

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTGATE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bury St Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124552

Headteacher: Mr Howard Lee

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Matthews

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 June 2005

Inspection number: 268232

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	296
School address:	Brooklands Close Hospital Road Bury St Edmunds
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Michael Pursell
Date of previous inspection:	21 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westgate Community Primary School is a first school, where pupils leave at the end of Year 4. There are 246 pupils in reception to Year 4 (145 boys and 101 girls) and 50 part-time children (25 boys and 25 girls) in the nursery. During the inspection there were 11 classes. Despite the fact that the school roll has fallen slightly since the last inspection, the school remains bigger than most other primary schools. The majority of pupils come from the local area. The pupils' mobility rate is below average. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, although an above average proportion have statements. Most of those who have Statements of Special Educational Needs are in the school's hearing impaired unit. A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but there are four pupils who speak English as an additional language and three pupils in public care. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average, overall. The school won an achievement award in 2003 and is working towards Healthy Schools accreditation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19410	Andrew Matthews	Lead inspector	English as an additional language English Physical education
32697	David Smith	Lay inspector	
20704	Terry Elston	Team inspector	Hearing impaired unit
12116	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Geography History
32354	Viki Baynes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music Religious education
32260	Andy Lane	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Westgate Primary is an effective school with some significant strengths. The quality of education provided by the school is good and standards are rising. Pupils achieve well through the school and, by the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is above average, overall. Pupils' personal development is very well provided for. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the school reaches out most successfully into the local and wider community to enrich the pupils' lives. Governors know the school very well and give very good support. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very effective and he is well supported by a hardworking staff and knowledgeable governors.
- The school curriculum is good, and this, together with good teaching, enables pupils to achieve well.
- All pupils are very well included in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are polite, behave well and work hard.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and pleased with the standards their children achieve.
- The tracking of pupils' progress towards their targets is not sufficiently rigorous.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. The good improvements put it in a strong position to keep the upward pressure on standards at the end of Year 4. Well-directed training for all staff has benefited management, teaching and learning. Governors are now much more involved in the work of the school and give very good support to the school's leadership. The key issue of improving standards of reading has been extremely well addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	D	D	A	A
writing	C	B	A	A
mathematics	E	C	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Children enter nursery with standards that are well below average, overall, and very low in language and mathematical development. They make good overall progress in the Foundation Stage and very good progress in their personal and social development, and leave reception with average attainment, except in their language and mathematical development, which is still below average. Due to improvements in teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection, **pupils, including those from different backgrounds, are now achieving well.** This is reflected in the above average standards in mathematics and science of current Year 4 pupils and their well above average standards in English. These pupils' attainment is also above average in physical education and in information and communication technology (ICT) and average in all the other subjects inspected. At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above average in reading, writing, mathematics, ICT and physical education. In science, their standards are average but more able pupils are not challenged enough by their teachers and should achieve better. In religious education and all other subjects inspected, standards in Year 2 are average. There was very little noted difference between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection, although in recent years, girls have outperformed boys slightly in reading and writing and boys have outperformed girls in mathematics. Gifted and talented pupils, and those pupils with special educational needs and

English as an additional language, are well supported and achieve well. Pupils with hearing impairment are particularly well supported and achieve very well.

Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. Pupils trust staff, are very well supported, and have very strong relationships with other pupils and adults. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually for the start of the day. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.** Pupils' personal development is enhanced well by the work of the active school council.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The overall quality of teaching is good and this leads directly to pupils making good gains in their learning, particularly in the development of their numeracy and literacy skills. However, some excessive use of worksheets in history and geography lessons restricts pupils' opportunities to use their writing skills. Teachers challenge pupils well, overall, and have high expectations of what they can achieve. The teaching assistants are very well trained and give very good support to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. There have been improvements in the way that pupils are assessed but teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils how they can improve their work or reach their personal targets.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is good, overall. The curriculum for physical education is particularly good. The curriculum is well enhanced by a very good range of visits and very popular extra-curricular activities. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and very good for those pupils with hearing impairment. Whilst the school's accommodation and resources are good, overall, they are unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where there is no covered area outside and a lack of large play apparatus. The computer provision has improved and very good use is made of the ICT suite, and computers in general, to support the pupils' learning in other subjects. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 are quickly adapting to their new interactive whiteboards and some very good use of this new technology was seen in one of the Year 3 classes. The school has very good links with the community and has built very good links with local schools. The school provides satisfactorily for pupils' care and welfare. Guidance is good for pupils' personal development and satisfactory for their learning, where there are some weaknesses in how pupils are helped to meet their targets. The school makes very good use of outside agencies to support pupils with specific behavioural, physical and learning difficulties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has the highest aspirations for the school, a very clear vision of what needs to be done and works unstintingly to improve its provision. He is very well supported by his deputy and committed staff. **The leadership and management of other key staff are good.** Rigorous monitoring has correctly identified weaknesses in the school's provision. These are being continually addressed with well-focused in-service training to develop the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants so that key objectives in the school's improvement plan can be met. The school's performance management system is particularly well linked to school improvement. The school's commitment to constant evaluation of its practice and the development of staff expertise is ensuring that it has a good capacity to continue its recent improvements and raise standards further. Governance is now very good and all statutory requirements are met. Governors have worked extremely hard to improve their effectiveness. Good quality training and regular visits to the school give them a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They have a good range of experience and expertise, and work closely with the school in planning and evaluating its developments.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school's provision and pupils enjoy the wide range of opportunities they have for learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- Track pupils' progress more rigorously and regularly towards their end-of-year targets.
- Clearly and consistently indicate to pupils how they can improve further.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects.

Pupils are working hard and achieving well. The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Standards in Year 2 and Year 4 are above average, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities are achieving well as they move through the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in their personal and social development.
- Standards in Year 4 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, overall, and pupils with hearing impairment achieve very well.

Commentary

1. The children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their school life. They settle very well and form strong relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. Attainment on entry is well below average, with significant weaknesses in the children's personal and social development and also their language and mathematical development. Children are achieving well in the nursery and reception classes because the teaching and quality of support are consistently good and very good in their personal and social development. By the end of the reception year, the great majority should meet the nationally expected Early Learning Goals¹, in all areas of learning except for their language and mathematical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (15.2)	16.0 (15.7)
Writing	16.1 (15.3)	14.8 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.2 (16.2)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The results for 2004 show a significant improvement over the previous year's results, with standards in mathematics being above average, and reading and writing being well above average when compared with all schools and similar schools. Particularly good was the improvement in the pupils' reading, which came about as the result of a whole-school focus. In previous years, boys had consistently outperformed girls in all subjects but in the 2004 tests girls outperformed boys, most significantly in reading and writing. In the teacher assessment of science, pupils' results were average, overall. The school's above average improvement trend looks set to continue.
3. The current Year 2 pupils are achieving well, overall, and very well in their reading due to the school's very successful drive to improve achievement. Standards are above average in

¹ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning.

reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and average in religious education and science. Due to a lack of consistent challenge in lessons, not enough of the more able Year 2 pupils are working at the higher levels in science. In all other subjects inspected pupils' attainment is average, apart from physical education where pupils are achieving well and their attainment is above average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of Year 2 boys and girls this year.

4. Standards in English have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now well above average in Year 4, with a very significant proportion of pupils already attaining the expected standards in reading for Year 6 pupils. The pupils' progress in reading is very good. They are also achieving well in mathematics, science, ICT and physical education and their attainment in these subjects is above average. In religious education, and all other subjects inspected, pupils' attainment is average. Pupils are using their good ICT skills effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. Pupils also make good use of their literacy skills to support their learning in some subjects, although this cross-curricular work is not planned so effectively as their work in ICT.
5. Pupils with hearing impairment make particularly good progress because of the consistently good level of support from a very good specialist teacher and very effective teaching assistants. The work for the withdrawal groups for these pupils is very carefully planned and leads to very good learning and integration with other pupils. The other pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in working towards their individual learning targets because they are given good support that is generally accurately matched to their needs. Frequent and regular communication between staff ensures that all SEN pupils receive well-directed support to enable them to be fully and effectively integrated into the work of the class. Parents and teachers review the pupils' individual plans regularly. This ensures that the pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes to school are good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an enriching and supportive environment within which pupils develop into responsible and confident young citizens.
- Pupils are proud of their school and make good progress because they are well motivated and eager to learn.
- The school monitors attendance and punctuality closely.

Commentary

6. Pupils' personal development is very good and is fostered through very good provision for social and moral development. Pupils are taught to appreciate the difference between right and wrong from the moment they enrol and, over the years, they become increasingly aware of how their actions affect others. Pupils care for one another, co-operate well, and ensure that those with special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school. Older pupils look after younger ones in the playground or in classes, act as 'buddies' and help them with their work. Pupils enjoy being part of the school community and like being given responsibilities for various jobs around school. For example, they undertake tasks in their classroom and elect representatives for the school council. Pupils' appreciation and understanding of the cultural traditions of others are promoted effectively through assemblies, lessons and a rich variety of displays. As a result, pupils get along very well and there have been no racial incidents. Analysis of the parents' questionnaires shows very positive views; indeed, almost everyone who returned their form indicated that their child enjoys school and taking part in the variety of activities available.

7. The last inspection found that pupils had positive attitudes to learning. Over the intervening six years, these have been maintained. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the opportunities for educational visits. They particularly look forward to the many extra-curricular activities, such as athletics, gardening and computing. Pupils are self-motivated, quick to accept responsibility and use their initiative well. For example, they help around the school and willingly take on school council responsibilities. There is a well-constructed home-school agreement in which the expectations of pupils, parents and school are clearly stated. Discussion with pupils shows that they have a clear understanding of the behaviour expected of them. They also understand fully the sanctions that apply if they fail to comply and are keen to be rewarded with stickers and awards when they behave well. Pupils speak highly of their teachers, although they also expressed concern about the occasional inconsiderate behaviour of a few of their peers. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
8. Above average attendance has been maintained since the last inspection. Rigorous monitoring procedures for attendance and punctuality help the school to keep an eye on particular individuals and to spot any emerging trends at an early stage. Unexplained absences are quickly followed up and parents are strongly discouraged from booking family holidays during the term. A few, however, continue to do so. For their part, pupils are keen to attend school and enjoy being praised in assemblies for especially good attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is good and its enrichment is very good. Accommodation and resources are good, overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, overall, but very good for pupils' personal and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved and is leading to pupils achieving consistently well through the school.
- Very good teaching enables pupils in the nursery to make particularly good progress in their personal and social development.
- Teaching for hearing impaired pupils is very good and enables these pupils to achieve very well.
- Reading is taught very well and leads to well above average standards at the end of Year 4.
- Teaching assistants are very knowledgeable and provide very effective support for pupils' learning.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13 (33%)	16 (41%)	9 (23%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

9. The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved since the last inspection. During the inspection a high proportion of lessons observed were good or very good and led to pupils making noticeable gains in their learning. The consistently good quality teaching in

the Foundation Stage (FS) enables children of all abilities to achieve well and particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants have a very good understanding of how young children learn and work closely with the teachers in planning an exciting range of carefully-planned activities that build constructively on the children's previous learning. In the activities provided, every opportunity is taken to develop children's speaking and listening and early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Routines are very clearly understood by the children and make them feel secure and valued. Despite the lack of a covered outside area or large play apparatus, staff maintain challenging teaching and compensate by using other resources effectively to build an enthusiasm for learning. Teachers assess children's work carefully but the recording of progress in the child-initiated activities in particular needs developing further.

10. In Years 1 to 4, pupils are well challenged and are achieving well, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where the quality of teaching is good. The teaching of reading is particularly good as a result of the recent school initiative and leads to pupils making significant progress in this area. Teachers are particularly good at encouraging pupils to do their best and, to this end, the role of teaching assistants is especially effective. They know the pupils very well, and use their very good knowledge and relationships to support and motivate the pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully but do not consistently inform pupils how to improve or move towards the targets that are set for them. This weakness is resulting in some of the older pupils not having a clear view of their personal strengths and weaknesses. The school has developed good assessment procedures and uses this information to set challenging targets in the core subjects. However, having set these targets, there are no formal opportunities during the year for teachers to review individual pupils' progress with senior managers to ensure that pupils are on track to achieve these targets. As a result, not all pupils are doing as well as the school predicted.
11. Teachers' good subject knowledge is used well in mathematics where pupils are set by ability in Years 3 and 4. Whilst pupils are taught in their own classes for literacy, the very successful in-service training for literacy, and particularly in reading, enables teachers to challenge pupils of all abilities, especially the higher-achievers. Teachers' good subject knowledge in ICT is also used well to integrate the subject widely across other areas of the curriculum. Whilst pupils make good use of their literacy skills in some subjects, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography, where the use of worksheets restricts opportunities for writing. The teaching of science is not consistently challenging for the more able Year 2 pupils.
12. Pupils have a clear indication of what they are going to learn in each lesson because the objectives are clearly explained at the start of each session. Whilst plenaries at the end of most lessons are generally used effectively to reinforce the learning towards these objectives, pupils do not always have an opportunity to discuss their own learning. When this does happen regularly, such as in one of the Year 4 classes, the teacher has a very clear knowledge of pupils' understanding of a particular concept and can plan future lessons more accurately to ensure that strengths are built on and areas of weakness addressed. The school has built good links with a local secondary school's physical education department. Teachers from this department work alongside school staff, offering high quality in-service training and making a significant contribution to the good standards that pupils achieve. Teachers make good use of pupils' speaking and listening skills and use questioning effectively to develop their learning. Teachers are adept at using 'talking partners' to assess pupils' understanding and to keep pupils fully engaged in lessons. This technique was used particularly well in a Year 1 literacy lesson when pupils described their imaginary monsters to each other.
13. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. This enables lessons to proceed at a good pace and gives pupils time to practise the new skills they have learned. Teachers and teaching assistants support the learning of SEN pupils well and develop these pupils' confidence and self-esteem effectively. Individual education plans are carefully drawn up and used well by the teachers and teaching assistants to plan work for the pupils. The targets in them are

clearly focused on the next stage of the pupils' learning and amended regularly with parents to build on pupils' successes and extend their learning. Occasionally, teachers do not tailor the work sufficiently well for these pupils' abilities, and without the help of the teaching assistants pupils struggle to complete it. The teaching and support for pupils with hearing impairment are very good because of the well-focused work of the experienced specialist teacher and her very well-qualified and capable teaching assistants. As a result, these pupils are very well integrated into the life and work of the school and achieve very well.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enrichment of the curriculum is very good.
- Provision for special educational needs is good and very good for pupils with hearing impairment.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education (PSHE) is very good.
- Accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.
- Initiatives to develop clear links across all subject areas are at a very early stage.

Commentary

14. The school has developed a good curriculum that is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum is reviewed regularly through subject audits. Although there are some links between subjects, this is not consistent across the curriculum. Planning clear links would enhance the curriculum and further develop the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
15. The school provides very good opportunities for enrichment. There is a very good range of clubs, including computers, gardening, dance, athletics, French and a signing club. Pupils in all year groups have a very good range of opportunities to visit places of interest throughout the year. Visits to museums, such as the Fitzwilliam, and places of historic interest, for example, Colchester Castle, are an important part of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy visits from theatre companies, music and dance groups and coaching by Ipswich Town Football Club.
16. Pupils with special educational needs and those from the hearing-impaired unit are fully integrated into the curriculum. The curricular provision for hearing-impaired pupils is very good. Their individual targets are planned very carefully and their progress towards them carefully monitored. Pupils gain much from writing their own targets and this gives them a very clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Throughout the school there is a very strong commitment to the inclusion of hearing-impaired pupils. The targets for other pupils with special educational needs are generally precise and measurable. Targets cover a wide area of difficulties, including behaviour, literacy and numeracy. Progress is carefully monitored by support staff who feed information into pupils' individual education plans and use their own initiative in modifying the work to make it more accessible for pupils.
17. Provision for PHSE is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in a variety of ways, including joining class and school councils. The emphasis on good relationships and social skills contributes well to pupils' development.
18. There are good induction arrangements for pupils joining the school. Nursery children visit the school with their parents and have the opportunity to play and listen to a story. A home visit is made before children start in the nursery. Transfer from class to class within the school is smooth and well planned. All pupils spend time with their new teacher in the summer term. Pupils moving to the next stage of education visit the local middle school

regularly during the year to sample lessons, and staff from the middle schools visit during the summer term.

19. Generally, resources and accommodation are good. Bright attractive displays create a stimulating environment and many provide a good support for learning. There is a well-used ICT suite, and ICT has been a successful focus for development in the school. Pupils benefit from well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers and a very good number of experienced teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to learning. Support staff are committed and very well trained and work together as a close and mutually supportive team in close partnership with the teachers. They take responsibility for several initiatives and support programmes such as developing pupils' social skills and helping with anger management strategies. A good range of resources is well used to support learning and the interactive whiteboards are being used effectively to make learning more interesting and enjoyable. However, in the Foundation Stage, there is no covered outside play area, which means children cannot play outside in wet weather. Also, there is no designated secure outside area for reception children. Resources for outside play are limited; for example, large construction kits and bicycles and tricycles are needed to provide children with more opportunities for physical development.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance. Involvement of pupils in the life of the school through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school knows its pupils very well and working relationships are very good.
- The school council is an effective body and is well regarded by staff and pupils.
- Sensitive and well-planned induction arrangements help children to settle in quickly.
- There are some shortcomings in day-to-day health and safety procedures.

Commentary

20. The parents' questionnaire confirmed that the school knows their children very well and the parents trust the school completely to deal with any problems that may arise. During discussions, pupils confirm that they feel well looked after and know how to seek help or advice. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe and have confidence to make the most of their time in school.
21. The school seeks pupils' views through surveys, discussions and the workings of the school council. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and appreciate being able to contribute to school life. Each class also has its own council from which representatives are drawn to serve on the whole-school council. Pupils with concerns or ideas can discuss these with their class or school council representatives who then report back on the outcome. Pupils make a clear contribution to school life and have brought about improvements, such as new playground equipment and a new 'quiet' area, and have raised funds to support charities and school events.
22. Most of the children attending the nursery move on to the reception class. Comprehensive induction arrangements ensure that children are well prepared for this. Older pupils who start during the school year receive good support through a system of 'buddies' and, when necessary, through additional support. The school monitors how well new pupils settle and parents confirm that they feel their child is well supported. Extra-curricular clubs also provide informal opportunities for adults and pupils to build relationships. This close contact enables teachers to spot emerging difficulties and to address them at an early stage.

23. First aid procedures are comprehensive and parents are promptly informed if a mishap occurs. Child protection procedures are thorough; members of staff are well trained and are fully aware of their individual responsibilities. Monitoring of health and safety is satisfactory and is independently audited. Records of the various safety tests of school equipment are up to date and risk assessment procedures are largely in place. A safety audit undertaken by a firm of specialists identified several points of action and some of these remain outstanding. The school is aware of this and plans to address the remaining priorities in the very near future.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good information and the school responds very well to their comments and ideas.
- The community and local businesses support the school very well.
- Strong links with receiving schools prepare pupils well for the next step in their education.

Commentary

24. The school has maintained very constructive partnership with parents. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting rightly felt that the school keeps them fully informed. Regular newsletters and letters keep parents up to date with school events and news about clubs is displayed prominently around the school. Teachers are flexible and try to make time for parents at the start or end of the school day, so that they can discuss any particular concerns. The school holds a number of curriculum evenings and courses, such as 'Keeping up With Your Child', which provide parents with the skills and confidence they need to be able to support their child's learning at home. Particularly successful were the reading meetings, as part of the school's recent initiative. Termly parents' evenings are well-attended and provide further opportunities for parents to discuss their child's learning. Annual reports to parents are well structured and give parents a clear picture of their child's progress. The school seeks the views of parents through regular surveys and very good use is made of this information when planning for the future.
25. The school has continued to forge constructive and rewarding links with a number of business organisations who sponsor events and broaden the range and quality of activities available to pupils. For example, a multi-national sugar company sponsored a Science Fair and a business partnership supported a 'Reading Together' project. The school makes very effective use of the local community to support and enrich the curriculum. Pupils visit local places of interest, such as the local theatre and brewery. Pupils also visit a local retirement home, compete in the town flower competition, and the school choir sings at the switching on of the town's Christmas lights. Visitors, including the local clergy, regularly contribute to assemblies and representatives from the police, fire and ambulance services talk to the pupils about their work. A small but hard-working friends association provides good support for the school.
26. Older pupils are well prepared for their move to middle school. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to get to know their next school through subject-based and other events, such as science and art afternoons. The school holds joint events, such as staff teas, and teachers from the receiving school also meet their new pupils. There are very close links with local special schools and pupils exchange visits regularly. The school also hosts work experience visits for pupils from the secondary schools and has excellent links with a nearby teacher training department of a local university.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and the governance of the school are very good. The management of the school is good and the leadership of other key staff is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and, with the help of all staff, manages the ongoing development of the school very well.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's effectiveness.
- The school has good self-evaluation procedures.
- The school's improvement plan has been instrumental in improving the school's provision and is very well linked to the teachers' performance management system.
- Whilst the school's target-setting processes are effective, the tracking of pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets lacks rigour.
- The school has very good systems to support new staff and very well-focused in-service training to develop the expertise of all staff.

Commentary

27. The leadership and management of the school have improved well in all areas since the last inspection. Governors meet all statutory requirements and now provide very good support for the work of the school, playing a major contribution in its leadership and development. The combination of information gleaned from governor visits, classroom observations and the headteacher's detailed termly reports gives them a very secure appreciation of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be improved. This information is used most effectively in the drawing up of the school improvement plan. Governors are keenly aware of the progress and end-of-year targets for the Year 2 pupils, and also follow the progress of all the other year groups during the year. As a result, they have a very clear understanding of the progress of all classes. Governors have very high aspirations for the school and have been instrumental in raising the school's expectations of its higher-achieving pupils, particularly in reading.
28. The headteacher has worked very hard and effectively to improve the school's provision since the last inspection. He provides very good leadership for the school and is very well respected by governors, staff, pupils and parents. He works very effectively with his deputy and together they make a very strong team. With a great emphasis on staff development, he has built a most effective staff team, which firmly puts the raising of pupils' achievements at the forefront of the school's work. He has a very clear vision for the school, so that all staff know exactly what they are working towards. The school's performance management system is very well integrated into the school improvement procedures and ensures that the principal improvement target for the headteacher remains a clear focus for all staff. The headteacher leads the curriculum development effectively and is most watchful to ensure that all pupils in the school are fully and meaningfully included in its activities. The school has a strong ethos and is a well ordered community in which pupils feel secure and valued.
29. The management of the school is good and has improved since the last inspection, particularly in terms of subject co-ordination. New staff settle quickly because of the very good induction and support they receive. All members of staff have a secure understanding of how the school runs from day to day and carry out this policy in a consistent fashion. The role of the co-ordinator has been particularly carefully developed and all co-ordinators have a clear understanding of standards in their subject because of the regular monitoring they carry out. This is particularly so in the case of the quality monitoring carried out by the hearing impaired co-ordinator. However, the co-ordinator for special educational needs, because of classroom commitments, has not yet had sufficient time to monitor the provision across the school. The school has recognised this in next year's improvement plan, which has ensured regular release time for this purpose. The co-ordinators regularly attend in-service training courses

for their subject, with the school making particularly good use of a nearby teachers' centre and the local education authority's expertise. All staff benefit from individual teachers' courses as regular feedback is given in staff meetings.

30. The school has developed good self-evaluation procedures and uses these effectively to draw up improvement plan priorities. The views of governors, staff, parents and pupils are carefully considered. These, together with information from the school's effective monitoring systems, enable the school to set very specific targets for its improvement plan. Since the last inspection, these have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school's target-setting procedures are thorough, but there are no regular discussions between individual teachers and members of the senior management team to track individual pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets. As a result of good teaching, the great majority of pupils reach their targets. However, a small minority do not and it is important for the school to identify these pupils' underachievement quickly so that appropriate extra support can be put in place.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	868,737	Balance from previous year	48,382
Total expenditure	832,646	Balance carried forward to the next	36,091
Expenditure per pupil	2,974		

31. The governors manage the budget very carefully and apply the principles of best value very well. The bursar provides very good support to the school in general and the headteacher and governors in particular. This is especially the case with the school's finances, where the school makes very effective use of the bursar's skills. As a result, the school budget is managed very carefully. The government work-place reform initiatives have been managed particularly well by the headteacher and governors.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is good.

At the time of the inspection, some children had only been in the afternoon nursery for a few weeks. Children with special educational needs, and the very small number of children with English as an additional language, are well integrated and receive very good support. Teaching and learning are good, overall, with some examples of very good teaching seen. All areas of learning are covered and there is a good balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated activities. The assessment of children's attainment and progress is not yet fully developed, particularly during child-initiated activities. The Foundation Stage profile is completed by the end of reception, but there is a need to develop an assessment system that is continuous from entry into school to when children move from the reception classes into the next stage. There is a good system of induction for children entering the school. The co-ordinator is currently on maternity leave and the temporary co-ordinator has been in post for a very short time, so it was not possible to make a judgement on leadership and management. Staff create a stimulating environment but more resources are needed in some learning areas. There is no covered outside play area and reception classes do not have a secure, designated outside area and have to use a playground and the school field. In this respect, accommodation is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Routines are well established and promote confidence.
- Children achieve very well.
- There is a very good range of activities that encourage and promote learning.

Commentary

32. Children enter the nursery with very low personal and social skills. They play on their own and lack confidence and curiosity. By the time they are at the end of reception, they are playing together, discussing ideas and sharing equipment. The great majority are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals. All adults show considerable expertise in encouraging and promoting the children's development. Independence is encouraged, with children understanding daily routines because these are clearly explained. There is a wide range of activities for children to do and the very good teaching consistently promotes the development of children's understanding of sharing, taking turns and co-operating. Adults are skilled at identifying those less confident children and ensuring that they join in. Play is used very effectively to develop social skills; for example, children making a tea party in the role-play area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching phonics.
- Children achieve well and very well in the development of their speaking and listening skills.

- Resources for role-play need developing.

Commentary

33. Teaching is good, with all staff creating a wide range of opportunities for children to develop and improve their language skills. Activities are carefully planned to improve learning, particularly speaking and listening, as this is an area where many children initially have very low skills. Children with English as an additional language are particularly well supported and are making noticeable gains in all aspects of their literacy work.
34. Many children enter the nursery with very low language skills. They use one word to respond to questions and find it difficult to explain what they are doing. Role-play areas are well planned to encourage talking: for example, the Three Billy Goat Gruff's house in the nursery. There is a need to improve resources for a wider range of role-play activities. By the end of reception, children can express themselves with greater confidence, can start and continue a conversation and use relevant vocabulary. They enjoy listening to stories. In one reception class, children were completely engrossed in the story of The Sandhorse.
35. Children in the nursery are encouraged to make marks and write from an early stage. They progress from marks to writing over letters and words, and then to forming letters independently. In reception classes, children are confidently writing letters and simple words. High attaining children can write sentences. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at a range of books. The strong emphasis on teaching phonics enables children to start to link sounds to letters. In reception, children can identify the initial sound in a word, and some can identify sounds in the middle and at the end of words. Some children in reception know what would be found on the front cover of a book. They can retell a well-known story such as *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* with enthusiasm. Despite the good provision, a significant proportion are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- Children's counting and calculating skills are developing well.

Commentary

36. Children enjoy mathematical games and activities are planned to provide a good range of learning opportunities. Throwing two die and adding the numbers was an enjoyable activity in a reception class. Children in the nursery can recognise some numbers to 10. One boy was delighted when he learnt to add two numbers, such as 4+5, and 3+2, during a snake game in the nursery. Enthusiastic teaching encouraged a reception class to count confidently to 100 and children were excited when they realised they could count backwards from 10 to 0. Lessons are well planned and teaching assistants provide very good support for individuals and groups. A good level of challenge is provided for a small group of more able children. These children can add and subtract numbers to 10 with confidence. There are appropriate opportunities built into planning, to learn about shape, space and measures. An exciting activity in the nursery, with children making footprints with painted Wellingtons, provided a very good opportunity for talking about *big, large, medium, small* and *tiny*. The nursery nurse is particularly skilled at initiating a good mathematical discussion. Children enter nursery with very low mathematical skills. Although the provision is good, the children's standards are still likely to be below average at the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computers are used regularly as part of learning.
- There is a good range of activities to promote learning.
- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- There is a limited amount of small equipment such as tools and magnifiers.
- Opportunities for children to use big construction kits are limited.

Commentary

37. Children enter the nursery with very limited experiences of the world around them. Good teaching ensures that there are many opportunities for the children to develop their skills and understanding. For example, nursery children visit a zoo and reception children visit Nowton Park to look at mini-beasts in their natural habitats. Good use is made of the school grounds, and adults are experienced at relating children's everyday experiences to learning. For example, in reception, tents were put up to provide children with first-hand experience of camping, and skilled questioning by adults helped children to explain what they were experiencing. Computers are always available with a good range of programs. Nursery children need considerable support while working at the computer, but reception children are more confident and many are developing skills at using the mouse. There are few opportunities for children to use a variety of tools. The lack of big construction materials limits the opportunity for children to build on a large scale. This area of learning has been a focus since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below national expectations. Children now achieve well, with most on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good.
- Children achieve well.
- Well planned opportunities for development.
- No covered outside area and no designated outside area for reception classes.
- Limited number of resources for outdoor play.

Commentary

38. Teaching is good, with planning ensuring there are good opportunities for development. Children can choose to work and play outside. There is plenty of space but, while the nursery has a fenced area, reception children use a playground and the school field. This is a large area, which needs a lot of supervision by staff. A smaller secure area would provide a safer environment. Children in reception are developing control of a variety of small equipment. Some can bounce a ball, throw and catch confidently, but some have limited skills. There is no covered outside area so children cannot play outside in wet weather. Resources are limited and there is a need for more bicycles and equipment for pushing and pulling. In the nursery, children are at the beginning levels of the Early Learning Goals. Achievement is good, and by the end of reception, a high proportion will achieve the Early Learning Goals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good.
- Music is well developed.
- There is a good, wide range of opportunities for development.
- Resources for role-play are limited.

Commentary

39. Children in the nursery enjoy painting and using a variety of media, but their concentration span is very short so that they do not fully develop their skills. Reception children are able to experiment with and select materials appropriately. While making a collage, a girl in reception rejected some material, saying, "That's too hard, it's not the right stuff". Children designed and painted beach towels and T-shirts as part of a topic on holidays. Stories and themes are used well to develop imaginative play. Nursery children enjoyed having a tea party for the Three Billy Goats Gruff in the role-play area. Children showed good skills in organising travel agents in reception. They issued tickets and booked very cheap holidays. However, more resources would improve children's development further. Music is well developed. Children enjoy singing favourite songs and nursery rhymes. A class of reception children created an imaginative story of a storm using a range of instruments. They experimented with loud and soft sounds. Nursery children are generally working at the first stages of the Early Learning Goals. Children achieve well, and a high proportion of reception children is on course to achieve the early learning Goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are well above average by the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good, overall, and very good for reading.
- The teaching assistants play a significant part in the very good provision.
- The subject is very well managed.
- Pupils use their literacy skills well in some subjects.
- The reading development initiative has had a big impact on standards.

Commentary

40. There has been a very good improvement in the school's provision since the last inspection and standards are now well above average at the end of Year 4. There is a significant proportion of pupils in Year 4 already working at the levels expected of Year 6 pupils. In the 2004 national tests for Year 2, the standards in reading and writing were well above average when compared with all schools nationally and also similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that the present group of Year 2 pupils, which does not have as many higher-achieving pupils as the previous year, has above average standards in both reading and writing.
41. Pupils are achieving well and there is no discernible difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special

education needs also make good progress and achieve standards that reflect their individual targets. Pupils with hearing impairments are very well supported and achieve very well. The teaching assistants' very effective guidance and support play a significant part in the very good provision for all pupils.

42. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in both Years 2 and 4. The great majority of the Year 4 pupils have well-developed speaking skills and use interesting language with complex sentences. They listen very carefully to their teachers and the other pupils. This was evident in a very good Year 4 lesson where the pupils were evaluating poems that their peers were writing about 'My Box'. They analysed one another's techniques to stimulate the reader's interest and discussed how they could use some of the ideas to improve their own poems. Most of the pupils think carefully when they answer questions, explain their point of view clearly and justify their answers and opinions in a mature way.
43. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 4. Standards have risen sharply because of a most successful whole-school focus on improving reading over the last two years involving staff and parents. A structured reading programme, supported by the systematic teaching of phonic skills, was introduced into the reception and Years 1 and 2 classes. By Year 2, most pupils read accurately with increasing fluency and all enjoy books and stories. By Year 4, many pupils are independent and enthusiastic readers who explain why certain books appeal to them. They use books and computer programs for research and to support their work in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. Through the younger pupils' home-school reading record books parents are provided with very useful information about how to question their children after hearing them read. Whilst these record books provide a very useful home/school link, their usefulness could be improved if a child's short-term target was stuck in to give a clearer focus to the reading at home.
44. By Year 4, standards in writing, including spelling, are above average. The National Literacy Strategy has influenced the organisation of lessons and this is having a positive impact on the development of the pupils' knowledge of grammatical structures and the processes of writing in different styles for different purposes. Pupils structure their writing well. They prepare an initial draft of their work and edit it to clarify their thoughts through their writing. They write narrative, arguments, factual pieces and poetry. Pupils are excited by experimenting with words, clearly shown when one pupil used his alliteration skills: 'my box is full of creatures where evil lurks and where putrid and polluting people turn into battling, bloodthirsty beasts'. The pupils in Year 2 develop their ideas into a sequence of punctuated sentences and begin to use connecting words effectively to join ideas and to create sustained writing.
45. The vast majority of the pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and they enjoy their lessons. They are very well behaved and try to do their best at all times. During discussions, they are attentive, make relevant contributions and respect the ideas and opinions of others. They are clear about the teachers' high expectations of their work and their behaviour. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they begin to understand the power of words to create moods and atmosphere, to pose questions, to create arguments and to encourage empathy.
46. Teaching is good, overall, and very good for reading (where the pupils' achievement is very good). Six lessons were observed with very good teaching in three of them and satisfactory or good teaching in the others. The teaching assistants play a significant part in this. All the members of staff have a very good knowledge and clear understanding of the subject because of the very well-focused training that they regularly undertake. Lessons have good pace as teachers are becoming much more confident at using computers and the interactive whiteboards as a principal teaching resource. The work is planned very carefully and the teachers explain clearly what they want the pupils to learn. The lessons are organised well, presented imaginatively and the work is suitably challenging for all ability levels. The teachers use their questioning skills very skilfully to establish the pupils' understanding and then use the answers effectively to support and extend the learning. At the end of lessons, the pupils

are given opportunities to discuss what they have been doing. Teaching is most effective when pupils are consistently involved in discussing or reviewing their learning during these sessions. Teachers mark work carefully and give good encouragement to the pupils' efforts. Less consistent is the way teachers inform pupils as to how to improve their work further. All pupils have writing targets but these again are not consistently referred to when pupils' work is marked and some pupils are unclear as to how they can improve their work.

47. The subject is managed very well by the two co-ordinators. They check regularly the quality of teaching and learning, teachers' planning and the pupils' work. The school's assessment procedures are good. Results of the internal and national tests are carefully analysed and suitable action taken to address any perceived weaknesses. Results are also used to identify areas for development. This is a most thorough system that has led to a very marked improvement in pupils' literacy skills in the last two years and improvements to the strong curriculum. Whilst the great majority of pupils reach their challenging end-of-year targets, an area for further development would be to introduce more regular monitoring of the pupils' progress towards these targets to ensure that all pupils stay on track to achieve appropriately. The school's resources are good and have been systematically improved in recent years. The library has been re-equipped with a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. Throughout the school, the pupils make good use of ICT for research and for word processing to enhance their written work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The pupils use their literacy skills well to support work in other subjects, although the planning for this work is informal. Their skills in speaking and listening are used across the curriculum in support of discussions in class sessions. Pupils' writing skills are developed well in some of the subjects, but where there is an over-reliance on worksheets, as in geography and history, valuable opportunities are missed for pupils to practise these skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well because the teaching is good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Improvement since the last inspection is good.
- Marking does not let the pupils know how to improve.

Commentary

49. National test results for 2004 showed that pupils' attainment was above average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms that standards for the current Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are also above average. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school because they benefit from good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve at the same rate as their fellow pupils because they are well supported by the adults working with them. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics were average and older pupils were not confident in recalling number facts. The school has worked hard in this area, with the result that standards have risen and the pupils now use good strategies to perform mental calculations. This represents good improvement.
50. The quality of teaching is good, overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. The teachers make it clear to the pupils what they are expected to learn and use good mathematical vocabulary. This is reflected in the way that the pupils talk confidently about their work and co-operate well in lessons to share their ideas. Throughout the school, the teachers

encourage their pupils to try different methods of calculation so that they build their confidence, with the result that pupils are willing to try complicated calculations.

51. In Years 1 and 2 the teachers encourage and motivate their pupils by giving them a wide variety of interesting tasks. In one very good lesson, for example, the pupils were investigating the seasons by producing graphs and charts based on the birthdays of the class. The pupils found the work exciting because the teacher provided a very good range of activities that challenged the pupils of all abilities and the adults provided very good support. The same is true in Years 3 and 4, where the pupils develop very good mathematical vocabulary because their teachers set high expectations for the way that the pupils explain their ideas. For example, in another very good lesson, the teacher provided many extended opportunities for the pupils to explain how they had worked out a sum in their heads. The use of interactive whiteboards in the older classes is beginning to have a positive impact on learning because the teachers use them well to break down complicated ideas into small steps.
52. The pupils' books contain targets that are related to National Curriculum levels. This is an effective way to ensure that the pupils understand what they are learning. However, the teachers' marking does not refer to these targets so that pupils do not understand clearly enough what they need to do next to improve. Teachers set long-term targets for pupils that are linked to national standards and they use the good day-to-day assessments effectively to adapt their plans. However, they do not bring this information together often enough to ensure that pupils are on track to meet the targets set for them.
53. The leadership and management of mathematics by the subject leader are good. Although only undertaking this responsibility for a short time he has developed a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject through good monitoring of lessons and the pupils' work. Areas for further development have been identified and a clear action plan put in place. An important feature is the way that the school is working with the local middle school to develop a continuous curriculum across Key Stage 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Mathematics is used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum, as, for example, the production of charts and graphs in science and history. However, opportunities are not planned systematically and, as a result, some opportunities are missed to use mathematical skills in everyday situations and to develop accuracy in measurement.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good coverage of all aspects of the science curriculum.
- Attainment is above average by the end of Year 4.
- Work is insufficiently challenging for higher-attaining pupils in Year 2.

Commentary

55. Pupils' achievement in science is good, overall, and particularly good in Year 4. There is good coverage of the science curriculum in all year groups and pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the core content of the curriculum as they move through the school. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of a body of technical vocabulary and investigative skills that are taught in a structured way from Year 1 onwards. Science lessons are backed by a lively programme of visits and visitors to the school; these widen pupils' horizons and develop their interest in the subject.

56. Teaching and learning are good, overall, but only satisfactory in Year 2. In all classes there is an emphasis on practical activities and investigations which pupils enjoy, but they are often teacher – directed with too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative in choosing their own equipment or devising their own tests. In Year 2, in particular, assessment is unsatisfactory and not used effectively to determine what pupils already know and understand. As a result, science teaching in this year is based on activities that are interesting in themselves but which do not develop pupils’ learning fast enough. Teachers give pupils appropriate opportunities to conduct fair tests in a systematic and structured way but do not challenge higher-attaining pupils to plan their own investigations or to undertake tasks which are qualitatively more challenging.
57. Teaching is underpinned by very good relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves. Nearly all lessons proceed in a calm purposeful atmosphere and pupils work conscientiously, both individually and collaboratively. Activities, such as dissecting an owl pellet and identifying the diet of the owl, are stimulating and engage pupils’ interest. Teachers’ expectations of behaviour are high and pupils of all abilities are fully included in all activities. Support staff are used well to help all pupils access the curriculum and teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with a hearing impairment.
58. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Although science has not been a recent focus for development, the co-ordinator has maintained its high profile within the school and there has been a constant movement towards refining what is already good provision. The good features noted in the last report have been built on systematically, and the curriculum has been evaluated and supplemented with new material as necessary. The co-ordinator has undertaken a programme of monitoring and has identified whole-school areas for development as well as issues that are specific to individual teachers. This has enabled him to identify the principal priorities for raising standards even further when science becomes a focus for development as:
- Using assessment to match tasks more closely to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils.
 - Giving pupils more opportunities to devise their own practical investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and standards are high.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The teachers’ assessments are not always accurate enough.

Commentary

59. The pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average skills and achieve well, so that by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 standards are above national expectations in all aspects of the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, build their skills well. Since the last inspection the school has improved provision, and standards have risen by the end of Year 2 and have been maintained by the end of Year 4. The school has kept pace with the increasing expectations and levels of technology seen nationally.
60. The quality of teaching is good, overall, ranging from good to very good. The teachers and support staff are confident users of ICT so that their teaching is effective and uses clear technical language. In many of the lessons observed, the adults took time to explain clearly the way that a particular program could be used and often asked the pupils to discuss this with

a partner. This approach built the confidence of the pupils so that when working independently they were able to try out new ideas. By using 'steps to success' at the start of lessons the teachers set out clearly how they expect their pupils to approach a task. In some lessons, however, the teacher did not define clearly what the pupils were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson and, as a result, too many pupils did not complete the task set.

61. The younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to log on to the school network to save and retrieve their work. They have particularly good skills in word processing and understand how to adapt the layout of a page. They use a range of programs well to produce charts, graphs and artwork. In one good lesson, the pupils used the Internet successfully to find information about Woodbridge and began to compare this town with their own neighbourhood. The older pupils in Years 3 and 4 are confident users of the school's network and can find the program they need quickly. They are beginning to make good decisions about which is the most appropriate program to use for a particular task. For example, a Year 4 class was able to make individual choices about which desktop publishing system to use to present the poems they had written. This aspect of ICT is enhanced by the high quality discussions that teachers have with their pupils.
62. The teachers make regular assessments of their pupils and set targets for their future attainment. This is a good system that provides the school with some valuable information. However, the assessments that the teachers make are not always precise because they do not focus clearly on the ICT skills, but take into account other factors such as the quality of language used. This means that the school's pupil tracking system is not providing managers with information that is accurate enough. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has gained a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of ICT across the school through good monitoring. She understands the areas for improvement and is leading the strategic development of ICT well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. ICT is used widely to support learning and to develop links between subjects. Good examples were seen of pupils using computers to enhance their work in humanities and in English. The school has invested heavily in interactive whiteboards and laptops for teachers, with the result that ICT is beginning to be embedded as a core tool for teaching and learning. The use of this technology is having a positive impact on the motivation of pupils and on the quality of teaching.

HUMANITIES

64. No lessons in either **history** or **geography** were observed during the inspection but scrutiny of planning and pupils' work indicates that attainment is broadly average in both subjects. A very good feature of the provision is the wide range of field trips and visitors to the school that extend pupils' understanding of the topics being covered. Cross-curricular links are developed as appropriate and good use is made of the locality as a basis for comparative studies. For example, pupils in Year 3 look at Bury St Edmunds past and present and compare it with other towns in the area such as Woodbridge and Felixstowe. Although planning in both subjects is based on national guidelines, progress has been significant in developing a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful for the pupils. A variety of teaching strategies are used which are motivating and encourage positive attitudes. ICT is used well to support learning through research. However, there is an over-reliance on worksheets in some years which is resulting in too few opportunities for these pupils to record their work in

extended pieces of writing. The co-ordinator manages the subjects well; she has monitored teaching and learning in the classrooms and has worked closely with a local authority adviser to develop the use of ICT in both subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A creative approach, including role-play and practical activities, is engaging pupils.
- There are good links to spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, and to personal, social and health education.
- Pupils' levels of understanding are not as developed as they might be.
- Assessment is at an early stage.

Commentary

65. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory. By the end of Year 4, pupils are achieving satisfactorily and reach appropriate standards as defined in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss their thoughts and ideas. Pupils enjoy the practical activities; for example, pupils in a Year 2 class enjoyed baking and designing Mendhi patterns and cards during a lesson about Eid-ul Fitr. Older pupils wrote acrostic poems about caring for the world, and some of the work produced was sensitive and thoughtful. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that work is linked with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A topic on Islam not only developed pupils' understanding of the religion, but also the cultural aspects. Good links are planned between religious education, pupils' personal, social and health education and assemblies; for example, the focus for assemblies was caring for our world, which directly linked to the topic in Year 3.
66. Pupils are developing their understanding of different religions and faiths satisfactorily but a significant minority do not listen attentively in lessons, so their development is not as secure as it should be. Pupils have the opportunity to visit a church and there are visits from different Christian churches and someone from the Hindu faith. The locally agreed syllabus is fully implemented and sufficient time is allocated for teaching. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the co-ordinators are aware of the need to extend and develop the range of resources. Assessment of the subject is underdeveloped and has rightly been prioritised for inclusion in the next school improvement plan.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the overall provision in **art and design**. Evidence from an analysis of the pupils' work and a discussion with the subject leader, indicate that the school has maintained the standards of the last inspection. Throughout the school there are good examples of the way that the pupils study the work of famous artists and use a variety of techniques to produce good quality work. The older pupils maintain sketch-books that are of good quality and show the clear development of pupils' skills. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and maintains a portfolio of the pupils' work across the school.
68. No lessons were seen in **design technology** during the inspection period, although an analysis of the pupils' work was carried out and a discussion held with the subject leader. From this limited evidence it is clear that the pupils make a wide range of models based on careful designs and that standards are broadly average. Examples were seen of pupils investigating taste in food technology. There are good samples of work in paper engineering when the younger pupils made books with sliding pictures. The subject leader maintains a useful portfolio of the work undertaken across the school.
69. Only one lesson of **music** was seen during the inspection. During this, pupils created a class composition using a variety of instruments. Pupils sing enthusiastically in assembly and in a

celebration assembly a group of pupils from the choir sang two two-part songs. A range of music is played as pupils enter and leave the hall. There are clubs for recorders and choir. The choir sing in local homes for the elderly, and at the 'switch-on' of the Christmas lights in town. A teacher from the local music service visits the school to teach violin. A Zulu song and dance group have visited the school and introduced pupils to a wide range of music from a different culture. The school also takes part in music weeks with other local schools. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop pupils' skills and understanding in music across the school and this will be a priority next year.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in lessons and standards are above average.
- Many pupils take part in the very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

70. The provision has improved since the last inspection and this has had a real impact on standards, which are now consistently above average. Pupils are achieving well, overall. Boys and girls of all backgrounds work hard, are very enthusiastic and achieve equally. They collaborate very well, with the subject making a very good contribution to their spiritual, social and moral development.
71. By Year 4, pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy practising skills to improve their personal performance. They are developing good catching and throwing skills which they use well in games. The great majority of pupils are confident in water and a significant proportion already meet the Year 6 expectations. Football skills are good and have resulted in the Year 4 team being very successful in local league and cup tournaments this year. Teaching is good, overall, and generates a huge enthusiasm amongst the pupils. There is a very good emphasis on vigorous activity in all lessons and results in most pupils developing good stamina. This was clearly seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils worked very hard in their games lesson, which included sprinting, hurdling and throwing. The school has built up very strong sporting links with a local secondary school as part of the School Sports Co-ordination programme. As a result, sports teachers from this school take lessons alongside class teachers. This has a two-way benefit for the school in offering the pupils high quality teaching whilst developing the coaching and teaching skills of class teachers. This initiative has had a major impact on raising overall standards since the last inspection.
72. The school makes good use of its extensive facilities, including a large playground and playing-field. The very good curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of after-school clubs and competitive matches against other local schools. The leadership role of the co-ordinator is now very good and has improved since the last inspection. He has built extensive links with local sports clubs. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are given every encouragement to join the training offered by these and other clubs. Pupils' progress is assessed carefully at the end of each unit of work so that teachers can build productively on pupils' previous skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

73. No lesson was seen in PSHCE and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision. However, the available evidence about the way that the school integrates the subject into many aspects of its work, indicate that the provision is very good and has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and the way they treat one another. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and pupils have a very clear understanding of the need for rules and the importance of maintaining them. There are very well planned opportunities for them to take part in discussions and to develop social skills, such as learning to take turns, share, work and play together, and help each other. The older pupils are particularly sensitive and caring in their support of the younger pupils. Pupils have a good knowledge about the importance of personal hygiene, diet and exercise. Sex education and awareness of drug and alcohol abuse are dealt with in PSHE lessons. Pupils have regular 'circle time' to discuss issues that are important to them, and representatives from Year 1 onwards take part in a school council, which pupils rightly feel helps them play an active role in the life of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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