very careful support is given to ensure that children form their letters correctly, with a wide range of different media used, such as using the interactive whiteboard, painting letters or drawing in sand, to capture the children's interest and encourage concentration. Children's own ideas are skilfully built on in written work and they rise to the challenge of writing independently. During the inspection, higher-attaining children used a word-bank book well to obtain spellings for their writing and were guided to use picture dictionaries well. The majority of children are likely to attain the nationally expected learning goals and a few children will exceed them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical activities make mathematics interesting and fun, so children like what they do and achieve well.
- Very good links with other areas of learning reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of number, shape and measures.

Commentary

47. The good and often very good quality of teaching and learning of mathematical skills through lively and imaginative activities helps children to achieve well. Most achieve the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1 and a few exceed them. In the nursery class, the teacher and teaching assistant provide many clearly focused opportunities for children to sort, match and count purposefully throughout the morning, as well as in mathematical sessions. For example, when making and baking cheese 'snakes' children measured the length of the 'snake' and also counted the spoonfuls of water they added before mixing each time. In the making of a Mothering Sunday gift, children cut a circle of material. Through very good assessment procedures and shared planning sessions, the activities in the reception class extend children's knowledge and skills effectively and make them confident with numbers. Children respond with enthusiasm and interest as they begin to recognise number bonds to 10 and to develop early addition and subtraction skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a wealth of interesting resources for children to investigate.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good and promote good achievement. This area of the curriculum is alive with interesting activities so that children have many opportunities to enjoy the wide world around them and to stimulate their curiosity. Visits, visitors and an extensive range of very good resources support this area of learning very effectively and help most children reach the nationally

expected levels by the end of the reception year. For example, nursery children made 'spectacles' after a visit to the opticians. Children have many good practical experiences to observe and study living things. For example, children dig an area of garden and watch things growing and have studied the seeds of a sunflower very carefully. Reception pupils had a visit from the school's rabbit, 'Malteser'. Adults encourage and guide children well to use construction sets and junk modelling purposefully. For example, children made model musical instruments from packaging and played them. A variety of exploration materials are always available in the classrooms or outside, such as the reflective CDs hanging from the tree or sand and water trays. In religious education children celebrate festivals from many cultures and learn about different people from around the world from whole school projects, such as Asian Week. The teaching and learning of ICT are strong. Children have good opportunities to use computers, tablets, the interactive whiteboard and the digital camera and use them confidently and with enjoyment in most areas of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor provision is very good and very good use is made of the school hall for regular physical education lessons.
- The very good range of activities promotes pupils fine motor control skills well.

Commentary

49. Good and often very good teaching and learning help children to achieve well. Therefore, by the time they enter Year 1, all children are likely to attain the expected learning goals and most will exceed them. The outdoor play area is in constant use for good, independently chosen or adult-led activities, which develop children's physical skills. Children have very good opportunities to use the large-wheeled toys and learn to use the space without bumping into each other. The school has recently developed the grounds to include climbing equipment and the 'HMS Robert Hitcham' ship. The outdoor area is used effectively to develop children's throwing and catching skills. Teachers and teaching assistants guide children well to safely climb, balance, crawl through tunnels and jump from trestles using the range of equipment in the school hall. With high expectation of independence, teachers encourage children to put mats away in groups of four. In a movement lesson, some children demonstrated good movements as jungle animals in response to music. This helped other children to refine their own ideas and movements. Through the very good promotion of independence and careful guidance in a variety of activities, children improve their control skills well when manipulating equipment like scissors, pencils and fasteners.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities enables children to express themselves in art, music and drama.

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning are good and often very good as staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities so that children achieve well in this area of learning. Most children attain the expected level by the end of the reception year. Role play is an important element of the very good provision. Teachers plan areas in the classroom or in the outdoor space well so that children can simulate different situations in imaginative play. For example, children in the nursery have extended their speaking and listening skills through play in the 'hairdressers' and 'school dining hall' and reception class children have the 'Vet's surgery'. Children regularly use paint, crayon, pencil and collage and with very good guidance they refine their control and skills. Children in the nursery were helped to look carefully at a daffodil and to draw what they saw. Children are encouraged to develop the skills of colour mixing well. Music times are joyful. Children in the nursery know the names of several instruments and the majority know which sound each one makes. Children join in action songs enthusiastically with a specialist teacher in assembly. Most children in reception know the words of the songs and are on the whole tuneful and use good volume.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over time the pupils have attained very well in national tests and this indicates how well they have learned.
- Boys do much better than other boys nationally.
- The pupils achieve very well overall which reflects the high quality of teaching they receive.
- Very good use is made of information and communication technology to support the development of the pupils' literacy skills.
- The pupils' very good attitudes help them to learn very well.

Commentary

51. In the 2004 national tests pupils aged eleven attained standards that were very high when compared with pupils nationally and with those who go to similar schools. When compared with how pupils performed when they were in Year 2, standards were well above average. Standards have been at a consistently high level over time and the improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The standard of work seen in the inspection was well above average. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests pupils in Year 2 reached standards that were above average in reading and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, they were just below average. Inspection findings confirm the 2004 National Curriculum tests, and standards are above average in reading and average in writing. The results of national tests point to no difference between the boys and girls. However, the boys perform particularly well when their results are compared with those of boys nationally and they leave the school up to a year ahead of the average for all boys nationwide. The boys work hard and have a real desire to succeed.

52. Standards of speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to one another and respond appropriately. In formal situations, pupils speak very well and express themselves confidently. This supports their learning in all areas of the curriculum and contributes to the very positive ethos of the school. The high level of achievement by pupils in their speaking and listening is attributable to the many and interesting opportunities pupils are provided with to extend their speech. These are to be seen in both introductions and end of lessons where pupils are expected and encouraged to explain what they have learned and in other school occasions, such as in assemblies, where pupils are asked to explain their work or read aloud to a wider audience.
53. Standards in reading by pupils by the end of Years 1 and 2 are above average. Almost all pupils in Years 1 and 2 read at the expected level or above and the pupils very much enjoy books that they personally select and those they have chosen for them. In group reading lessons there are occasions when opportunities are missed to challenge higher attaining pupils with more difficult reading materials. Pupils continue to achieve well in reading as they move through the school. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading that are well above average. They talk readily about favourite authors like JRR Tolkien, C S Lewis and Jacqueline Wilson and give clear reasons why they have chosen the works of one author compared to another. They read widely and voraciously and many make use of the local library as well as the school library. They use their reading and their excellent skills in ICT to research topics to support their learning in other subjects.
54. Standards in writing are above average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Years 1 and 2, analysis of the pupils' work shows that they have made good progress in the current school year. A key issue at the last inspection was to improve the appearance of the pupils' work. This has been suitably tackled and younger pupils are beginning to join their letters and to use full stops and capital letters in the correct places. In the literacy sets for pupils in Years 5 and 6, those in the upper set are challenged to write in a variety of styles as they respond to a wide range of literature. The pupils' writing is often bright and imaginative and pupils understand well that the choice of interesting vocabulary is a key factor in holding the attention of the reader. In the other sets there is less emphasis on pupils practising and extending their skills by writing at length but pupils make good progress in developing their skills as writers.
55. The teaching is very good overall and promotes very good achievement. A real strength in teaching is in how basic skills are taught and in the scope that the pupils are given to practise these through other subjects. Pupils learn the importance of reading accurately or in presenting work neatly as a result. Pupils are given good scope to use new technologies in support of their writing development. This gives a purpose to their writing as they enjoy contributing to the school's excellent website and encourages them to set high standards for themselves. All teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and give every encouragement to all pupils enabling them to achieve highly. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, understanding that just as much can be learned from errors as from getting it right first time. A key issue at the last inspection was to improve the marking of pupils' work. This is now satisfactory and pupils are given clearer guidance as to how they might improve their learning.
56. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils now take a greater pride in the appearance of their work. Pupils' work is sampled to check on standards and teaching has been monitored although, at present, this is not being done by the co-ordinator with sufficient frequency. As a result the few inconsistencies that are to be noted in some teaching have not been addressed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The school makes very good use of other subjects to promote and extend the pupils' learning of literacy. In oral work, the pupils' learning is supported very well by their knowledge and accurate use of vocabulary that is specific to a particular subject. There are many good examples of pupils writing at length in subjects like history and geography and in using ICT to present the results of their research work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are effectively promoted through other subjects.
- Pupils are eager learners and thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- The co-ordinator has a good understanding of what could be further improved but he has too few opportunities to directly monitor teaching.

Commentary

58. The end of key stage National Curriculum test results for 2004 indicated that Year 2 pupils reached standards that were in line with the national average and below average when compared with similar schools. The 2004 National Curriculum results for pupils in Year 6 indicated that they reached standards that were well above the national average and well above average compared with pupils who attained similar results in their Year 2 tests. Inspection findings indicate a slightly different picture in terms of standards. The findings point towards pupils reaching above average standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. The difference between inspection findings for Key Stage 1 and the results of the tests is attributable to the natural differences in attainment between cohorts. Achievement is high by the time pupils leave the school. There is no significant difference in achievement between the boys and girls and all pupils including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining achieve as well as their classmates.
59. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently solve a range of problems involving number, shape, space, measure and data handling. Pupils are solving problems involving the four rules of number and understand well that mathematics is used in their day-to-day lives. The pupils' confidence and overall achievement in mathematics continue to develop apace as they move through Years 3 to 6. Pupils develop a good mathematical vocabulary and demonstrate good skills in solving problems that are of an open-ended nature. In addition, pupils thrive on the many good opportunities they are given to extend their understanding of number, shape, space, measure and are skilled in understanding how mathematics is not simply about number but is to be seen in the form of tables, diagrams, charts and tables. Pupils are equally confident in using ICT to assist them in their learning. Their good knowledge and understanding of how to use various programs that include spreadsheets, the computer language of 'Logo' as well as their understanding of early robotics, make a good contribution to their learning of mathematics.

60. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Opening sessions are often bright and breezy and involve the pupils taking part in a range of mathematical games and strategies that they enjoy greatly. The effective organisation of these sessions helps to focus the pupils on what they are to learn during the remainder of the lesson and builds up their considerable enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils are eager learners and respond well to teachers' expectations and the high level of challenge given them in their work. In Years 1 and 2, good use is made of practical equipment and this is of benefit to those that need such apparatus in order for them to grasp what they are learning. In many classes, teachers use interactive whiteboards well to make teaching points and pupils are often very clear on what they are expected to learn as a result. Teachers know their pupils well and good use is made of assessment information to determine which groups pupils are to be taught in. This enables those who can handle a greater degree of challenge to undertake work that pushes and extends them.
61. There is good leadership and management of the subject and the co-ordinator has a good idea of what still needs to be achieved in order to ensure that achievement in the subject remains high. Careful monitoring of the pupils' assessment data ensures that a careful watch is kept on the progress of individual pupils to ensure that they continue to have work set for them that matches their particular ability. However, it has been some time since the co-ordinator has specifically monitored the teaching in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Mathematics is used well to promote pupils' learning in other subjects and teachers take good care that the work that is planned is meaningful and has purpose. Pupils develop their understanding of measurement through making models in design and technology, of weight through their work in food technology, and also extend their perception of how scientific data can be presented through the use of tables, charts and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator has had a significant impact on raising standards, particularly in practical scientific enquiry.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge extends pupils' skills and knowledge very effectively.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and they work very well with each other in practical investigation and experimentation.

Commentary

63. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 are above average. They are lower than the teacher assessments made for the 2004 cohort because of a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average and reflect the results of national tests in 2004. There has been good improvement in standards since the last inspection because of very effective leadership, which has improved the quality of teaching and learning overall and consequently pupils' achievement. Pupils' achievement is very good overall. It is particularly good in the mixed-age Year 5 and 6 classes, where teaching is consistently very good. Good support from teachers and

teaching assistants help pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as their peers and in national tests the majority of these pupils attain the nationally expected standard. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively and in the Year 6 national tests in 2004, nearly three-quarters of pupils attained the higher level 5 and two-thirds of pupils are expected to attain this level in 2005.

64. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge very well to assess pupils' understanding and to develop their scientific learning. The very good subject leader has identified that teachers need to create more opportunities for pupils to be involved in their learning through methods of scientific enquiry, particularly in junior classes.
65. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows an increasing amount of practical work within topics and lessons and this provides a very good balance between developing the skills and knowledge of the subject. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils demonstrated a very clear understanding of fair testing, organised themselves very well in their groups and set up their own equipment carefully so that they could measure distance travelled by a toy vehicle down a ramp. They tested different surfaces, such as lino, carpet and bubble-wrap. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher introduced the topic and guided pupils very well as they planned their own investigation into the relationship between particle size of sugars and differences in dissolving. All pupils took active parts in the planning and carrying out of the tests, with very good support of the teacher, who challenged effectively but allowed pupils to follow their own ideas. Pupils applied mathematical skills well and produced very good graphs and conclusions. There are very good links with other subjects, such as the application of electrical circuits in torches in Years 3 and 4. Teachers encourage pupils to use a very good range of recording methods, applying their literacy and mathematical skills. ICT is used extensively in researching aspects of scientific topics such as classification of different animals. The co-ordinator is currently working with the ICT co-ordinator to use ICT more effectively in investigational work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always guide them sufficiently about how to improve their work.
66. The leadership of the subject is very good and the management is good. The co-ordinator provides very good direction for improvement as she monitors teaching and learning very well by looking at teachers' plans, pupils' work and has observed teachers' lessons and helped them to improve pupils' learning. Analysis of the results of national tests is good and from teachers' end-of-year assessments, pupils' attainment is tracked well. However, methods of keeping records for each unit of work and day-to-day assessments vary from teacher to teacher and are not consistent across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator makes an outstanding contribution to the provision in the subject.
- Pupils' achievement is very high.
- The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Pupils are eager users of ICT and very much enjoy what is provided for them.

- The school's web-site, to which the pupils contribute well, is a rich and valuable learning resource.
- Progress since the previous inspection has been excellent as is the quality of the school's resources for the subject.

Commentary

67. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and by the time pupils leave the school, they reach very high standards. All pupils achieve extremely well and are very confident and proficient in their use of a wide range of software and associated ICT equipment to support their learning. There has been excellent progress since the previous inspection characterised by much innovation and the school is renowned both locally and nationally for its pioneering work in ICT.
68. Pupils in all classes are skilled users of a wide range of ICT equipment and accompanying software. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use programmable toys effectively and are equally skilful and confident in their use of the Internet to support their learning. As they move through Years 3 – 6, these skills are developed extremely well through use of wide range of software. Pupils use three-dimensional software well and are proficient in using spreadsheets, constructing multimedia presentations and in designing their own web-pages. When exploring different subjects, for example, pupils present their work on the school's web site that is then used for further research by other pupils in the school. Of note is the way in which pupils use software to extend their learning in many areas of the curriculum, by researching information in science, history, geography, and religious education or in developing further links with design and technology by use of sophisticated control and modelling equipment. The pupils have a very good understanding of the part that ICT plays in their daily lives. This is enriched through the many opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of ICT equipment that includes graphic tablets, digital drum machines, electronic keyboards and digital and video cameras.
69. Teaching and learning are excellent. In many day-to-day lessons, teachers make highly effective use of interactive whiteboards to make teaching points and, as a result, pupils gain a good understanding that ICT is more than 'just using computers'. High challenge and expectations are further features of the high quality of teaching as well as the imaginative use of software to broaden pupils' learning. In a Year 1 personal, social and health lesson, for example, pupils used story boards to move graphics and text around as part of a broader theme of how to respond positively in a situation when faced with potential bullying issues. Teachers make highly effective use of the school's web-site as a learning resource and such work successfully extends the pupils' learning that information can be gathered electronically and downloaded for further use in a wide number of subjects.
70. There is excellent leadership and management of the subject and the co-ordinator makes an outstanding contribution to the quality of both the pupils' learning experiences as well as the professional development of his colleagues. His non-teaching role provides him with scope to teach alongside his colleagues and he has a very good understanding of the standards that pupils are reaching. His work has been instrumental in ensuring that the school's work in the subject is shared both nationally and internationally. Resources for the subject are excellent and used extensively at many points of the school day.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. There is excellent and often very creative use of ICT to support and extend the pupils' learning in other subjects and with the expert guidance given by the co-ordinator in this respect, pupils develop a very good understanding of the part that ICT can play in assisting them in their learning and of how it is to be seen in many aspects of their day-to-day lives.

HUMANITIES

72. The inspection did not focus on **religious education** as this is inspected and reported on separately by the local diocese. **Geography** was sampled and no lessons were seen so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. Analysis of pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that the school uses both local and national guidance when planning what is to be taught. Discussions with older pupils demonstrate they have very good attitudes to the subject and they talk in detail about work on the rainforest that they have studied recently. They have used their excellent skills in ICT for research. The curriculum is enriched by using the local area and by special days like one that focused on life in Jamaica. This has a positive effect in increasing the pupils' understanding of another culture. The school recognises that the subject can be developed further and is working with the local secondary school to achieve this.

History

Provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils enjoy their learning of history and achieve well.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables the pupils to learn key principles of history well.
- The pupils' enthusiasm for the subject is influenced in part by the rich learning opportunities they are given.
- The subject is well led and managed and this promotes good learning.

Commentary

73. Pupils attain standards that are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2 pupils remember clearly work about transport that they have already learned. In Year 6 the pupils talk confidently about the Vikings and know how this period of history relates to what has gone before and what came afterwards. They are less confident of the skills involved in historical research. They know the importance of the work of archaeologists but are not always sure of the difference between primary and secondary sources. At the last inspection standards were judged to be above expectations and this position has been maintained. Overall, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
74. Teaching is good. The pupils' good learning is helped by teachers continually reinforcing the learning objectives and by effective use of visual materials prepared on the interactive whiteboards. Teaching methods are varied so that pupils remain fully engaged and very good use was made of an expert's knowledge when Year 6 pupils visited the local church during the inspection to learn about its history. Analysis of the

pupils' work shows that they use their excellent skills in ICT to research questions they want to answer. In some classes pupils write at length so deepening their historical understanding and practising their literacy skills. The quality of teaching helps to engender a strong interest in pupils of the events from the past, how people lived their lives compared to people today and in exploring how the events from the past have helped to shape the present. The pupils are very keen to learn and persevere well to complete research into questions they have chosen to investigate.

75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has a clear vision of the way the subject is to be taught especially for pupils at Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement is boosted considerably by the quality of learning experiences that teachers plan for them. Much cross curricular work is to be seen and teachers exploit well the potential of subjects such as English, art and design and ICT to extend pupils in their learning. In addition, there are very good arrangements to enrich the curriculum through a varied programme of visits and visitors. These make a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

76. The inspection focused on music and art and design as the school is proud of how well pupils achieve in these subjects. Not enough evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the provision in either design and technology or physical education.
77. No lessons in **design and technology** could be seen during the inspection. Pupils' work was studied and the subject discussed with the co-ordinator and pupils. Displays around the school, photographs of pupils' work, their evaluation of outcomes of projects as well as of manufactured items indicate that standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and are above those expected in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve well, particularly in junior classes, and they indicate in discussion their enthusiasm and interest in the projects given. The subject is led and managed well. Teachers assess pupils' attainment at the end of units of work, but at present there is no formal record across all year groups, except for the end of year level of attainment for all pupils.
78. In **physical education**, no lessons were seen. However, a very wide range of physical activities offers pupils excellent opportunities to take part in sport. The school belongs to the High Suffolk Primary Schools' Sports Association. Pupils compete with those from other schools at football, girls' football, unihoc, cross-country running, netball, swimming, rounders and athletics. Many of these sports also feature in the highly developed inter-house competitions so allowing even more pupils to be involved. Pupils' skill levels benefit from the coaching they receive from members of local amateur and professional clubs in cricket, football, short tennis and golf. Almost all pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres when they leave the school.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in art and design.
- A vibrant curriculum gets the best from pupils.
- ICT is used extremely well to support pupils' learning.

- The subject makes a very strong contribution to the pupils' personal development.
- More use could be made of sketchbooks to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

79. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards that are well above national expectations. This is an improvement from the last inspection when standards were above those expected for 11-year-olds. Art and design has a very high status in the school. There are many trips organised for pupils to visit both local and national galleries and this helps to make art and design a highly popular subject for the pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
80. By the end of Years 1 and 2, pupils have a good understanding for their age of the works of different artists and enjoy looking at their work with a view to employing the styles and techniques in their own work. As they move through Years 3 – 6, pupils continue to make good progress in appreciating how famous artists created their work. In their own work, the pupils take great care, drawing, painting and constructing three-dimensional pieces that often depict a fine eye for detail. Pupils are equally confident in using a wide range of art materials to create batik prints, or tie and dye, and models using a range of malleable materials. Of note, is the highly imaginative work that pupils often produce as a result of using new technologies. Pupils frequently use digital cameras to capture images of interest to them and then use painting packages to further manipulate the image to create more interesting effects. As a result, pupils learn that new technologies can be used creatively to capture a vast array of images that can be then turned into simple works of art.
81. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about their art work and apply their skills well in lessons and strive very hard to produce work of real quality. Teachers make full use of the potential in other subjects to support pupils' learning of art skills and this helps to reinforce what pupils are being taught. The work of other artists is used imaginatively to stir the pupils' interest in their learning. Trips and visits to both local and national galleries are frequent occurrences, enabling the pupils to see and experience first hand art and design in its many different forms. Although pupils do use sketchbooks, there is greater potential, given the high levels of interest demonstrated by the pupils, for these to be used more extensively to fully extend the pupils' understanding of preparatory work.
82. There is very good leadership and management of the subject and the co-ordinator leads developments in the subject very well. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The subject makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal development as pupils are given many opportunities to look at the work of different artists from many different countries.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching helps pupils achieve well in lessons.
- A high proportion of pupils learn individual instruments from visiting instrumental teachers.
- Club activities, musical productions, use of ICT, visits and visitors significantly enhance pupils' musical achievement.

Commentary

83. Year 2 pupils attain standards that are above nationally expected levels and Year 6 pupils attain standards that are well above the expected levels. By the end of Year 6 standards have risen significantly since the last inspection because the school uses the expertise of three teachers and the high input of visiting specialist teachers and parents very well. Pupils achieve very well overall. Pupils in infant classes achieve well, but this rises during the junior years because of the high uptake of the very good individual brass, woodwind and stringed instrumental tuition, recorder clubs and membership of the choir. Pupils are very motivated, keen and work hard in lessons and other activities and this aids the very good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs take an active part in lessons, often working on compositions in mixed-ability groups and they achieve as well as their peers.
84. Teaching and learning are very good. The school has an excellent range and number of instruments, so that all pupils can fully participate in all class lessons. Very relevant activities and music from a variety of cultures and different styles develop pupils' cultural understanding very well. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson pupils used keyboards in pairs to create melody and drone, demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of the styles of jazz, pop, classical and brass music. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the use of the computer in their lessons. In a very good Year 1 lesson pupils worked very well in pairs to create ostinato to accompany 'their' section of a space story on the simulated keyboard on screen. Using earphones they show great concentration as they experiment, with very good guidance and encouragement of the teacher. They record the pleasing outcomes for later use and compilation. The teacher in Years 5 and 6 challenges pupils very well at all levels of ability. Her expectation of pupils' listening skills are high and pupils respond very well, identifying the bar numbers in which the main theme is repeated in *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* by Mozart. Use is made of pupils' particular talents, not only in their participation in assemblies and productions, but within lessons. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate the very good result of their work last term, composing a class piece in the style of Vivaldi's *Spring*. Group compositions for sections and the repetition of the main theme involve all pupils, are very competently delivered and include some pupils playing their specialist instruments.
85. The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader promotes pupils' love of music beyond class-work and instrumental tuition through the organisation of club activities and other initiatives. There are five well-planned beginner, intermediate and higher recorder clubs where pupils learn to read music, play alongside each other and develop two-part playing with clarinets. A parent is just restarting a keyboard club. Those who learn individual instruments have the very good additional opportunity to play with other instrumentalists in an orchestra led by a parent, the vicar of St Michael's and staff. A very well attended choir creates particularly good development of the voice for junior pupils, with the development of harmony, descant, expressive control and attention to the dynamics of the song. Singing alongside the choir in assemblies helps to improve the performance and attainment of other pupils. Other initiatives that extend pupils' understanding and skills very well include their taking part in music workshops with two parents who are professional members of orchestras, workshops led by two drummers and all pupils taking part in infant or junior musical productions each year. Very relevant visits are made to extend pupils' aspirations, to see performances at the local secondary school and Year 6 pupils visited the ballet and the opera in London. All pupils have very good opportunities to perform.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Only one lesson in personal, social and health education and citizenship was seen but there is ample evidence that pupils attain standards that are well above average by the age of 11. The school successfully promotes the subject through timetabled lessons, through other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, assemblies, class discussions, support systems, daily interactions with pupils and in special events designed to enhance pupils' experiences. Each class takes it in turns to lead the Celebration of Achievement assembly each week, which helps to raise pupils' sense of achievement and to promote their self-belief. A regular programme of 'paired-reading' fosters very good relationships across the school. The school council represents the views of pupils very well and these are taken into account in whole school decisions. The school places a very high value on developing pupils' responsibilities in the world in which they live, so pupils are encouraged to think of environmental issues and to raise money for a wide range of charities, as well as contacting children in other countries by e-mail. Very good provision is made to help pupils to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle. Through science lessons and separate programmes in Years 5 and 6, pupils learn about sex and relationships and drug misuse. Visitors such as the dentist, health workers and members of the emergency services reinforce the programme of work very well.
87. A new co-ordinator has recently taken on the role of subject leader and is in the process of evaluating the overall provision in school. The subject is wide, but is led and managed well and has a good, developmental scheme of work for the weekly lessons.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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