

# INSPECTION REPORT

**CATFIELD VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL**

Catfield

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121103

Headteacher: Mrs M Blackie

Lead inspector: Dr. Alan Jarvis

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 266578

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

© Crown copyright 2005

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First School  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 5-8  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 33

School address: School Lane  
Catfield  
Great Yarmouth  
Postcode: NR29 5DA

Telephone number: 01692 580568  
Fax number: 01692 580568  
e-mail: head@catfield.norfolk.sch.uk

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
Name of chair of Ms A Johnson  
governors:

Date of previous 1<sup>st</sup> February 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the rural village of Catfield and the surrounding area. The headteacher has been in post for one year. Most pupils live near to the school. It is much smaller than most other primary schools. It has two mixed aged classes. Reception children and those in Year 1 are taught in one class; Year 2 and Year 3 pupils in another. There are fewer pupils than at the last inspection, reflecting the local birth rate. In a typical year fewer pupils than normal join or leave the school. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are broadly average but there is a little disadvantage. Although the number of parents claiming free school meals is average this has doubled in recent years. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds. None speak English as an additional language. The standards of pupils when they start full time education vary considerably year by year. For those currently in the reception class standards were average. Pupils in Year 2 started with standards that were well below average and those in Year 3 were average on entry. Around one in four pupils has a special educational need, which is a little above average. This too varies year by year. Currently there are no such pupils in Year 3 but in Year 2 one half are on the register of special educational needs. Most have been identified as needing a little additional support in lessons but others receive more specific support for speech and

communication or difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school works closely with its local cluster of primary schools. It is closely affiliated to the church and has very strong links with the "Catfield Kittens" playgroup on the same site.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2711	Dr. Alan Jarvis	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology
1311	Dr. Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
8316	Jozefa O'Hare	Team inspector	English Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Religious education Art and design Geography History Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA  
Herringston Barn  
Herringston  
Dorchester  
Dorset  
DT2 9PU

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>10</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>14</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>36</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Catfield First is a satisfactory school** and provides sound value for money. It has been going through a difficult period as a result of staff illness and not having a headteacher for some time. Since the current headteacher took up post one year ago much of the decline has been rectified. Her good leadership and management have ensured that teaching, learning and the curriculum are now at least satisfactory in all years and they continue to improve. Pupils are eager to learn. The school has the confidence and backing of parents and is doing its utmost to fire on all cylinders again.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is seeing this through.
- Very good relationships and very effective moral development ensure pupils mature well.
- Very good links with other schools contribute to the very effective enrichment of the curriculum.
- Pupils are cared for very well and play a vital role in developments.
- The accommodation is very poor and adversely affects pupils' achievement.
- Staff turnover and illness have limited improvements to the mixed reception and Year 1 class.

Staffing difficulties have resulted in improvement being below what would have been expected with stable staffing. The school is not as effective as it was. Achievement is satisfactory rather than good. Standards in Years 2 and 3 are line with those of each year group on entry. All key issues have been tackled very well. Care of pupils and the enrichment of the curriculum are better than they were. The headteacher and governors are working strenuously to tackle remaining shortcomings and ensure pupils again do well in every class.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	A*	E	C	B
Writing	A*	E	C	B
Mathematics	A*	E	B	A

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

The table shows that in 2002 a very able group of pupils achieved well and standards were in the top five per cent of schools. In 2003, pupils did not do as well as they should by reaching well below average standards from below average standard on entry. This year group felt the full effect of staff changes and illness. Standards picked up in 2004. The school's own tracking showed that this group of pupils achieved satisfactorily. The table shows that they did better than their peers in similar schools but some caution is needed here because of the small number of pupils involved.

**Achievement is satisfactory** overall. Pupils do as well as their peers in similar schools. Children in the reception class are achieving satisfactorily in most areas of learning; they are achieving well in their personal, social and emotional development. However, the very poor accommodation means that they do not do as well as they should in some areas of understanding of the world around them and their physical development, but their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are

good. Standards in Years 1 are above average. This group of generally more able pupils have achieved satisfactorily to date, despite staffing difficulties, because of the good steps taken to minimise disruption. The current Year 2 class has many pupils with a special educational need. Standards are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents satisfactory achievement in terms of their capabilities from a similar starting point on entry. Many of these pupils are now achieving better than they have been because the teaching is better in Year 2, as is the quality of extra support they receive in class and when withdrawn for one-to-one teaching. Standards in Year 3 remain average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, as they were in the 2004 national tests. However, standards are steadily rising up these broad bands of attainment as pupils are now making good gains in their learning and achieving well.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good overall but are very good by Year 3. Spiritual, moral and social development is good and moral development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory but holidays taken in school time hinder the school's efforts to improve standards. There have been no exclusions for at least the past five years.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall.** During the inspection pupils had good teaching in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, which was taken by a supply teacher. However, teaching is more typically satisfactory in this class and good in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class. Teaching and learning are better for the older pupils because teaching is planned in more detail, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their learning, especially the older pupils. Good assessment procedures are in place and older pupils in particular have a good awareness of how they can improve. Other key strengths which support achievement are the very good enrichment of the curriculum, small class sizes, very effective care, the high level of involvement of pupils in the school's development, and very strong links with other schools. In addition, the thriving links with the church and effective links with parents help support pupils' good personal development. The accommodation is very poor; this is planned to be rectified by the Norfolk Local Education Authority as the school changes to an all-age primary school within the next few years.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher has worked strenuously to improve provision from a low level. Her good leadership and management have had a good impact on the provision for special educational needs, strengthening teaching, fostering an effective partnership with parents and ensuring the curriculum is enriched very well. She and other staff are working on improving the things that matter most and successfully minimising the impact of staff absence, which has impaired the pace of further developments and is preventing leadership and management from being better because one member of staff has a marked influence in a small school. Governance is satisfactory but improving. Governors are supportive in many ways but do not find out enough about what goes on at first hand to help inform their decisions. Best value principles underpin much of what goes on in the school. All statutory requirements are met. Governors are working sensitively to resolve outstanding difficulties as soon as is practicable.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. A significant number of parents at the school gate were fulsome in their praise of the school and expressed the view that the school was

*"Brilliant!"* or *"There is a lovely atmosphere"* and that their children are *"Incredibly happy"*. Some would like more extra-curricular activities. The inspectors do not agree; they are already very good. Pupils talk positively about how their teachers support and encourage them and feel very involved in all the school offers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- ensure the younger children receive stable and effective teaching;
- further strengthen the sound teaching and management in the Year 1 class, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and related areas in the reception class; and
- press for the very poor accommodation to be improved as soon as possible.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

*Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.*

Standards are average in reception and Year 3, above average in Year 1 and well below average in Year 2. Achievement for each year group is satisfactory overall from their different standards on entry.

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

- Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are achieving well this term.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly in Years 2 and 3.
- Children in the reception class achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, but not as well as they should in their investigation of the natural world and physical development.

#### **Commentary**

1. At the last inspection pupils in Year 2 started school with above average standards. They achieved well because of good teaching. Consequently, they reached well above average standards by Year 2. Between 2000 and 2003 the school went through a period of instability. However, during most of this period results held up well. Results in 2002, when the national tests were taken by a very able group of pupils, were in the top five per cent of schools. However, the results were not improving in line with the national trend. This reflected the lack of a permanent headteacher to guide the work of the school and ensure all was right.
2. The full impact of the instability was felt in the 2003. Standards fell dramatically. The national test results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools. Whilst standards were below average for this group of pupils when they started school, this means that they did not do as well as they should. They underachieved. The reasons for this were a lack of firm leadership and management and the Year 2 pupils being taught by inexperienced supply teachers. Schemes of work and systems for tracking pupils' progress were also under-developed.

*The table shown in this section gives average point scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term. So, if a school's points are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead. Caution is required in looking at the results as the numbers in the school are small.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.6 (14.2)	16.0 (15.7)
Writing	14.8 (12.2)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.7 (14.7)	16.4 (16.3)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Both standards and achievement were higher in 2004 than the previous year, but remained below those at the last inspection. No pupil underachieved. A major reason for this was that the class had permanent staff teaching them well in Year 2. This balanced out the impact of having several teachers whilst they were in Year 1 which slowed down their rate of learning. Standards were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics; average overall. A good focus on writing ensured the majority of pupils reached the expected level for their age. This boosted the performance of the small number of lower attaining pupils, who generally achieved well. The higher attaining pupils generally achieved satisfactorily by reaching above levels expected for their age, although their achievement in writing was below that expected. Overall, the school's own data shows that this group of pupils achieved satisfactorily from their average standards on entry. The impact of the combined teaching in Years 1 and 2 was thus satisfactory.
4. Children in the reception class have come in with average standards. They are achieving well in their personal, social and emotional skills as a result of the good ethos, low numbers and promotion of strong Christian values. Although affected by the cramped accommodation, achievement is satisfactorily in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Teaching is satisfactory in these areas and standards are likely to be in line with the goals expected of children of this age by the start of Year 1. However, they are not achieving as well as they should in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development because the outside area is under-developed. Their ICT skills are, however, good.
5. The current Year 2 class is smaller than normal. Just over half of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This means that overall they started with standards that were well below average. Standards seen remain well below average and so overall achievement is satisfactory; however, the pupils are making up some lost ground and have achieved well in the last half term. The good, focused support for their special educational needs is a key factor in their current, brisker progress and complements the consistently good teaching of this year group.
6. Standards in Year 3 are average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, as they were in the 2004 national tests. This indicates satisfactory achievement since this group of pupils started school. However, standards are steadily rising up these broad bands of attainment as pupils are now making good gains in their learning and achieving well because of good teaching. Standards in science and ICT are average in Years 2 and 3. Achievement in both these subjects is satisfactory by Year 2 and good in Year 3.
7. The overall satisfactory achievement is helped by the small class sizes, the good ethos for learning, the very good care given to pupils and good teaching in Years 2 and 3. The very poor accommodation, continuing staff illness and the sound, but not fully

effective, teaching in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science remain barriers to higher achievement.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Their personal development is good. This is supported well by the school's effective spiritual, social and cultural education and very effective moral education. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils improve as they progress through the school.
- Pupils build very good relationships with adults and each other.
- Pupils' mature personal development is positively shaped by their very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
- Pupils are very eager to accept responsibility and participate in the School Council.
- Holidays taken during the school terms hinder the school's efforts to improve standards.

## Commentary

8. Despite staffing instability, reception children in the mixed reception and Year 1 class make a sound start to their school lives. Initially, some show a reluctance to participate in their new surroundings, but they quickly respond and show enthusiasm and confidence in joining in lessons and activities. They are determined to try hard in all activities and want to please their teacher. Most understand classroom routines. There are very few incidents of immature behaviour, although shouting out the answers to the teacher's questions sometimes spoils the learning of other pupils. The daily involvement with the school family in a very small school is ensuring that the reception children are achieving well in their personal, social and emotional development. Year 1 pupils consistently demonstrated good attitudes and independence in their work.
9. Pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class have at least good attitudes. Older pupils often show very good attitudes as they respond well to their involvement and being valued for their personal qualities. They were often seen correcting the behaviour of younger pupils and they understand that hard work will bring them success. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively included in all activities in the classroom and they work as well and enthusiastically as others.
10. In the school, pupils are calm, have good behaviour, and are very polite to adults. Pupils relax and play safely together without fear of bullying or harassment. They value each other's differences and contributions either in the classroom or in clubs and activities. Pupils' relationships with all staff are very strong as they bond together within the tight school family. Their close daily involvement ensures that mutual trust is at a very high level. A minority of boys have shown some immature behaviour during the last school year requiring adult involvement, but these incidents have sharply reduced in number during the present school year. No pupil has been excluded for at least the past five years.
11. Pupils show a maturity by Year 3, often exceeding their years. This is because the school prioritises the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together these make a good contribution to their enjoyment of the school family and the quality of their education. Collective worship meets statutory requirements. Pupils learn about and have respect for the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths. Assembly themes challenge pupils to think about issues such as friendships and feelings. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, which is strongly reinforced throughout the school day by staff and older pupils. All pupils are well involved in developing classroom codes of conduct. Pupils like each other and the staff, and they are taught to share and work together as well as learn about winning and losing in teams. Pupils willingly accept meaningful responsibilities to support adults, and older pupils are enthusiastic to help younger pupils or pupils new to the school through "*Playground Pals*". The School Council brings all pupils together each week to discuss issues affecting the future of the school. The school enthusiastically welcomes people from the local community to teach pupils about their own cultural roots and traditions, and visits and tournaments give pupils an appreciation of history, art and sport. The school tries hard in combination with the local cluster of schools to give pupils effective practical experiences of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

12. Attendance has been in marked decline. However, it is now improving, and is in line with the national average during the current year. The headteacher has successfully implemented several new strategies, including giving parents guidance on when to keep their children at home if they are ill. Unauthorised absence is very well controlled, but holidays taken during the school terms are high and interrupt the improvement of pupils' progress.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Very good enrichment of the curriculum, very effective care, high levels of involvement of pupils in its development and very effective links with other schools are key strengths. The very poor accommodation and continuing staff illness are major barriers to further improvement.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment is good.

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

- Staff illness and changes in the mixed reception and Year 1 class continue to affect pupils' learning.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class.
- Assessment is used well and older pupils in particular are clear as to how they can improve.
- Teaching in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, taken by a supply teacher, was good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their learning.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	21	1	0	0	0

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

13. Consistently good teaching and learning were seen, as the table shows. However, around one half of the lessons observed were taken by a supply teacher who was covering for staff illness in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. Scrutiny of work shows that this does not reflect the recent pattern throughout the school. Teaching is

more typically satisfactory in the mixed reception and Year 1 class and consistently good in the Year 2 and 3 class. This is because learning has been planned in more detail for the older pupils. The continuing staff illness and changes have an adverse impact on pupils' learning. Despite the headteacher's strenuous efforts to minimise the effect, this inevitably disrupts pupils' continuity of learning and consequent achievement. As a result, the combined teaching up to Year 2 has a sound impact on pupils' achievement.

14. During the inspection, the supply teacher in the reception and Year 1 class provided a variety of challenging tasks, which successfully motivated and engaged the pupils in their learning. Other key features seen were effective planning, good adherence to literacy and numeracy strategies and to Foundation Stage planning, with appropriate balance between directed and independent activities. The work was suitably differentiated to meet the varying needs of the pupils well. The teacher's skilful questions and responses to pupils' contributions resulted in pupils' good learning and achievement. Nevertheless, over time, these pupils' achievement remains satisfactory, because of the disruptions arising out of staff illness and changes.
15. Learning in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class is consistently good. The two teachers work well in tandem, ensuring that, through corporate planning, sharing of assessment information and close liaison, they accelerate learning. The tracking of pupils' progress is well established and information used to plan the next stage of pupils' learning. The teachers pay close attention to what has been covered well and where aspects of learning need to be revisited. These arrangements are now paying dividends and can be seen in the rate of learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils' enthusiasm characterises learning in this class.
16. The teachers in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class have very high expectations of their pupils and challenge them effectively. A particular strength is the way the teachers involve the pupils in their learning. This is achieved through carefully planned opportunities for pupils to self-assess their progress against set objectives. At the end of the lesson, pupils evaluate what they have learned. This strategy features strongly and enables the pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. They set their own targets and, with teachers' help, evaluate whether these have been met. Teachers' meaningful marking is an additional factor in the pupils' understanding of how they can improve. In both classes, the teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning but the support in Years 2 and 3 is more focused.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched very well by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Resources are good, but the accommodation is very poor.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum and achievement are seriously affected by the very poor accommodation.
- Staff changes and illness have impacted adversely on curriculum development and learning.

- All elements of English have received a stronger focus which is starting to pay dividends.
- The curriculum is very well enriched by clubs, visits and visitors.
- Older pupils do more mathematical investigations and scientific enquiry than the younger ones.
- The national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus have been linked well to ensure full coverage of the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

17. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and effectively resourced. All statutory requirements are met, without ignoring any subject of the curriculum. The national guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education have been linked well to ensure full coverage of the curriculum. Teachers use the national guidelines to aid planning. These have been adapted and customised to suit the needs of the pupils, without losing the rigour of the national curriculum requirements. This is particularly evident in Years 2 and 3 and can be seen in the faster rate of learning here.
18. The headteacher has reviewed the curriculum and put into place a range of strategies for improvement. The result of the stronger focus on all aspects of English can be seen in the rising standards in Year 3 in the subject. In mathematics and science enquiry-based learning is also paying dividends, but this is covered better in Years 2 and 3 than in Year 1, because of staff changes. Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
19. The current headteacher's good leadership has resulted in a curriculum that is improving and socially inclusive. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life. The curriculum is successfully supporting learning in other subjects. The careful links between all areas enable the pupils in Years 2 and 3, in particular, to learn well. Good examples of this were seen during the inspection, where the pupils effectively used ICT to support learning in religious education and the humanities.
20. The carefully planned visits and visitors help to enhance learning through first-hand experience and very effectively support learning outside the school day. A very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and tournaments provides further enrichment for the pupils. These include sporting activities, such as keep fit, hockey, mixed sports and football, as well as aesthetic ones such as art, gardening and cookery. These clubs are very well attended by the pupils and enable them to take up an interest and to mix socially with others.
21. The school has found it difficult to recruit suitably qualified and experienced staff, because it is situated in a sparsely populated area of the county. The headteacher and the governors are working closely with Norfolk Local Education Authority in order to find more suitable staff should the need arise. Staff illness has also resulted in turbulence and disruption of education for the younger classes. Despite best efforts being made this has inevitably affected pupils' learning and the pace of curriculum development and continues to be a key barrier to improvement.

22. The Foundation Stage children have limited space, because they share it with Year 1. The cramped conditions in this class limit the range of activities, such as exploration, play and investigations, inside and outside the classroom. For older pupils, similar limitations exist. Time is inevitably lost in moving furniture and equipment or setting up ICT resources. Physical education does take place outdoors, but it is entirely dependent upon fine weather. In addition, the accommodation offers no privacy for the staff where they can have a break, meet in confidence with parents or discuss sensitive issues. Withdrawal teaching of pupils with special educational needs has to take place in a draughty, small entrance foyer, which is not conducive to learning, especially in the winter. There is no space for a library although a good range of books are kept in the corridor. There is no assembly hall, which seriously curtails whole-school activities.

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

Very good steps are taken to support the care, welfare and health and safety of all pupils. Pupils have good support and advice. Pupils are involved very well in the school's work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are protected very well both inside and outside school.
- All pupils trust an adult they can go to if they need support.
- Induction is very good and so pupils settle in quickly and feel part of the school family.
- Pupils play a vital role in the development of the school.
- Outside professional agencies provide good support to specific pupils.

### **Commentary**

23. The headteacher has systematically improved many aspects of support, guidance and welfare during the last year. Provision is much stronger than it was. Policies and procedures are well defined and thoroughly implemented. She has ensured all pupils are included well into the life of the school, irrespective of their backgrounds or needs.
24. Child protection procedures conform very well to Norfolk statutory guidelines. The school is very vigilant to of risks to children, and staff refresher training is up to date. The school has very good relationships with the education welfare officer and the school nurse so that there are full reviews of pupils causing concern. The school undertakes regular audits of the school premises and risk assessments are fully in place. Despite a high minor accident rate due to the limitations of the small building, the school is a safe place and minor accidents are well recorded. Accident and medication procedures are well established.
25. A tightly bonded family atmosphere is promoted. Staff have a thorough knowledge of all pupils through living together in a small school village school. They understand pupils' needs when they have problems, and pupils feel totally secure that they can trust the headteacher and staff to listen with a sympathetic ear to their problems and anxieties. Older pupils mirror the roles of the staff in pastoral care and help to settle and correct the behaviour of younger pupils. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in academic subjects are well developed. The tracking of

pupils' personal development is good and is supported by well kept centralised records. Teachers identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage and develop good individual educational plans in consultation with pupils and parents. There is good feedback and discussion of issues between the staff and headteacher to structure strategies to the individual pupil, including effective support from outside agencies.

26. Most of the reception class attend the adjacent "Catfield Kittens" pre-school. Pre-school children are used to playing together with the pupils from the school each Friday, but they are also introduced into the school over three taster sessions in the term prior to starting the school. Although some show initial reluctance, their introduction to the school is smooth and calm.
27. A weekly School Council is an essential feature of school life for all pupils. Pupils debate problems and the future of the school with enthusiasm. In the last year, they have changed the colour of their uniform, developed school rules and rules for the playground, and voted that the school should pursue awards such as a Healthy Norfolk School and an Eco-school. Parents can view the notes of the School Council meetings on the school notice board, so that they can see the culture change that is taking place with their children. Older pupils are involved in setting targets, which have credibility by being part of the pupils' record folders. Targets are challenging, positively influence performance, and give pupils a real understanding of how to improve.

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

Links between the school and parents are good. The school's links with the community are good. Links with other schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An improved and effective partnership has been forged with parents.
- Good communications and information assist parents to help with their children's learning.
- Thriving links with the parish church are central to the work of the school.
- Highly developed links with other schools enhance the curriculum and transfer at the end of Year 3.

### **Commentary**

28. Parents are very satisfied with the school and the education it provides. Parents recognise that the headteacher, during her year in post, is improving the culture of the school in all areas and giving their children greater independence and maturity. A significant number of parents at the school gate were fulsome in their praise of the school. They expressed the view that the school was "*Brilliant!*" or "*Had a lovely atmosphere*" and that their children are "*Incredibly happy*".
29. A small minority of parents show some dissatisfaction with the provision of enrichment activities and the accommodation. The inspection team do not agree with them about enrichment as it is very good. However, there has been a recent improvement from a

low base and it is thought that a few parents are expressing the wish for even more activities to take place. Parents' views on the accommodation are fully vindicated as the inspection team judged this to be very poor.

30. Parents sign and support a home-school agreement. Although holidays taken during school terms are very high, parents have improved their children's attendance and punctuality in line with national averages. The school is helping parents by discussing how they might help their children and explaining new education strategies and initiatives. Consequently, an increasing number of parents are helping with homework. A small core of parents is energetic in planning the Christmas Fair, but there is no parents association. Presently few parents help in lessons but many are willing to help at other times such as on sports days, or helping with ground clearance and Christmas functions.
31. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are informative and interesting, and represent the personality of the school well. The quality of annual reports to parents is good. They focus well on pupils' levels of attainment and progress, but they lack feedback on past or future targets. Pupils give a review of how well they have done and parents' feedback is welcomed. Parents enjoy a very informative newsletter, which covers homework and topics.
32. The school listens carefully to parents and encourages an open door policy. It is changing the culture when dealing with parents by the occasional use of parent questionnaires. Parents and teachers mix well at either end of the school day, which facilitates informal conversations. There have been occasional complaints but these have significantly reduced in the last year.
33. As a church school, considerable effort is made to ensure the links with the parish church thrive. The vicar is a regular visitor for assemblies. Pupils regularly enjoy the spiritual atmosphere of this church at festival times. The village facilities and adjacent countryside are important resources for the practical teaching in some subjects. Visitors from the community are welcomed into the school for art. The Princes Trust and local businesses have generously supported the school.
34. The very good relationship with the on-site "Catfield Kittens" playgroup enables reception children to make a good start into the school. The school has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with similar local village schools and the middle school. These enrich the cultural activities that the pupils enjoy in sport, art and drama. Together they have promoted the "Thinking Schools" project. Very good contact is maintained with the local secondary school, which gives them access to swimming and gym facilities. Parents receive knowledgeable and informative advice as the time for transfer to middle school approaches, especially for pupils with a special educational need. Consequently, pupils make a mostly anxiety-free transition.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and effectively oversees the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and improving.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has worked strenuously to improve provision from a very low level.
- Staff illness has impaired the pace of developments, but the impact has been minimised.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively co-ordinated by the headteacher.
- Best value principles underpin much of what goes on in the school.
- Governors do not find out enough about practice at first hand.

### **Commentary**

35. The school has been through a difficult period. Before the current headteacher took up post in September 2003 there had been no permanent headteacher for three years. The school has also found it hard to recruit suitably qualified teachers for the younger children and one member of staff became ill. Despite the best efforts of the governors this led to many of the important structures and systems within the school seriously declining in quality. Achievement also suffered.
36. Much has happened for the better in the last year. The headteacher has had to prioritise where she put in the effort to put right the many weaknesses she inherited. The inspection team fully endorse the approach she has taken in establishing a much improved climate for learning. Most importantly, her good leadership and management have ensured that pupils are no longer underachieving and teaching and learning have been strengthened. The strengthening of care, links with parents and enrichment activities have been particularly successful. All key issues identified at the last inspection have been effectively tackled. With the help of other staff and governors a robust, realistic and cost-effective school improvement plan has been successfully implemented. Most staff have good training opportunities for further training. Policies, which had been neglected, are all now of a good quality. She tracks pupils' progress well. Performance management for teaching and non-teaching staff is either fully established or will take place as soon as is practicable. All staff receive clear advice and training to help them improve.
37. However, leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good overall. The key reason for this is that staff illness is limiting the pace of further developments in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. Consequently, overall achievement in the school is satisfactory, rather than good because it has been difficult to further improve teaching and the curriculum in these years. This has a particularly marked effect in a small school where other key staff necessarily play an influential role. For example in this class:
  - parts of the development plan for the Foundation Stage have not been implemented, although the headteacher is clear what needs to be done and is taking as much action as possible;
  - the positive improvements in planning and assessment evident in the Year 2 and 3 class have not fully fed through to the sound systems in place for the younger children; and

- the development of some subjects is slower than it might be even though the headteacher and other staff are ensuring that some improvements are forthcoming.
38. The able chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher and provides her with effective support and challenge. Governors have recently reviewed and clarified their roles and responsibilities. In the past year they have focused on health and safety, updating policies and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. They are particularly supportive of school events, sustaining the very strong links with the church and have supported the school well through the difficulties of recent years. They have a sound grasp of its strengths as well as areas for development or resolution through the information provided to them. This has been helped by their good evaluation of performance data. Some visits have been made to the school to see work at first hand. There are firm plans in place to further develop these so that they can systematically find out how well developments are proceeding and focus their support.
  39. The impact of staff illness remains a barrier to further improvement. It remains uncertain when this will be resolved, but governors are ensuring this is handled sensitively and ensuring that good quality supply staff are employed if need arises. A further barrier is the very poor accommodation. This is planned to be addressed as the school expands to an all-age primary school. However, the timing of this has already been delayed several times, because of difficulties Norfolk Local Education Authority have had with their financing of developments, not only at Catfield but with other schools. The governors are keen for this to be tackled as soon as possible.
  40. The headteacher and governors work closely together and aim to increase the value for money provided by the school. This is not as high as it was because of recent difficulties. Nevertheless, they have looked very carefully at the results of the school and what is being achieved in similar schools. This has resulted in a clear plan of action for improvement. Even though there is not a lot of room for manoeuvre in the budget they have compared expenditure in different categories to see where savings might be made and where extra money needs to be invested. The views of parents and pupils are increasingly being taken into account. Governors make sure that services are bought at the best possible price, such as when money is spent on staff training.
  41. Both the policy for special educational needs and pupils' individual education plans are of a good quality. Effective procedures have been established for the early identification of pupils who need support. Support staff are effectively deployed and supported, particularly for the older pupils. The headteacher sees parents regularly to discuss their children's needs and ensure they are able to complement the good support given in school. Improved resources and careful tracking of progress are helping these pupils to achieve well.
  42. Finances are now on a secure footing. The figures in the table below need some interpretation. The current headteacher "inherited" a relatively large carry forward of just over £22,000. In the past year this has been used well. Money has been being targeted at improving resources for pupils, staff training and urgent maintenance to the buildings. A more realistic contingency of around 5% is likely to be held back at

the end of this financial year (2004-05). The expenditure per pupil looks high, and it is. This is because a school of this size receives extra funding to take account of its high overheads. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	143,289
Total expenditure	149,179
Expenditure per pupil	4,262

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22,157
Balance carried forward to the next year	16,267

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

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

43. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is not as high as it was because of the negative impact of several changes of teacher and staff illness. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. Although staff illness has affected the pace of development the headteacher has ensured that reasonable progress has been made during the past year in improving resources, providing staff training, addressing the quality of teaching and strengthening links with parents. However, staff changes have meant that insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection. The lack of an outdoor area and the generally very poor accommodation in the school also remain key barriers to further higher achievement across all areas of learning.
44. This year the children had average standards on entry. During the inspection, the reception class was taught temporarily by a supply teacher. Her teaching was consistently good. Consequently, the children made good gains in their learning in most lessons seen. However, pupils' work and the available planning shows that teaching in the last half term has been mostly satisfactory. Even so, standards could be higher as the planning is not as detailed as it is in the Year 2 and 3 class. The result is that the activities set, although enabling children to work productively, are not as challenging or as well tailored to the learning needs of individual children as they are in Years 2 and 3. During the inspection the theme for learning was "People who help us – The Police Force". Children have been in the reception class for half a term. They learn alongside pupils in Year 1 in a small mixed-age class.

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

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

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

- Children achieve well and are on course to reach above average standards by the end of the reception class.
- Children generally follow class routines well, and work and play well together.
- Children with special educational needs are helped to take a full part in activities.

#### **Commentary**

45. The children achieve well because the teaching is good. When they arrive in the mornings, children are keen to get going. In most activities guided by the teacher they rarely called out of turn and most listened carefully. They have already formed good relationships with adults and other children because of the clear rules which they have discussed. For example, this term they have talked through the playground rules and feel part of the School Council. Usually, they work and play well together without direct adult supervision. Only one exception to this was seen where two children got over-excited when playing at policemen. This was soon resolved. All children are equally valued. The needs of children with special educational needs are identified as soon as possible. Consequently, they are given the support they need

from their first days in school and are effectively integrated into all activities. However, the teaching assistant supports them better in group sessions and in tasks they choose than in whole-class sessions.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are effective partners in helping to develop their children's reading.
- The good ratio of adults to children helps achievement.
- More formal methods of learning have been introduced at too early an age.
- The classroom has good writing and reading areas but the outside area is not well developed.

## Commentary

46. The children have started to develop a good interest in books. They handle them carefully and are starting to be aware of the way in which stories are structured. In class, they listen to and join in with books read by the teacher. Some of the more able children show an interest in reading books on the computer. Children select their own books from a suitable range and they take them home so that they can read them with their parents. Many parents help. They also encourage their children to learn some simple words which are also sent home for them to practise.
47. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is satisfactory. Children cover the work expected for this age. For example, they have made up their own firework rhymes such as "*Rochit go schh and bang, cathrin whels go whiz and sparcers go pop*". However, planning and monitoring shows that the formal literacy strategy, normally adopted in Year 1, has been introduced too early. This has led to some children finding some of the tasks too demanding. This was much less the case in the teaching seen, where a good balance between directed and independent activities enabled pupils to access the curriculum well.
48. The classroom is small for all the good resources that are available. However, the teacher has organised this as productively as possible. A writing area, close access to the library and stimulating role play areas have been set up to provide a focus for learning through play. Children enjoyed making "*Wanted posters*" for the police station or writing police reports. A safe area has been set up outside for the children to work in at playtimes but otherwise it is rarely used. Children frequently work in small groups, soundly supported by the teaching assistant. For example, they made "zigzag" books which helped to develop the idea of how books are made and support the children's emergent writing. This is supporting the satisfactory achievement. As a result children are likely to reach average standards by the end of the reception class.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good resources are used in learning.
- More opportunities could be provided to learn outside or through play.

## Commentary

49. The children are likely to reach average standards by the end of the reception class because of the satisfactory teaching. The teaching seen was good and better planned than that they received in the first half term. Children were able to choose from a well-resourced range of activities designed to stimulate their mathematical interest. However, the satisfactory achievement to date reflects the sound teaching during the last half term.
50. Children's counting skills were developed well in a lesson seen. Questioning was targeted well to both the reception children and the Year 1 pupils. The teacher used the answers she heard to further challenge children to think of the number one before or one after a number up to ten. The teaching assistant provided timely support to children working in small groups. However, less support is given to supporting mathematical skills through play.
51. Children cover the work expected for their age. For example, some show a developing confidence to attempt simple problems such as to fill a blank number square with the numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 so that the columns and rows add up to 10. They build models with bricks and ask their friend how many bricks they think they have used. They use number-based jigsaws to help them learn numbers up to 10. However, although the playground has some number markings the outdoor environment is underused and too few opportunities have been provided for pupils to choose to learn through play activities.

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

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is unsatisfactory because the accommodation remains under-developed as a learning resource, particularly in developing children's awareness of living things.
- Children show a good understanding of their own culture.
- For their age, children have good computer skills and good resources are available.

### **Commentary**

52. Children have regular opportunities to develop their skills using computers. For example they confidently use a space bar, mouse and the keyboard. Children have also learnt to control a programmable toy and make it move in different directions. They are also familiar with digital cameras and can use simple software on the computer. During the course of the year the very close links with the church have enabled the children to learn about the beliefs of Christians and the festivals they observe. They have also looked at Jewish traditions and some festivals celebrated by other people in the United Kingdom. Other resources are under-developed.
53. Teaching is satisfactory. In the classroom children have some opportunities to explore and investigate their world around them. Children are particularly interested in the Barn Owl which lives around the school. They can recognise some common materials and most know a few names of the parts of a plant. Good records have been made of the weather over a period of a week. However, although they occasionally use the

school grounds as a resource they are underdeveloped and do not provide a rich resource for this area of learning. This is unsatisfactory and so learning is unsatisfactory. Standards are likely to be below average by the end of the reception class, especially in their knowledge of the world and in independence in this area.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

54. This area was sampled. Children show a satisfactory awareness of their own needs with regard to eating and looking after their own hygiene. Children have time in the "Catfield Kittens" playgroup accommodation to explore different ways of moving around to music. Satisfactory manipulative skills were seen when children made police equipment. However, there is no developed outdoor learning environment for this area of learning. This significantly limits the opportunities for children to regularly develop specific skills through positive play, using large wheeled toys, small games equipment such as bats and balls and portable climbing equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

55. This area was sampled. During the inspection children were observed painting and modelling with plastic dough. Role play features well in learning. Some pupils imagined an accident had occurred and safely cordoned off the room. Others had such a fascination with handcuffs and police night sticks that they attempted to find out more by searching the Internet for information.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are well below average for the current Year 2, but average for Year 3.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 2 and 3 and better than in Year 1.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils understand clearly how they can improve their work.
- Leadership and management are good.

#### **Commentary**

56. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are well below average. This is attributed to the disruption to their education arising out of staff changes. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the combined teaching they have received in Year 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. In Year 3, standards are average and their achievement is good overall. This is because of the good teaching the pupils are now receiving. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective assistance from teachers and teaching assistants and achieve well as a result.

57. Standards in *speaking and listening* are well below average in Year 2 and average in Year 3. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to answer questions, because staff value

pupils' contributions. In consequence, pupils feel confident to offer opinions, in the clear knowledge that their contributions will be valued. The teaching assistants interact well with their pupils, challenging thinking and deepening understanding further through skilful questions. The stronger focus on this aspect of English is now beginning to pay dividends. This can be seen in the literacy lessons and in other subjects. Pupils enjoy drama and feel confident to participate happily by undertaking roles. This strategy successfully deepens pupils' understanding of difficult issues such as those of the Gunpowder Plot, for example. The last session of lessons is well used by teachers to discuss key learning points, to share observations and to check whether the pupils have met their learning objectives.

58. Standards in *reading* are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 3. Pupils of all ages are keen to read and they all love books, as a direct result of teachers' infectious enthusiasm. Staff listen regularly to pupils' reading during guided reading sessions, and parents are encouraged to share books with their children on a daily basis. Pupils in Year 2 talk with interest about books they are reading and retell the story briefly. Year 3 pupils read texts fluently and with good expression. All pupils enjoy poetry and talk eagerly about their favourite poems. Reading is well taught, as evidenced by the confident way pupils of all abilities decode unfamiliar words. Visits by an author have stimulated pupils' interest in reading and writing.
59. Standards in *writing* are well below average for Year 2 and average in Year 3. Since the beginning of the term, the pupils have achieved well because of the more rigorous and good teaching in the class. Nevertheless, Year 2 pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, because of the staff instability that they have experienced. Their writing conveys meaning, but it is not sustained as yet. Spelling is often phonetically plausible, but the pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds to write words. Year 3 pupils know and understand the key features of instructional writing. They are effectively helped by the teacher making learning relevant by linking instructional writing to school premises 'to help visitors' to locate places. The pupils successfully write directions for this purpose. Scrutiny of work shows that the higher attaining pupils write for numerous purposes, including poetry. Their spelling is generally accurate and handwriting legible. The average attaining pupils in Year 3 write a play-script for Red Riding Hood and show understanding of the format. The lower attaining pupils write simple sentences, starting with a capital letter and finishing with a full stop.
60. Teaching in the Year 1 class has been satisfactory for much of the term and pupils have worked productively. Teaching in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class is good. This is having two effects. Firstly gaps in the coverage of the curriculum, caused by staff absence, are being rectified in Year 2. Consequently, pupils are making more even progress and are achieving better than they were. Secondly, pupils in Year 3 are now much more confident in their learning, having had a full year of stable teaching. The two teachers plan co-operatively to ensure progression and continuity for the pupils. They make tasks interesting, asking challenging questions to deepen understanding, and match work well to pupils' different abilities. The teachers, together with the effective teaching assistant, through very good relationships and encouraging manner, successfully maintain pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy their learning because teaching methods are imaginatively planned and staff seize many opportunities to build on their achievements. Teachers make good use of homework to consolidate and to extend

learning. ICT is well used as a resource for teaching and learning and computers are used regularly to help pupils to improve their work.

61. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher monitors school performance well and takes action to address identified weaknesses. The rigorous action plans are beginning to result in improving standards. The subject is well resourced. The reason why there is a difference between the good management and satisfactory achievement is that some of the initiatives have not yet had time to fully impact and others have been limited by staff illness. Despite these factors the staffing issues have meant that insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection.

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

62. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop language and literacy in other subjects. In design and technology, pupils evaluate their work and propose improvements. The pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class recorded their feelings and responses after making the Royal Beach Huts for their playground. Language and literacy support learning in science, for example, in using correct vocabulary to learn how the eye is constructed. The development of speaking and listening skills is now a carefully planned feature of each subject and is beginning to make a positive impact upon all aspects of English.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 2 and 3 and better than in Year 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support in their learning.
- Assessment procedures are good and pupils are given good guidance on how they can improve.

### **Commentary**

63. Standards in Year 2 are well below average, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory over time. Since moving into the current class, the pupils are achieving better, because of the good teaching they receive. In Year 3, standards in mathematics are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support, resulting in their good progress in relation to the prior attainment.
64. Pupils in Year 2 calculate multiplications of odd numbers by even, using number fans. The less able pupils, with effective assistance from the teaching assistant, calculate simple multiplication such as  $3 \times 1$ . The higher attaining pupils use cubes to find the rules for multiplication of odd and even numbers. In Year 3, pupils show competence in number and soon work out the rules for multiplications. They confidently calculate multiplication of three-digit numbers by a unit. The higher attaining pupils pose own problems for their partners to solve. They recognise odd and even numbers, providing

reasons such as 'because it ends in 1 or 8'. Year 3 pupils use their competence in number to find answers to money.

65. All the prescribed learning areas in mathematics are covered thoroughly and the school focus on investigation strategies is helping to deepen knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning. Assessment procedures are good and teachers modify their planning in the light of assessment. Pupils' performance is tracked well. The marking of pupils' work is positive and encouragement given. Pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their work and, through self-assessment, they are involved in their own learning and what they need to do to improve. Pupils have individual targets for improvement and appropriately record when these have been achieved.
66. Overall, teaching is satisfactory because of the disruption resulting from staff illness and changes. This is continuing currently in Year 1. The headteacher has taken rigorous steps to ameliorate the effects of this situation and has done everything in her power to make improvements. Older pupils are making good progress in their learning because teaching is good in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class. The two teachers in Year 2 and 3 plan thoroughly and share the learning objectives with their pupils, so that they know exactly what they are expected to learn. Tasks that are set are usually challenging and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. In a good lesson observed, the teacher made learning exciting by informing the pupils that one of the governors has given them a challenge to find out "*what the result will be for a mathematical problem*" and to explain to her the solutions. These strategies are used extensively to link mathematics to real life. Pupils use data handling to find out their favourite fruit and use measurements for a purpose such as constructing a plan. Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics through the investigative approach.
67. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory rather than good because of the uncertainties resulting from the co-ordinator's continuing absence. The headteacher and the part-time teacher both share the responsibility of managing the subject and have ensured reasonable progress has been made in improving the subject. However, the difficulties that the school has faced have meant that insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

68. Pupils use their mathematical skills effectively in other subjects. There are good opportunities in geography to use co-ordinates on grid squares to pinpoint locations. In personal, social and health education, pupils take surveys of trees in the school grounds. In ICT, data handling is also used to complement work in mathematics. Results are recorded in block graphs and pie charts efficiently.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Scientific enquiry is not as emphasised as highly in Year 1 as it is in Years 2 and 3.

- Good teaching and use of assessment are helping pupils to achieve well in Years 2 and 3.
- The cramped internal accommodation restricts the space available for science activities.
- Assessments of pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 are a little too generous.

## **Commentary**

69. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The decline in achievement in 2003 has been arrested and reversed. Pupils reached average standards and achieved satisfactorily in the 2004 national tests, as they did at the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved in Years 2 and 3, as have subject leadership, management and assessment. However, teacher assessments of how well pupils do at the end of Year 2, although accurate in scientific enquiry, indicate that pupils have slightly higher levels of understanding than is justified by wider evidence of their performance.
70. Standards in the Year 2 are well below average. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, this represents satisfactory achievement from similar standards on entry. Whilst in Year 1, these pupils had several changes of teacher. This fragmented their learning and left some gaps in what they had covered, especially in scientific enquiry. They are now in receipt of good teaching in Year 2. As a result they are achieving well, making good gains in their learning and making up for lost ground. Pupils in Year 3 are now achieving well and improving on their average standards.
71. The able pupils in the current Year 1 are very switched on by science and respond positively to good teaching. The supply teacher used a real and artificial plant to promote an enquiry of their different parts. They were fascinated to learn that an "Onion is a bulb" and one higher attaining pupil already knew that part of a bulb is a food store. A good focus on enquiry is also evident in Years 2 and 3, and is helping to raise standards. For example, in one lesson seen pupils were improving their skills by thinking of a fair test to see which paper towel mopped up water best.
72. The use of assessment is developed well in Years 2 and 3. In these years the teacher shares and regularly discusses a list of what pupils are expected to achieve in each unit of work. Consequently pupils have a clear idea of what they have learnt and where they need to improve. This is effectively backed up by regular marking which not only gives encouragement, but also gives useful pointers for improvement. The system is not yet as well developed in Year 1.
73. The subject is led and managed well by the headteacher. Her clear plan for further development focuses correctly on further strengthening scientific enquiry and teaching and learning in Year 1. She has improved resources such as the useful reference books in the library, good quality lesson materials and ICT equipment such as a microscope which can display images on the computer. The cramped classrooms continue to hamper learning in science but there are firm plans to improve the school grounds to provide more learning opportunities.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching results in older pupils developing their ICT skills well.
- There are good resources which are well used.
- Pupils and teachers use computers with confidence.
- There is good use of ICT to support teaching and learning across other subjects.
- Co-ordination and management are good.

## **Commentary**

74. Standards are average in Years 2 and 3. By Years 2 and 3 pupils are achieving well and making up for the ground lost through staff illness because of the better teaching they are now receiving and much improved computers and other ICT equipment. However, In Year 1, achievement remains satisfactory, because of staff changes.
75. There is good teaching in the combined Year 2 and 3 class. Pupils are competent in using ICT as a tool for learning. The majority of pupils can access the Internet successfully. The teacher and her teaching assistant use their subject expertise to teach pupils knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Pairing the more able with the less able pupils is a very good arrangement whereby both learn from each other. The teacher uses this system successfully to the benefit of all pupils. During the inspection, pupils accessed the program about Judaism and researched efficiently how to play the Dreidel game. They were visibly excited at being able to challenge one another and successfully learned to use appropriate terms when playing the game.
76. During the inspection, the supply teacher in Year 1 organised the pupils to use the electronic toy to program it. She gave good demonstrations how to use the toy. The pupils listened attentively to the instructions and programmed the Roamer against the teacher's commands. The cramped accommodation showed how difficult and restricting it is for teachers to teach and for pupils to learn. Teachers use ICT as an aid for learning. The supply teacher encouraged the Year 1 pupils to use the digital camera to record building constructions of the reception children. The more able pupils use ICT to draw a road map, accessing the program to add traffic lights, trees and houses. They competently print the work independently. Their standards are above average. In the mixed Year 2 and 3 class, the teacher uses ICT to support learning across the curriculum, as well as competence in the subject. The project on Kenya enabled the pupils to compare life there with that of their own. Pupils learn that different sources of information are available through CD-ROMs, the Internet and videos.
77. The leadership and management of ICT are good and are beginning to raise standards. The reason why there is a difference between this and the satisfactory achievement is that the initiatives have not yet had time to fully impact. The co-ordinator has clearly developed plans to extend the subject further by purchasing interactive whiteboards and providing further training for staff. The school has sustained its standards and so improvement has been satisfactory.

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

78. ICT is used well as a tool to aid teaching and learning across other subjects. Computers are effectively used in English to support literacy. The overhead digital projector was used to teach instructional writing and to introduce an aerial map to extend pupils' geographical skills.

## **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was sampled because not enough lessons could be seen during the two days in school. History and geography were also sampled.*

79. In **geography** planning shows that over the course of a year pupils satisfactorily cover the curriculum expected for their age. Each term pupils either do a topic on geography or one on history to allow for more in-depth work. Recently the older pupils have looked at the world in general. They have discovered how some people find it easy to obtain spectacles whilst in some parts of the world it is very difficult. The local optician has helped. Work has been linked well with their personal development as the pupils are collecting stamps towards paying for a guide dog. The subject is being led and managed well and there is a clear action plan.
80. In **history** the curriculum is also covered satisfactorily. Some good links have been made with other subjects. Older pupils have used their numeracy skills well whilst looking at the co-ordinates of different places on a map of the British Isles. ICT has been used to find out information about Vikings on the Internet. Drama has also been used well when pupils re-enacted the "Gunpowder Plot", taking a side they would not normally associate with. The subject is being led and managed well and provision is strengthening.
81. In **religious education** evidence shows that there is an appropriate programme throughout the school to ensure full coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. A particular strength is the way the school has adapted the national guidelines and linked them to the syllabus, without losing the rigour of the requirements. Both elements of the subject, learning about and from religion, are well represented. In a good lesson observed during the inspection, pupils in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class showed good understanding of the Jewish festival of Chanukah and knew that it is an important Jewish festival. The pupils compared its importance to that of the Christian festival of Christmas. When asked about the Torah, one Year 3 pupil suggested that 'it is like the Bible, but it is a scroll of paper'. Pupils are familiar with Bible stories, including those from the Old Testament, such as the Creation and the story of Moses. Pupils learn about Buddhism and Sikhism and can associate Punjabi language with the main followers of this religion. There are good links with English where discussions feature strongly in the subject. These links enable the pupils to articulate their observations and some do with considerable thought and perception, when discussing God, for example. The links with personal, social and health education, such as through the topic on fairness or making a Respect for Others leaflet, make a very good contribution to pupils' moral development.

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

*Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled. Work in music was not inspected.*

82. In **art and design** planning shows that over the course of the year sufficient attention is given to ensure the curriculum is soundly covered. Each term pupils either do art and design or design and technology. This allows each subject to have time for it to be covered in some depth. This term pupils in Years 2 and 3 have been looking at art in the environment. They have been interested in the artist Andy Goldsworthy, who collaborates with nature in his work. Pupils have created artwork in the school grounds

and just like Andy Goldsworthy have seen that art can be temporary and evoke different feelings as it changes. Some pupils do well, especially those who might not shine in other subjects. The subject is being well led and managed. Resources have been improved, there is a clear plan for action and governor links are being forged.

83. In **design and technology** less work has been done this term. Work around the school shows that pupils in Years 2 and 3 have done a project on packaging. The different shapes of packaging promoted good links with numeracy and the instructions for making them helped support their literacy skills. Although progress in developing the subject is being impeded by staff absence, other teachers are ensuring that reasonable steps are being taken to strengthen it.
84. In **physical education**, pupils receive a wide range of interesting and varied experiences. The curriculum has been extensively revised by the headteacher and now covers all the prescribed areas including gymnastics, games, dance and swimming. Extra-curricular activities are very good. The many after-school clubs and tournaments enable the pupils to improve their competitive games skills. The enthusiastic teaching assistant, with keen encouragement from the headteacher, is currently undertaking professional development to train as a physical instructor. She is putting her skills to good use by organising after-school activities, which are well supported by the pupils. The school has forged very good links with other schools and accesses expertise from local coaches. These factors are having a favourable impact on improving staff expertise and raising standards. These arrangements are highly commendable, bearing in mind the size of the school. The main problem in raising standards further is the very poor accommodation.

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

*This area of the curriculum was sampled.*

85. Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. The outcomes of the school approach are clearly seen in the good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. The very good personal development of the pupils and the very good relationships that exist throughout the school are in evidence. In circle time and discussions, pupils explore their ideas and values, such as conflict resolution and feelings. Issues such as "Remembrance Day" are sensitively explored, including those of death. Sex education is taught according to agreed approaches.

## 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	3
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 (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	4

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