

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SIDESTRAND HALL SCHOOL**

Sidestrand, Cromer

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121254

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Fee

Lead inspector: Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 262151

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 8 – 16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 105

School address: Cromer Road  
Sidestrand  
Cromer  
Norfolk  
Postcode: NR27 0NH

Telephone number: 01263 578144  
Fax number: 01263 579287

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Michael Lovatt

Date of previous inspection: 08/02/1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sidestrand Hall is a school for boys and girls aged eight to 16 with moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently, of the 105 attending the school, only 25 are girls. The attainment of pupils who join the primary section of the school is well below average and that of those who join in Year 7 is below average. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are 79 with moderate learning difficulties and 18 have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Two have speech and communication difficulties, one is visual impaired and five have autistic spectrum disorders, including three with Aspergers Syndrome. Additionally, a very small number have further needs, including medical conditions and hearing impairment and 14 of those with moderate learning difficulties also have some degree of emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils are white and none have English as an additional language. There are five pupils in public care. Although pupils' socio-economic circumstances vary, these are broadly below average. The school has three residential units for pupils who need to develop social and independence skills. At present, 17 pupils stay for between one and four nights each week. The catchment area covers a large part of Norfolk and a few pupils board because it is not practical for them to travel home daily. The school is in a rural location close to the sea. It is set in extensive grounds and housed in several buildings including what was originally a large private house. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was absent owing to ill health. Five temporary or supply teachers were covering for absence or unfilled vacancies.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                   |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 15173                          | Rosemary Eaton    | Lead inspector | Art and design, design and technology, English as an additional language             |
| 11437                          | Tony Anderson     | Lay inspector  |  |
| 14691                          | Jenny Hall        | Team inspector | Science, modern foreign language, personal, social, health and citizenship education |
| 29452                          | Christine Emerson | Team inspector | English, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs          |
| 14563                          | Graham Pirt       | Team inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education     |

The inspection contractor was:

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

|  | Page      |
|--|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>                    |           |
| <b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses                |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities                       |           |
| <b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>                           | <b>11</b> |
| Teaching and learning  |           |
| The curriculum   |           |
| Care, guidance and support   |           |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community                    |           |
| <b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| <b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4</b> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>                     | <b>27</b> |

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Sidestrand Hall provides a **satisfactory** standard of education. However, this school has serious weaknesses in the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed, the systems for collecting and using information about how well it is performing and pupils' achievement in English. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, as is the quality of teaching and learning. There is satisfactory leadership but management is unsatisfactory. Staffing problems are slowing down developments. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The systems for checking how well the school is performing are not effective enough.
- The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is not managed sufficiently well.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics and science.
- The headteacher has accurately judged the strengths and weaknesses of the school and made plans to improve matters.
- Pupils do not all attend school regularly and lessons frequently start late.
- Pupils achieve very well in physical education.
- Staff work hard to provide interesting activities for pupils, during the school day, after school and in the residential units.
- The school has very strong links with the community, other schools and colleges.

The school has declined since its previous inspection. For example, pupils' behaviour is now a more significant problem and achievement in English is now unsatisfactory. Several of the issues that were raised in the previous report have been tackled successfully, but there remain weaknesses in management systems and methods of dealing with challenging behaviour. Other than in English, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching remain largely the same, although there have been improvements in Years 4 to 6. The number of exclusions has risen considerably.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Pupils' achievement at the end of: | in relation to individual targets in: |                               |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                    | subjects of the curriculum            | personal and social education |
| Year 6                             | <b>satisfactory</b>                   | <b>satisfactory</b>           |
| Year 9                             | <b>satisfactory</b>                   | <b>satisfactory</b>           |
| Year 11                            | <b>satisfactory</b>                   | <b>satisfactory</b>           |

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. In Years 4 to 6, they achieve well in mathematics and science but their achievement in English is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve satisfactorily in English and well in mathematics and science. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is good in science, satisfactory in mathematics and unsatisfactory in English. Throughout the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily in information and communication technology, religious education, and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Achievement in physical education is very good. Girls and boys and those with additional special educational needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders, achieve at similar levels. However, pupils who regularly miss lessons through exclusion or absence do less well. Year 11 pupils are successful in examination courses in a few subjects, including GCSE in mathematics.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **satisfactory**. The residential units make a good contribution, especially to helping pupils become more independent. Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. Although most pupils behave well, the unacceptable behaviour of a minority results in it being unsatisfactory overall. Attendance is

unsatisfactory. Too many pupils are absent without good reason. Although they usually arrive on time in the mornings, pupils are often late for lessons.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory** and so is the quality of learning. A number of teachers spend too much time managing pupils' behaviour and are not always successful in this. The most effective teachers plan interesting and relevant activities and ensure that lessons move on quickly, so pupils don't lose interest. Teachers do not all collect enough information about how well pupils are learning and achieving and individual education plans do not have literacy or numeracy targets. Pupils' work is often not marked thoroughly enough in order to help them to improve.

The curriculum includes a good range of activities to make pupils' learning rich and enjoyable. The arrangements for looking after pupils' welfare are satisfactory, with good care and support arrangements in the residential units. The school has very strong links with the community and other schools and works hard to involve parents in their children's learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Leadership is satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear understanding of what the school needs to do in order to improve and has made decisions which are beginning to move it forward. She has established a new leadership team but staff changes and absence have limited what it has achieved and the headteacher has to take on too many tasks. Management is unsatisfactory and a number of systems are not working effectively – for example, ways of improving teaching, assessing pupils' performance and managing their behaviour. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet their statutory responsibilities and are increasingly finding out for themselves about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Financial planning and management are good.

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

Parents are broadly satisfied with the school. Rightly, a number are concerned about standards of behaviour and the incidence of bullying. Pupils' views are positive. They especially enjoy sporting activities. Many of them are critical of other pupils' behaviour.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve management systems, especially those that concern the quality of teaching, pupils' learning, and their behaviour. Ensure that these are clearly understood and carried out consistently.
- Raise achievement in English.
- Continue to implement the procedures for improving attendance and ensure that lesson time is not lost by pupils' late arrival.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Achievement is **satisfactory**.

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

- Pupils' achievement in English is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement is good in mathematics and science and very good in physical education.
- Pupils with significant behavioural difficulties and unsatisfactory attendance do not achieve as well as others.
- Pupils' limited reading and writing skills inhibit their achievement in other subjects.
- Most Year 11 pupils achieve success in examination courses in a narrow range of subjects.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve as well as others.

#### **Commentary**

1. Other than for the youngest pupils, the school's targets for pupils to achieve National Curriculum levels in English are not as challenging as those for mathematics. Lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that the pupils in Year 11 are currently achieving much lower levels in English than in mathematics and science. For instance, higher attaining pupils, achieving level 5 in mathematics and science, are working at level 3 in English. A number of factors are responsible for this unsatisfactory achievement, including weaknesses in planning and assessment and teachers' lack of subject expertise, especially in Years 10 and 11. The headteacher has identified English as an area of particular concern, sought support from the local education authority and appointed a specialist teacher to start work later in the year.
2. Achievement is satisfactory in information and communication technology, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education, in line with the overall quality of teaching, the curriculum and assessment procedures. However, in mathematics and science, most pupils achieve well and they do very well in physical education. Again, teachers' expertise, their knowledge of how well pupils are progressing, and carefully constructed programmes of work, all contribute to the success of these subjects. Additionally, they are effectively led and managed, with high expectations for pupils to achieve and for the subjects to develop. Nevertheless, past or present staffing difficulties mean that achievement currently is simply satisfactory in science during Years 4 to 6 and in mathematics for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
3. A significant minority of pupils spend varying periods of time at home, because they have been excluded or are absent. They are therefore not able to benefit from lessons and activities. Consequently, they achieve less well. For instance, at the end of last year, only one of the four Year 11 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties gained a GCSE pass. Two of them achieved the Silver Challenge level youth award, but the other two only managed the lower level Bronze award. Additionally, several of the pupils currently on roll are regularly out of lessons, at either the teacher's or their own behest. Although the school does require them to make up work missed, this is clearly not as effective as taking part in the lesson.
4. Since pupils' reading and writing skills lag behind their understanding and knowledge, their learning in other subjects is hampered. For instance, the pace of science lessons slows when pupils are required to write down their findings. Again, pupils complete most aspects of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award during Year 10, but the element involving writing about an interest usually runs on into Year 11, because pupils find this process so laborious.



- The school offers a number of examination courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Currently, only mathematics is available at GCSE level, with seven pupils last year gaining grades E to F. Science is being considered for next year, but there are no similar plans for English. English, mathematics and science are the only subjects in which pupils attempt Entry level examinations, most achieving success in all three. The ASDAN youth award scheme provides recognition for pupils' achievement in subjects such as religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education and the Duke of Edinburgh award also demonstrates aspects of personal development. However, in a range of subjects, including information and communication technology, art and design, and design and technology, pupils' achievements go largely unrecognised.
- Girls do as well as boys and the small numbers with additional special educational needs, such as visual impairment or autistic spectrum disorders, and those in public care, make progress at rates equivalent to others. This is because teachers try hard to do their best for all pupils. Girls are provided with equal opportunities and the school enlists the help of outside agencies to meet the needs of pupils with other than emotional and behavioural or moderate learning difficulties.

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

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are **satisfactory** but their behaviour and attendance are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A small number of pupils behave in a poor manner in class and around the school, leading to a high level of exclusions.
- Procedures for managing and improving behaviour are not sufficiently well established or consistently implemented.
- A significant minority of pupils have poor levels of attendance.
- Pupils' punctuality, particularly between lessons, is unsatisfactory.
- Many pupils have good attitudes to the school and their work.
- Pupils' social awareness is well developed through visits and work in the community and through the residential units.

### Commentary

#### Exclusions

##### *Ethnic background of pupils*

##### *Exclusions in the last school year*

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                             | 104                  | 73                                | 2                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background          | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

- Although behaviour was judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, concern was expressed about the behaviour of a proportion of pupils and how it was handled by staff. Behaviour in the school now appears to be a more significant issue. This can partially be accounted for by a greater number of pupils being referred with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The expectations of different teachers vary and consequently pupils are not always clear about what is acceptable. Pupils who regularly demonstrate challenging behaviour have

individual plans, setting out agreed methods to minimise and deal with particular types of disruption. However, these are often inadequate. For instance, the suggested response to a pupil who is throwing things is to 'encourage him to stop'. A support centre has recently been established to cater for pupils who cannot manage their behaviour in particular lessons. However, its inconsistent use reduces the impact of what is potentially an effective measure to help reduce incidents. The records of referrals to the centre and any follow up work are not detailed enough to be useful. When the teaching is good, there is rarely challenging behaviour from pupils. In these lessons, this is dealt with effectively, using a system of consequences for learning time lost. The school has used exclusion extensively to manage serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour. It is now actively working to reduce the reliance on this sanction and there is evidence that the rate of incidents and the number of days for which pupils are excluded are both declining slowly. The most usual reasons for exclusions are physical assaults, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour. Several parents are concerned about the standard of behaviour and, through their inspection questionnaire and in discussions, a significant proportion of pupils expressed their own disquiet.

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 7.6 | School data          | 4.7 |
| National data      | 8.7 | National data        | 1.5 |

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

8. Nearly half of the pupils have attendance levels below 90 per cent and in excess of one fifth of them have levels below 80 per cent. These unsatisfactory levels of attendance have a negative impact on many pupils' learning and achievement and indicate that a number have less than enthusiastic attitudes towards school. There are good examples of the school working hard with individual pupils and their families in an effort to improve their attendance. For instance, one Year 10 pupil, who previously refused to attend a mainstream school, has gradually increased the length of time she stays each day. An action plan for improving attendance has been produced this year, in partnership with the pupil attendance officer, but it is too soon for its impact to be seen. Registration is occasionally dealt with too casually – for example, pupils may be registered when they are not in classrooms and registers are not marked during lessons, despite the coming and going that often occurs within and between them. There is little evidence of pupil lateness at the start of the school day. However, pupils regularly arrive late for lessons, reducing the time available for them to learn. A minority of parents do not support the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly.
9. The majority of pupils are keen to learn, although a small minority display negative attitudes towards staff and other pupils. However, in most lessons, pupils who are not behaving provocatively stay out of trouble and get on with their work, quite often in the face of significant disturbance. Pupils express positive views about many aspects of the school. Most enjoy attending and appreciate that staff are helping them to succeed. During the inspection, nearly one third of the pupils took part enthusiastically in a cross country event alongside pupils from other schools. Again, a similar number regularly attend after school clubs, willingly giving up their own time, and there is considerable support for lunch time activities, such as football, computers or indoor games. There is an absence of vandalism and pupils take care of equipment during practical activities. However, a minority mistreat property when they are not behaving well – for instance, by throwing pens and small equipment around the room.
10. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop and practise their social skills through the many visits that they make, including residential trips to places such as Dentedale in North Yorkshire. Those who stay in the school's residential units enjoy the social activities that are planned for them. These include sports, swimming and regular opportunities to cook meals and eat together. Pupils are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong and how

to become better citizens. For example, during the inspection, assemblies and tutor periods tackled the subject of bullying. Pupils are encouraged to understand why they, and others, can have conflicting feelings. Cultural development is satisfactorily supported by studies in art, geography and literature and spiritual development is enhanced by the work done in religious education and assemblies.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are **satisfactory**. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported **satisfactorily**. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are **good** overall.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In a significant minority of lessons, teachers have to spend too much time managing pupils' behaviour.
- Lessons are quite often interesting and fast-moving.
- Not enough account is taken of pupils' individual needs, particularly in English.
- In several subjects, pupils are taught well.
- Procedures to measure how well pupils are learning and the way in which the school uses assessment information are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons*

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor     | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 0         | 7 (17.5%) | 16 (40%) | 13 (32.5%)   | 3 (7.5%)       | 1 (2.5%) | 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.*

- Several teachers are not experienced or skilled in working with pupils who have challenging behaviour. Because the whole-school systems to support behaviour management are not sufficiently robust and plans for dealing with individuals are inadequate, these teachers regularly struggle to maintain order. Matters are made worse when pupils straggle in late from their previous lesson, so a crisp start cannot be made to the proceedings. In these circumstances, teachers find it harder to impose their authority, occasionally resulting in certain pupils effectively taking control – for instance, deciding to go to the support centre or opting out of particular activities. The more established teachers make it clear from the outset that they are in charge – for example, by setting out their expectations for pupils to come in quietly and organising the seating arrangements. Again, low level interruptions are dealt with firmly, so they do not escalate. In a mathematics lesson, a Year 6 pupil noticed it was snowing and started to get agitated. The teacher took his concern seriously and reassured him, before distracting him with a task. As a result, the lesson moved on smoothly. By way of contrast, in another lesson, the teacher had asked the Year 7 pupils to pay attention whilst others were describing the work they had been doing. One pupil ignored the instruction and continued noisily to cut out pictures, making it very hard for the others to hear what was being said. However, the teacher took no action. The less experienced teachers accept noise levels that are too high. When pupils speak loudly and shout out answers, the teacher raises his or her own voice, in order to be heard. Pupils then become louder than ever, resulting in an atmosphere that is not conducive to learning. The progress of all pupils is affected when teachers fail to maintain order. The class

dictates the pace of learning, which inevitably slows down, and pupils do not achieve the levels of which they are capable.

12. One way in which the more effective teachers manage pupils and encourage them to learn is by limiting the opportunities for them to become bored and restless. Topics and activities are chosen because they will interest pupils. For example, during a science lesson, Year 10 pupils learning about friction investigated six types of training shoe to find out which gave the best grip. Pupils see the relevance of such tasks to their everyday lives and this encourages them to work hard. Initially, the same pupils were less interested in a design and technology lesson, because they were not shown a sample of a completed CD holder and didn't understand what they were aiming to produce. Although many pupils are capable of sustained periods of concentration, they generally achieve best when lessons include a variety of teaching and learning styles. For instance, successful lessons regularly involve an introductory activity, to set the scene and create interest, a more substantial practical task, and then a session to sum up what has been learned and check pupils' understanding. A very effective food technology lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 followed this structure. The carefully planned beginning and ending ensured that pupils made their fruit salad safely and to a very high standard and understood the importance of fruit in a healthy diet. In a small number of lessons, there are not enough changes of activity and pupils do not make sufficient gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, slowing down because they are uninspired and the teacher gives them no real sense of purpose. Typically, mathematics, science and physical education lessons move on quickly, whilst those in English tend to be repetitive and dull.
13. Another reason why pupils are discouraged from trying hard is because the tasks set for them are quite often pitched at the wrong level, being either too easy or too difficult. In these lessons, the same work is provided for every pupil, regardless of their ability or previous learning. In a number of subjects, including English, the lack of information about pupils' achievement is a significant factor in teachers' failure to match work more closely to their needs. However, even when it is clear in a lesson that particular pupils are sailing through a task, they are not always moved on to harder work. Teachers each use their own system to record their plans for lessons, although the headteacher has suggested what needs to be included. Too often, there is no indication that various groups of pupils – for example, those with emotional and behavioural difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders – are expected to achieve different outcomes to others. More usually, the higher attaining pupils complete the work quicker and lower attainers are given extra help. This weakness is especially noticeable in English. Mathematics lessons are usually planned much more effectively, with assessment information often used well to make sure that pupils are working at their optimum levels.
14. Several teachers are specialists in the subjects they teach and experienced in working with pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. As a result, teaching is frequently good – occasionally very good – in mathematics, science and physical education. In these subjects – which are also the ones with better developed systems for assessing and recording pupils' learning – overall achievement is significantly better than in others, particularly English.
15. There are no agreed procedures in place to ensure that all teachers have an up-to-date and accurate knowledge of pupils' progress. A minority of teachers are beginning to assess pupils regularly. For example, in science, the level which secondary aged pupils have reached is recorded each time they complete a unit of work and in physical education pupils are involved in keeping track of their own performance. However, information gained from these assessments is not yet used consistently in all subjects in order to evaluate the progress which individual pupils or particular groups of pupils have made over time or set targets for them to achieve in the future. Pupils' work is not always dated or marked and marking often does not specify the support which they were given to complete the work. Consequently, it is not easy to tell how well pupils are doing. The school has recognised these deficiencies and there are good plans to improve the situation. By the end of the current term, a commercially produced assessment scheme will be used to assess pupils' performance in all subjects, analyse the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, set targets for improvement and inform parents.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual education plans do not help to raise standards of achievement.
- Teachers do not all have the appropriate skills and experiences to meet pupils' needs.
- A wide variety of activities in and out of school enrich pupils' learning.
- The school environment is used well as a learning resource.
- The residential units provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The examinations offered do not recognise fully pupils' achievements in all subjects.

## Commentary

16. The targets in individual education plans deal exclusively with personal and social skills. Typically, pupils have four or five of these, too many for staff or pupils to focus on at any one time. The lack of academic targets is a weakness recognised by a couple of teachers, who have developed their own unofficial plans. For example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 each have one target for literacy, numeracy and personal development, which they have helped to set. These plans are manageable and useful. The weak individual education plans mean that, for example, there is no whole school approach to improve the literacy skills of particular pupils. In science, for instance, a teacher has diagnosed correctly why a Year 7 pupil has difficulty writing legibly and is helping him in science lessons, but the pupil requires this level of support in all subjects. Pupils who have visual or hearing impairment are carefully monitored by the local education authority's sensory support service and advice is given to staff on how to meet their particular needs. Good support for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder or speech and communication difficulties is provided by the speech and language therapist. As well as working with individual pupils, she helps targeted groups and classes to develop their ability to use language in social situations. However, the objectives on pupils' individual education plans do not identify clearly areas for development that relate to their additional special educational needs. Consequently, although the pupils are generally well supported there is not a vehicle for ensuring that their needs are identified in all lessons.
17. Throughout the school, or for particular groups of pupils, there is a shortage of specialist teachers especially for English, mathematics, design and technology, music and French. This limits what pupils can achieve in these subjects. Staff who join the school from mainstream schools are not always given the training they need for teaching pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they are often unable to meet the needs of all pupils. Permanent and temporary staff are not supported well enough on appointment. They have all had appropriate training in physical restraint procedures but not enough guidance on other methods of managing challenging behaviour. This results in lost learning time in lessons. The number of teachers is not generous and most class sizes are larger than average for schools of this size and type.
18. Clubs, lunch time and evening activities, residential opportunities, visits, and links with the community all help to make pupils' learning a richer and more interesting experience. Girls and boys play football and watch football at weekends. There is football and cricket coaching, and the school is supported by the local sports development officer. Pupils attend residential outdoor activity centres; whilst those remaining at school enjoy an activity week. Last year, thirty secondary aged pupils attended a sporting and activity summer school. At lunch time there are planned indoor and outdoor games, a computer club, the adventure playground, and, for younger pupils, colouring, card games and toys. An after school club offers sporting activities including triathlon, drum lessons, cooking and model-making. A wild life club is supported by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. There are visits to churches, parks, the theatre, museums, a leisure centre, and to the beach. Pupils have had replies from as far away as

Denmark to the messages they sent out to sea in bottles. Secondary aged girls and boys are equally included in enrichment work; but primary aged pupils have fewer opportunities for participation than the older ones.

19. There are fifteen acres of school grounds with lawns, woodlands and cultivated areas. These are used well to promote learning in environmental science and physical education, for example. Local businesses and the Royal Air Force have been very supportive, helping the school purchase and erect a large greenhouse for environmental science. In horticulture, pupils grow and sell organic vegetables and have recently planted apple trees. The school has won a local environmental award and bid successfully for grant funding for further developments. Pupils are currently designing woodland trails, a wild life pond, a totem pole, hides and a junior playground as possible future projects. The grounds support a newly introduced course in land based skills at entry level and the wildlife club also takes full advantage of the opportunities offered by the environment.
20. There are three residential units, currently occupied by a small number of boys and girls, for one or more nights a week. Here, in 'family' settings, pupils learn to live together, support each other and become more independent. In each unit, pupils make choices about their evening meals and breakfasts and take turns to help prepare meals. They practise relevant skills like shopping for groceries, ironing their clothes, washing up and de-frosting the refrigerator. They visit Cromer weekly, take responsibility for their own pocket money, and become more confident as they shop with their friends.
21. The school only makes provision for one GCSE subject, mathematics. A GCSE course in science is under active consideration. Entry level courses are provided in English, mathematics and science. This range of subjects at Entry level is too narrow for achievement in other subjects to be recognised. There is no option system with appropriate examination courses for pupils to specialise in subjects in Years 10 and 11. The ASDAN youth award scheme, the Duke of Edinburgh award, and land based skills at entry level complete the range of examination courses offered and are all good initiatives.

### Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory**. **Satisfactory** support, advice and guidance are provided. The ways in which the school seeks to involve pupils in its work and development are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A variety of effective procedures – for example, for child protection – are in place.
- The site and buildings present a variety of health and safety problems.
- School teaching, care, and support staff know their pupils well but there are weaknesses in formal advice and support arrangements.
- Pupils have a variety of good opportunities to express their views about the school.

### Commentary

22. In many ways, the school cares well for pupils. For example, drinks and toast are offered each morning, providing an energy boost for those who have travelled some distance. Child protection training has taken place and procedures are well known to staff. The residential units provide a good standard of care and pupils feel safe. For instance, sensitive attention is paid to ensuring their privacy and dignity. The school carries out and acts on a range of risk assessments – for example, before visits take place. Records of incidents, including when physical restraint is used, often lack sufficient detail to enable staff to analyse these and use the information to manage pupils more effectively. Fire drills are not held frequently enough. Through their visits and meetings, governors are very familiar with the strengths and deficiencies of the accommodation. When possible, action is usually taken to minimise the risks

to pupils. For example, the ways in which taxis drop off and collect pupils have been altered, to improve their safety. However, there remain difficulties, such as the school's proximity to the cliffs and sea.

23. Staff in the residential units support pupils well. They provide stability and emotional security for pupils with specific problems, enabling them to benefit from the opportunities provided by lessons and other activities. During the school day, a senior teaching assistant provides effective guidance for individual pupils who have additional learning needs or emotional problems. The support centre is effective in providing a bridge into school for pupils who have previously found it hard to attend. However, at the present time, access to the centre is not well managed and there are not clear objectives or records relating to pupils' attendance there. Consequently, a minority of pupils go to the centre to avoid lessons. There are good procedures in place to support pupils who are new to the school or residential units and to help them as they move up through the school. The Connexions Service works closely with the school to help prepare pupils for leaving and the school is effective in helping pupils to transfer successfully to local colleges at the end of Year 11. Because marking of pupils' work is not always satisfactory, and assessment of their progress is limited, they do not have access to good advice about how well they are doing and how they can improve.
24. Pupils' personal development is supported through the school council which is designed to give pupils a voice in how the school is run. However, owing to staffing difficulties, the council does not currently meet regularly and feedback to other pupils is not consistent. Pupils have represented the school on the local youth council. They are also involved in a variety of projects both on and off the site which further enhance their development. For example, a number have recently taken part in an initiative to develop the school grounds. A visiting local artist has also added value to this project, which has provided a further opportunity for pupils to have a voice in the way the school is run. In addition to frequent opportunities to talk individually with staff, a number of pupils have regular access to adult mentors who listen to their views and offer advice.

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

The school has **good** links with parents. There are **very good** links with the community and other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning.
- Pupils' personal development and educational opportunities are enhanced by the very strong links with the community and other schools.

### **Commentary**

25. Although very few parents attended the meeting with representatives of the inspection team and only a small minority completed and returned the questionnaire, it is clear from other inspection evidence that support for the school from a number of parents is strong. Most of those responding to the questionnaire feel welcome in school and well informed and consider that their views are taken into account. The information provided by the school to parents is useful. For those unable to attend the annual review of their child's statement of special educational needs, the staff will speak to them over the telephone or may even arrange for the review meeting to take place at the child's home. Termly newsletters are also sent out to parents and these are well designed, easy to read, and informative. The school has recently increased the number of parents' meetings from one to two and, on one of these occasions, parents are invited to attend school during the afternoon when they can see their child at work in the classroom. The attendance by parents at these and the review meetings is good. A number also provide welcome support for events such as performances and sporting activities.

26. The school makes very good use of the local environment and facilities in order to enhance the curriculum and develop pupils' social skills and self-esteem. There are good links, for example, with a local nursing home, garden centre, supermarket, and playgroup, which offer experiences of the world of work. A group of Year 10 and 11 pupils with needs such as autistic spectrum disorders benefit from weekly visits by the Norfolk Youth and Community Service, during which they discuss teenage issues. A variety of educational visits take place in the locality. Residential pupils also make good use of the local community. For example, during the inspection, a group of pupils were taken into Cromer during the early evening for a well organised opportunity to spend some of their pocket money in the local shops. They are able to join local youth groups, such as Guides.
27. The school also has very good links with other schools and colleges, a good example of which is the regular visit to a nearby primary school, to enable pupils in Years 4 to 6 to use its swimming pool. Pupils have also visited secondary schools – for example, to take part in a languages project. Similarly, Sidestrand offers its facilities to others. The gym is used regularly by one primary school and another has visited the grounds to collect natural materials for an art project. There have been joint environmental projects for secondary aged pupils. Very positive relationships with colleges across the county mean that pupils are able to move on to further education courses near to where they live.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership and governance are **satisfactory**. Management is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The unsatisfactory performance management of staff prevents the school from identifying precise areas for them to develop.
- The inadequacy of data – for example, about pupils' achievement – means that the school cannot effectively evaluate how well it is performing.
- There are unsatisfactory induction arrangements for staff, particularly as there are so many new, temporary and supply staff.
- The headteacher has a clear vision of what the school needs to do to improve but staffing issues have slowed down progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis.

### **Commentary**

28. Since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in the standard of management due mainly to difficulties with senior staff shortages over a period of time. Performance management of teachers is not well established. A new programme has recently been started, with clearly defined teams, but it has not been operating long enough for all teachers to have targets. It is therefore not having an impact on the quality of education, through the improvement of teaching or the consistent implementation of systems linked to assessment and behaviour management. This leads in turn to inadequate collection and analysis of data to help the school identify how successful, or otherwise, it is being in all of the different areas. There is also an insecure basis on which to make decisions about staff training, although much of that taking place is relevant. The induction procedures for new, temporary or supply staff are not formalised at present and are not consistently applied. This contributes to several staff being unsure about how to deal with situations in the classroom.
29. The headteacher's intentions for the school's development are based on high aspirations for the academic success of pupils and improvements in the behaviour of the minority where it is currently not acceptable. She intends that all pupils will achieve as well as they possibly can and staff have been brought together to establish a set of school aims which reflect this. The



organisation of staff into teams co-ordinated by heads of primary, middle and senior departments is a positive move but staff changes have limited its impact. The headteacher sets a good example for other staff – for example, by her positive outlook and awareness of local and national initiatives and their implications for the school. Staff members from another school have been brought in by the headteacher to act as role models in dealing with difficult behaviour and provide advice.

30. The headteacher has been in post for four years and during this time she has developed a comprehensive improvement plan. This followed a supported self review exercise undertaken by advisory and other staff of the authority at the request of the headteacher. This confirmed her perceptive judgement of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, many of the issues raised by this inspection have already been identified and feature in the school improvement plan. Satisfactory progress is being made on the areas in the plan, such as the remodelling of the senior management structure, provision of training to enhance behaviour management and development of the support centre. However, the long term absence of the deputy headteacher through illness and vacancies for significant members of staff, have hampered developments considerably over the last year. This is compounded by the fact that several subjects do not have leaders, resulting in the headteacher having to oversee them. This necessarily slows down the rate at which they are moving forward and adds to her workload.
31. Led by a knowledgeable chair, governors are very supportive of the school and are beginning to contribute well to discussions about its shape and direction. This is helped by the recent introduction of a governors' development plan. Governors' understanding of how the various parts of the school work is supported by comprehensive reports from the headteacher. These provide opportunities for governors to keep a close eye on how the school is developing as well as information on which they can both challenge and support the management team. In addition to this, the chair of governors and the numeracy governor have made many visits to classes, which inform governors very effectively about strengths and weaknesses in the school. Other governors' roles have recently been defined and further visits are planned by them to provide first hand information about the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties appropriately, with essential policies in place.
32. Financial processes are well organised and responsibilities are clearly defined. Financial planning is carefully considered. For example, this year, because finances are tight, teachers have been required to present bids for funds, rather than being allocated a budget. The administration of the school works effectively and is efficient in processing information and communications. Administrative staff provide a welcoming and valuable link with parents.

### **Barriers to raising achievement**

The shortage of substantive teachers in key areas of the school and the ill health of the deputy headteacher contribute to the lack of consistency in subject and school management and mean that the headteacher has to undertake too many tasks.

### **Financial information**

#### ***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |       |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Total income               | 1243160 | Balance from previous year          | 38957 |
| Total expenditure          | 1223931 | Balance carried forward to the next | 19229 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 11547   |                                     |       |

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

*Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects.*

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

*Six lessons were seen in English. French is the modern foreign language taught and one lesson was seen. Judgements have not been made about French.*

##### **French**

33. Pupils are taught French from Year 4 to Year 9. The primary aged pupils enjoy demonstrating their vocabulary – for example, by counting in French or naming objects. These pupils benefit from being taught by a teacher with expertise in the language. In the one lesson seen, pupils in Year 8 and 9 were motivated by real French food to learn the French names for different foods. Their pronunciation was very approximate because they do not have specialist teaching. A higher attaining boy learned to say, hesitantly, for example, 'Je voudrais un pain au chocolat, s'il vous plait.'

##### **English**

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- English is not well co-ordinated across the school, because of unsatisfactory subject leadership and instability in staffing.
- Consistent procedures for assessment are not in place and pupils' work is often not marked.
- Work set is not matched accurately to pupils' individual needs.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 4 to 7 and Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not have enough practise in developing their writing skills or using computers to record their work.
- Many pupils do not take care in the presentation of their work.

##### **Commentary**

34. The subject leader, who is an experienced English teacher, is responsible for teaching English to pupils in Years 8 and 9 and their achievement is satisfactory. However, because of changes in staffing over the previous year, the other pupils are taught by teachers who are not specialists and in several cases are temporary staff or are very new to the school. The subject leader does not have a clear picture of English provision in the parts of the school where she does not teach. She has not had the opportunity to observe teaching or check planning and has not established consistent procedures for assessment or an overall programme of work for English. Consequently, teachers do not have a clear sense of direction and work set is not always well matched to the needs of the pupils. Improvement in English has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection. However, the headteacher has identified the need to raise standards in English for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and 10 and 11 and has made plans for an advanced skills teacher to work with teachers to improve standards.
35. The records which teachers maintain in order to keep track of pupils' learning are not always up-to-date and do not give an accurate picture of how much progress all pupils are making in reading and writing. The results of any assessments which are completed are not held centrally or collated. This means that the school cannot judge how well individuals or groups of pupils

are doing over time or set accurate targets for future performance. The lack of detailed records of progress makes it difficult for teachers to match work accurately to the needs of individual pupils. Consequently, in most lessons, pupils are all given the same work. This means that higher attaining pupils are not challenged and pupils with more difficulties do not complete the work set. An example of this was in a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 where all pupils were given the same worksheet to teach the letter 'p', despite the fact that several had much better skills than others. Because work is not well matched to pupils' needs, they regularly become frustrated and this can result in inappropriate or disruptive behaviour. Although pupils are entered for Entry level examinations in English, there is no examination course for pupils capable of more challenging work.

36. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening, because teachers draw them into discussion and try to extend the vocabulary which they use. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. This is because the teacher has good subject knowledge and good relationships with the pupils so that they are well motivated in lessons. An example of this was in a good lesson for Years 8 and 9 where pupils learned what it meant to go on pilgrimage, as a basis for studying the 'Canterbury Tales'. However, in other year groups, where teachers' subject knowledge is less well developed and the management of behaviour is not always effective, progress is unsatisfactory in reading and writing. Opportunities are lost for pupils to develop their reading skills. For example, in a lesson for Year 11 pupils, the teacher had brought in a variety of suitable materials, such as horoscopes from magazines, to help pupils to understand what prediction meant. However, the teacher read aloud from the magazines herself rather than involving the pupils. This meant that they did not practise reading and a number lost interest. Worksheets are used extensively for recording pupils' answers. Consequently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop skills in extended writing or writing for different purposes. There is little evidence of pupils using computers to record their work.
37. Pupils do not always take care with the presentation of their work and work is too often incomplete. By the age of 11, pupils can recognise and read simple familiar words and write a short sentence to label a picture. They have difficulty forming their letters, which are not accurately drawn and are of different sizes. A minority of those in Year 9 begin to write with joined up writing but this is not consistent. They can spell simple words but capital letters and full stops are not always used accurately. Teachers' assessments indicate that the majority of 14 year-olds have a reading age between only six and a half years and seven and a half years. In 2003, 18 Year 11 pupils achieved Entry level in English, with six pupils attaining the highest level 3. However, school targets indicate that no pupils are expected to achieve level 3 this year.

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

38. Teachers try hard to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects. For example, there is a strong emphasis on using scientific language in science lessons and pupils are supported to develop an appropriate vocabulary in religious education. However, as pupils do not have literacy targets in their individual education plans, there is not sufficient guidance to teachers about the specific needs of individual pupils. Consequently, those who have particular difficulty reading or writing are often given the same work as others, which is unsatisfactory. Pupils' underdeveloped literacy skills impact on other areas of the curriculum. Examples of this are in mathematics and science, where pupils have trouble reading the texts and recording at a level commensurate with their skills in the subject they are studying.

## **MATHEMATICS**

*Seven lessons were seen in mathematics.*

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy is used well between Years 4 and 9.
- The effectiveness of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is hampered by the lack of permanent staff.
- There is good teaching overall although a minority of teachers manage behaviour inconsistently.
- The way in which their work is marked is not always helpful to pupils.

### **Commentary**

39. The effective provision in mathematics has been maintained since the previous inspection. The learning opportunities planned for pupils in Years 4 to 9 are good. Subject plans provide suitable guidance for teachers when they prepare lessons and take good account of the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. This ensures that pupils build on what they have already learned and contributes to their good achievement as they move up through the school. Pupils who respond well to the school's routines and expectations make good progress up to Year 6 and build on this good start up to Year 9. Those who remain in lessons, behave well and respond to the teachers' expectations, make good progress overall. Recently, Year 11 pupils have achieved success in GCSE and in Entry level courses.
40. Teaching and learning for pupils up to Year 9 are good. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is currently satisfactory, although occasionally the quality is less than satisfactory. This is due mainly to the fact that there are temporary and supply members of staff and approaches to manage pupils' behaviour are found wanting. Too frequently, pupils absent themselves from lessons or behave inappropriately, and this is having an impact on achievement. Achievement is currently satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, rather than good. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and provide pupils with clear explanations. They use questions well to check if pupils have understood and they correct errors quickly so that pupils are successful. Most teachers use the information they have about pupils' achievement to plan what they need to learn next, but these intentions are not reflected in individual education plans. During lessons, teachers discuss pupils' work with them, providing them with good levels of praise and opportunities to correct their mistakes. They do not, however, mark the work in order to indicate to pupils what they have learned and how they can improve.
41. Leadership and management of the subject are good overall, especially for pupils between Years 4 and 9. However, the co-ordination for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is less effective following the departure of the previous specialist teacher. There is insufficient use of computers to help pupils learn in mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

42. The opportunities planned for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory but are too dependant on the skills of individual teachers. The school has not yet considered how some elements of the mathematics curriculum could be taught, more interestingly, through other subjects – for example, through design and technology and science.

### **SCIENCE**

*Six lessons were seen in science, including two in environmental science.*

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Specialist teaching helps secondary aged pupils to make good progress and achieve well, but assessment of the progress made by primary aged pupils is poor.

- There are many opportunities for pupils to learn National Curriculum science and environmental science through active involvement in practical work.
- Planning documents, teaching methods and examination courses are not matched well enough to the learning needs of all pupils.
- The subject is well led but aspects of management require further development, particularly the use of assessment information to guide planning.

## Commentary

43. Secondary aged pupils are achieving well in National Curriculum science and in environmental science, because they are taught well by specialists. Pupils play an active part in lessons, they enjoy their work, and their relationships with teachers are very good. Pupils with challenging behaviour are managed very effectively. No time is wasted in lessons and pupils make good progress as a result. In Year 10 and Year 11, a small number of pupils achieve National Curriculum attainment level 5. Although capable of working to GCSE standard they are currently only entered for Entry level science, which recognises achievement up to level 3 only. A GCSE course is being considered for next year. A small number of pupils in Year 10 have begun to study for an NVQ level 2 examination in land based skills. They are highly motivated and making good progress. A temporary teacher, who is a specialist, has recently begun to teach the primary aged pupils. As a result, they are beginning to develop a broader range of practical and enquiry skills and their achievement is satisfactory. They investigate, for example, how to separate mixtures, and how to distinguish different sounds. Formerly, there has been too narrow a focus on learning about animals. The written work by primary aged pupils has not been checked. There is no annotation to indicate how much support has been given and what work has been completed independently.
44. Pupils achieve a good range of science enquiry skills because they do a lot of practical work. Pupils in Year 6 investigate how to separate a mixture of small sweets and sugar crystals. A higher attaining boy can explain how his sieve worked to separate this mixture. In Year 7, each of the pupils uses a newton meter to pull shoes across different surfaces to measure and record which surface gives the most grip. Lower and higher attaining pupils can all predict results, do the experiment and complete a results table. Only higher attaining pupils have the skills to explain the results. Year 10 pupils studying land based skills learn for themselves how to use garden machinery such as petrol driven mowers and rotavators. In a horticulture course, secondary aged pupils learn how to grow and market their own organic vegetables.
45. The main area for development in science is to match lesson plans, teaching methods and questioning techniques more closely to the full range of learning needs in each class. In particular, the writing required in science lessons is frequently too difficult for lower attaining pupils to complete. Also higher attaining pupils are not developing well enough the range of writing skills they need for GCSE work. They do not have enough opportunities, for example, to write explanations in their own words.
46. The subject leader has a clear vision about areas for development in science, although there is no formal development plan in place to meet these targets. The recording of assessment information is improving but there is not enough use of data to track pupils' progress over time. There is good joint planning of the curriculum by primary and secondary science teachers but the work of the primary department is not checked closely enough, especially marking and assessment procedures. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. For example, new courses have been introduced for older pupils.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

*Two lessons were seen in information and communication technology. Evidence from other subjects was also used in order to make judgements.*

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in specialist lessons is good.
- There are only limited opportunities for pupils to take examinations.
- There is a lack of clarity about the leadership and management of the subject.
- Computers are used insufficiently in other subjects.

## Commentary

47. Overall, achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory. However, pupils learn well in timetabled computer lessons. Teaching by the instructor is good but pupils do not have enough of these lessons for them to achieve well. In the Year 11 lesson seen, pupils worked enthusiastically; they were able to use previous learning to import clip art for their project work when making an invitation and were able to select between bit-mapped and vector images. When creating newsletters they could select appropriate type faces and utilise imported images. The instructor showed good subject knowledge, was very aware of individual needs and set realistic and achievable challenges. She managed pupils with challenging behaviour well, enabling them to stay on task. Pupils are interested in their work and more able pupils work independently. All pupils are fully included in the lesson, with very good support for lower attaining pupils from the teaching assistants.
48. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have the opportunity to follow an Entry level or GCSE course for accreditation. There is an element built into the ASDAN award scheme, but this does not fully recognise the achievements of all pupils, especially the higher attainers.
49. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. However, there is a lack of clarity as to whether the instructor is the subject leader. Despite this uncertainty, she maintains the expectations for the subject in the school, manages the computer systems and plans the curriculum. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Resources are good in most respects but there are no interactive whiteboards. Although a data projector is used well in the computer room, attention needs to be given to improving the safety of its electricity supply source and an effective screen.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

50. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is unsatisfactory. In a few lessons in subjects such as English, and religious education, the Internet is used for research and pupils use the search skills learned in their specialist lessons. However, there is little evidence of computers being used in most other subjects. Teachers do not habitually plan to make use of the resources and enable pupils to practise and develop their skills.

## HUMANITIES

*Four lessons were seen in religious education and one in each of geography and history. Judgements have not been made about geography and history.*

### Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the local community to develop pupils' understanding of Christian places of worship and festivals.
- Religious education lessons promote pupils' spiritual and moral development well.
- Assessment, including the marking of work, is unsatisfactory.

- Teachers often provide stimulating lessons to promote pupils' understanding of world faiths.

## **Commentary**

51. Pupils follow a varied curriculum which develops their understanding of world faiths, including Christianity, and promotes their spiritual development. Teachers are skilled at using local facilities to help pupils to learn about the Christian faith. For example, as part of an ASDAN module on places of worship, Year 10 pupils have produced an illustrated report about a church they have visited. They have taken digital photographs of some of the main features and symbols, such as the pulpit and the cross, and written about how they are used. Members of a local church helped pupils to write prayers and prepare a performance about the Creation for a harvest festival assembly. Younger pupils learn about the stories in the Bible. For example, those in Years 4 and 5 know how Jesus called the fishermen to be his disciples. These experiences enable pupils to develop a sound understanding of Christian practices and beliefs.
52. Within religious education lessons, teachers create opportunities for pupils to reflect and develop their spiritual awareness. An example of this was at the end of a very good lesson about Buddhism where Year 7 pupils were encouraged to sit quietly and meditate. They responded well to this and one remarked that 'It helps me to clear my mind and be calm'. Because teachers use stimulating resources, pupils are interested and show an understanding of the beliefs and rituals associated with different religions. For example, Year 7 pupils know about the five promises of Buddhism. Younger pupils in Years 4 to 6 learn about the importance of friends and to recognise the good things about each other.
53. Leadership and management are currently satisfactory. At the present time, the subject is overseen by the headteacher as there is no designated subject leader. However, there is a plan in place for a recently appointed teacher to take up the responsibility. There are currently no procedures to assess what pupils have learned and teachers do not always mark pupils work or ensure that they record when the work was completed and how much support the pupil required. This makes it difficult for teachers to judge how much progress pupils are making and plan work which is well matched to their needs. Improvement in religious education has been satisfactory since the previous inspection.

## **History**

54. Teachers ensure that pupils develop historical skills and knowledge as they move up through the school. In Years 4 to 9, lessons are based on topics, where history is interwoven with other subjects, such as geography and art. These topics are stimulating and resources are used effectively to develop pupils' interest in history. An example of this was where a video helped pupils in Year 8 to understand how people lived in medieval times and make comparisons with life today. Lively displays celebrate the work which pupils have done. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made Roman costumes and dressed up as part of their project on the Roman Empire.

## **Geography**

55. There is clear evidence in teachers' planning that pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of the local area, Europe and the rest of the world. Pupils' work and displays around the school show that they follow an interesting curriculum which helps them to understand and develop a greater awareness of the school's own locality in particular. For example, Year 11 pupils have carried out a survey of leisure facilities in Cromer and pupils in Years 7 to 9 are studying Cromer as an example of a resort settlement.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

*Two lessons were seen in design and technology. Judgements were not made about this subject.*

## **Design and technology**

56. The school has specialist accommodation for food and resistant materials technology, but the experiences offered are limited by the lack of suitably qualified teachers. As a result, for example, secondary aged pupils do not have opportunities to use power tools or machinery. Food technology is taught by a number of teachers, often during 'topic' lessons. Teaching and learning were very good in the food technology lesson observed. There are no examination courses offered in the subject.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

*One lesson was seen in art and design and one in music. Judgements were not made about these subjects.*

### **Art and design**

57. Pupils throughout the school are taught art and design, learning to express themselves through using a variety of techniques. The subject makes a good contribution to cultural development, increasing pupils' awareness of the art of societies such as the Aborigines and the work of artists including Gauguin and van Gogh. There are no opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to follow examination courses. The large art room is a good resource.

### **Music**

58. In the lesson seen, the knowledge and skills of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were at a low level. However, teaching was good and they made good progress in learning about pitch and experimenting with the sounds made by household objects. The subject specialist recently left the school and a replacement has not yet been recruited.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Three lessons were seen in physical education.*

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for physical education provides a very good range of activities and is relevant to pupils' needs.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have opportunities to enter for examinations.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject, because they are taught very well.
- There are very good links with other schools for sporting events.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

59. The learning opportunities provided include all the elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils throughout the school make very good progress in physical education and there is no variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Those who have different levels of attainment make the same progress as other pupils when measured against prior performance. The programme in Years 10 and 11 provides very good opportunities for pupils to improve their skills and performance, although at present it is not possible for them to gain recognition for their achievements, through examinations. The curriculum is enriched very well by additional activities, during which pupils are given opportunities to participate in a wide range of sports, such as orienteering. An after school club is run which receives funding from the national lottery 'Awards for All'. The school also provides good opportunities for pupils to be involved in more adventurous activities, during a residential trip to Cumbria. All Year 10 pupils participate in the



Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and successfully achieve the Bronze award. Pupils in Years 4 to 9 go swimming, as do those in the residential units.

60. Pupils are enthusiastic about participating in physical education and various activities were praised by them, through the inspection questionnaire. Behaviour is good because of the structured approach during lessons and the consistently high expectations of the teacher. Pupils listen well during activities, offer responses with confidence and willingly apply what they have learned.
61. The teacher is a subject specialist and lessons provide stimulating opportunities for pupils. Pupils in all years are taught that warming up, through stretching exercises, reduces the chance of injury and enhances performance. They apply this in their cross country running, measuring their own performance against previous results. The quality of the teaching and learning in the subject are significantly enhanced by the teacher's effective management of the pupils and the efficiency of the organisation of lessons and groups. Teaching assistants provide very valuable support during lessons, with their tasks clearly defined in order to ensure the fullest participation of all pupils.
62. The subject leader has established very strong links with other schools locally, which provide good opportunities for football matches and athletics events. During the inspection, an inter-school cross country competition, organised by the subject leader, made a significant contribution to pupils' performance and skills and their personal and social development.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The very high quality of the provision has been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject leader has identified appropriate priorities that will help improve learning opportunities further and these include the development of examination courses in order to recognise pupils' achievements. Accommodation and resources for the subject are good.

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

*Five lessons were seen in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Evidence was also obtained from other observations – for example, in the residential units.*

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ASDAN youth award programme and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme make strong contributions to the personal development of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well in the residential units.
- Pupils are learning about relevant topics, such as bullying, but their progress is frequently held back by unsatisfactory behaviour, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- There is no subject leader and planning for this subject has not progressed far enough.

### **Commentary**

64. Pupils' achievements in personal, social, health and citizenship education are satisfactory overall. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 achieve well in challenges that form part of the ASDAN youth award. They develop, for example, increasing confidence, independence and social skills. They learn how to calculate change on shopping trips, how to locate electricians to repair television and washing machines, and how to use a library. Pupils complete two weeks of work experience, writing diaries to help them identify their feelings about the experience. They receive very positive reports from the employers. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in Years 10 and 11 helps pupils learn how to identify and pursue leisure activities, carry out investigations, collect information, and take responsibility for their own learning. From Year 9 onwards, pupils are supported well by the Connexions Service.

65. The small number of pupils who stay in the residential units make good progress. They learn to socialise, discuss and make choices about what to eat and what activities to do in the evening. They practise preparing simple meals, iron their clothes and shop for groceries. They become more independent and confident during weekly visits to the local town, learning how to accept responsibility and budget with their pocket money.
66. The quality of teaching and learning in personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory. Lessons are often interesting and topics are relevant, but pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their writing skills. In a lesson about caring for pets, pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn well because they are fascinated by the gerbils brought into the lesson, and they behave well to avoid frightening the animals. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 learn about bullying, what it means, how it makes them feel, and what can be done to stop it. They variously role play, watch a video, make posters, and talk about this topic. Pupils do not behave well enough, however, to make good progress, and staff do not manage this unsatisfactory behaviour effectively.
67. Staff changes have had a significant impact on the development of the subject. There is no designated subject leader to draw together all its aspects – for example, learning in lessons, at lunch time, in the residential units, through enrichment activities, and pupils' individual personal targets – into a whole school policy and curriculum plan which shows how pupils will progress from Year 4 to Year 11. Teachers have not received enough written guidance to help their planning and teaching. They do follow a relevant programme of weekly themes – 'Bullying' was the topic during the inspection, for example. The few topics already planned for pupils in Years 4 to 6 are appropriate for this age group. They include, for example, personal hygiene, healthy eating, keeping safe, feelings, friendships, and looking after pets. The very brief outline plan for teaching pupils in Years 7 to 9 is inadequate, especially on what to teach in citizenship and sex education and how to teach it. The headteacher is satisfactorily maintaining an overview of the subject and a subject leader has recently been appointed. This subject was not reported at the time of the previous inspection so it is not possible to judge how well it has improved.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i>  | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>4</b>     |
| How inclusive the school is  | 4            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 5            |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 4            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                    | <b>4</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement  | 4            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>        | <b>4</b>     |
| Attendance   | 5            |
| Attitudes  | 4            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                        | 5            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development            | 4            |
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>               | <b>4</b>     |
| The quality of teaching  | 4            |
| How well pupils learn  | 4            |
| The quality of assessment  | 5            |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                          | 4            |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities     | 3            |
| Accommodation and resources  | 4            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                             | 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                 | 3            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                 | 2            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                   | 2            |
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b>                   | <b>4</b>     |
| The governance of the school   | 4            |
| The leadership of the headteacher                                    | 3            |
| The leadership of other key staff                                    | 4            |
| The effectiveness of management                                      | 5            |

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

\* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.