

INSPECTION REPORT

PARKER'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Saham Toney, Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121101

Headteacher: Mrs A Phillips

Lead inspector: Mr P B McAlpine

Dates of inspection: 3 - 4 May 2005

Inspection number: 267470

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	101
School address:	Pound Hill Saham Toney Thetford Norfolk
Postcode:	IP25 7HP
Telephone number:	01953 881601
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Cross
Date of previous inspection:	7 December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. It has 101 pupils organised into four classes, all of them mixed age. All of the pupils are from white-British family backgrounds. The socio-economic indicators for the immediate locality are on the low side of average. About 10 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is broadly average. The proportion with special educational needs, 21 per cent, is average; no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Of the pupils with significant special educational needs, half have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Overall, attainment on entry is average but there are annual variations, particularly in the numbers of pupils with potential for high attainment. The proportion of pupils joining the school after the Reception year or leaving before the end of Year 6, the usual times of admission or transfer, is higher than is typically found. This mobility during the previous school year stood at 13 per cent, including 10 per cent who left; this is high compared to other schools. The school has been through a turbulent period that saw three-quarters of the teaching staff change. There have been staff redundancy, illnesses, and absences including maternity, and periods when classes were taught by temporary teachers.

The school is participating in the Leadership Development Strategy in primary schools. It has Healthy Schools and the Investors in People Awards. This voluntary controlled school has collective worship inspected separately.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
32475	Mr N Butt	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Geography Music
23805	Mrs M Lygoe	Team inspector	English History Physical education Religious education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This **satisfactory school** has a number of good features and a few aspects for improvement. The substantial majority of pupils make satisfactory progress. Current standards in English, mathematics, and science are in line with national averages. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Teaching is satisfactory, with good and very good features but a few aspects for improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with good features and a few aspects for improvement. The school is competently led by the headteacher and the ethos of the school is good. Value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils like school and attendance is high;
- the pupils who are more able do well in all subjects, reflecting good levels of challenge and high expectations for these pupils in all classes;
- a few of the less able pupils and some with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they might, reflecting teaching that is not consistently meeting their learning needs;
- standards in information and communication technology are above average;
- some of the teaching is high quality but there is too much variation between lessons;
- the use of assessment is underdeveloped;
- the substantial majority of pupils behave very well but a very small minority engage in low-level harassment of other pupils and this is not always dealt with effectively.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The school has been through a period of considerable change. The turnover of teachers has been high, reflecting normal reasons for change, and there have been periods when classes were taught by temporary and agency teachers. Two of the four classes are presently taught by teachers who have been in post less than a year; another by one who has been in post two years. Despite these changes, all of the issues identified by the previous inspection have been successfully remedied and standards sustained.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory. The sizes of year groups are small and caution is needed when interpreting test results. Only five pupils took the tests in Year 6 in 2004 and results are not required to be published when numbers are so low. A table normally included here showing results has been omitted for this reason. Numbers currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are higher than in 2004. In these year groups, the present standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage, achievement is satisfactory in all areas of learning apart from creative development, where achievement is good. Throughout the school, all of the pupils of average or higher ability have made satisfactory or better progress since starting school. The more able pupils are achieving well. A few pupils of lower ability, including some with special educational needs, are capable of attaining the nationally expected level for their age but might not do so because their learning needs are not being consistently met. Standards in information and communication technology are above average in Year 6, reflecting particularly effective provision and good achievement. Standards in religious education are satisfactory. Other subjects were not a focus of the inspection and were sampled. The evidence in these subjects shows average standards and satisfactory progress throughout, with good features in art and design and in history. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is mixed but satisfactory overall. **Pupils' personal development, including their attitudes to school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Almost

all pupils behave well, with most behaving very well. A few pupils, mainly with special educational needs, are not learning how to respect the needs of others quickly enough.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory with good features. The teaching is satisfactory. In most lessons, average and more able pupils learn quickly and complete the targets set for them. Lessons are generally interesting, use resources well, and engage the pupils intellectually through good questioning and dialogue. Support provided for less able pupils is not always specified clearly nor is it always consistent with their learning needs. This reflects shortcomings in the use of assessment to evaluate the progress individual pupils make and to identify next steps in learning. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is typical of the majority of schools. Extra-curricular provision is good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The accommodation is cramped, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The arrangements for pupils' care, health and safety are satisfactory. Links with parents are satisfactory but the school needs to do more to ensure their satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The satisfactory leadership and management are leading to a successful, orderly school with a good ethos. The leadership of the headteacher has united the teachers and pupils and is giving a clear and appropriate direction to the work and development of the school. The headteacher leads through the example of her good teaching and is fully supported by the deputy headteacher. Both provide good role models for other staff. Strategic planning is good and appropriately reflects the school's ambitions and goals. The changes in teachers have meant that subject management has lacked continuity and been difficult to sustain over recent years; this situation is now improving. Monitoring of performance, however, is underdeveloped and is a school priority for improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Financial management is good and it is helping the school to achieve its educational priorities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of parents are mixed. More than two-thirds of them think highly of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. Nearly a third of the parents have raised concerns about the school and they are unhappy with aspects of its effectiveness. These proportions are not as positive as is found in the majority of schools. In contrast, most pupils like school and enjoy lessons. The issues raised by parents have been examined by the inspectors who found that a very small number of pupils engage in persistent low-level harassment of others and this is not always noticed by members of staff or dealt with effectively. Inspectors do not agree with those parents who think that leadership and management are unsatisfactory. They found that leadership is principled and always aiming to act in the best interests of pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise the achievement of the less able pupils;
- increase the consistency of teaching by using assessment effectively to evaluate the progress pupils make and to provide for their next steps in learning;
- increase the effectiveness of subject leaders;
- eliminate the low-level harassment some pupils experience by using effective intervention strategies;

- raise the level of parental satisfaction and increase the effectiveness of procedures to deal with their concerns and complaints.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory in all year groups. Current achievement and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory in all areas of learning apart from creative development, where they are good. Current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average in English, mathematics, and science. They are above average in information and communication technology. Standards are average in religious education and in all of the other subjects, with good features in art and design and in history.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils that are more able generally achieve well.
- The progress made by less able pupils and those with special educational needs is too variable.
- Standards in information and communication technology are good.

Commentary

1. The small size of year groups means that caution is needed when interpreting test results. This is because the presence or absence of pupils who are academically gifted or have significant learning difficulties can have a disproportionate impact on results compared to larger schools. Results are not required to be published when the year group has 10 or fewer pupils. Over the past five years, when sufficient pupils have taken the tests to enable them to be published, the results in both Year 2 and Year 6 have compared satisfactorily with similar schools.
2. Twelve pupils took the tests in Year 2 in 2004. The results were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics, reflecting a particularly able cohort on entry. The results were better in reading and writing than schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. They were much better in mathematics. About half the pupils exceeded national expectations in reading and mathematics, and a third exceeded them in writing and this was very good. Over the past five years, the results in reading and writing in Year 2 have regularly been above average. Those in mathematics have been more variable. Overall, the trend of improvement in Year 2 is broadly in line with the national trend.
3. In Year 6, only five pupils took the tests in 2004 and results were not published. A large proportion of this cohort had left the school before the end of Year 6. In previous years, when numbers in the year group had been larger, the results were generally average or higher in each subject tested. Allowing for years when cohorts were too small, the trend of improvement in Year 6 has been broadly in line with the national trend.
4. Numbers currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are greater than 10. Present standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. All of the pupils of average or higher ability have made the nationally expected progress since starting school. Some pupils of average ability are now exceeding expectations and, overall, the more able pupils are achieving well. A few pupils of lower ability, and some

with special educational needs, are capable of attaining the nationally expected level for their age but might not do so because their learning needs are not being consistently met. There are no significant variations in academic performance between girls and boys.

5. Achievement in information and communication technology is good and standards are above average throughout, reflecting particularly effective provision. Nearly all pupils are confident and competent users of computers and familiar with a wide range of programs. Standards in religious education are satisfactory. Other subjects were not a focus of the inspection and were sampled. The limited evidence in these subjects shows average standards and satisfactory progress, with good features in art and design and in history.
6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. They mainly have difficulties with literacy and numeracy or have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their progress is inconsistent. Some of them progress as well as they can, others do not. Learning difficulties are not always diagnosed carefully enough and progress is not accurately measured. These shortcomings mean that the school is not always well placed to know what the pupils might learn next or to provide the right support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good and punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes towards their school and behave satisfactorily overall. Their personal development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are interested in their work and the life of the school and accept responsibility willingly.
- The behaviour of a very small minority is unsatisfactory and the school's efforts to manage this are not totally effective.
- Pupils have good spiritual, moral and cultural development and have a strong awareness of the school as a community.

Commentary

7. Attendance last year was well above the national average, with unauthorised absence low. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The vast majority of pupils have good or very good attitudes towards their school. They arrive in the morning eager to learn, attend well in lessons and start work promptly when asked by the teacher. They are keen to answer questions and more mature pupils raise perceptive points which improve the learning of all. When asked, older pupils said they had enjoyed their time at Parker's and that learning was fun, although they had to work hard.
8. In their questionnaire, no pupil said that school was not enjoyable at all although about a quarter said that it sometimes was. Around one on ten parents replied that their child did not like school. These concerns arise from the poor behaviour of a very small minority. This behaviour gives rise to the view of a significant number of parents that there is uncorrected bullying. Pupils say that when it occurs it is generally dealt with but there remains some low level and irritating harassment with occasional more

serious outbursts. Although the school has taken some steps to address this issue and these incidents have reduced, more needs to be done. No pupil has been excluded during the reporting period.

9. The school raises pupils' spiritual and social awareness through assemblies and class sessions in which they can discuss personal issues and this is supporting their moral development as well. Older pupils have the opportunity to express personal beliefs and are encouraged to treat those of others with respect. Pupils understand right from wrong and can talk about their feelings and the impact of their actions on others.
10. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own culture, including music and art. They participate in local events with their own efforts. They are gaining knowledge of life in a third world country through contacts with a school in Zimbabwe and displays around the school encourage awareness of other faiths and their importance to minority ethnic communities in Britain. Pupils have a strong sense of the school being a community and this is fostered by the many opportunities to take responsibility and the buddy system in which pupils are placed into mixed age groups for assemblies, lunch and wet playtime activities. The buddy system is effective. The school council, with its well-developed system for feeding back to class council sessions, also fosters good social development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. The arrangements for using assessment to guide the next steps in learning for pupils are underdeveloped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are often exciting and motivating, reflecting good use of resources and good questioning skills.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent throughout the school and the learning needs of a few pupils are not always being met.
- The use of assessment to track the progress of pupils and to identify next steps in learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 15 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	1	5	8	1	0	0
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

11. Nearly all the teaching is satisfactory or better and this is broadly consistent with the national picture. The amount of good or better teaching, however, is less than is typically found. Where teaching is good, the learning needs of pupils of all abilities are met and all pupils in the lesson are motivated, keen to learn, and make worthwhile gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Where teaching is very good, motivation and interest levels are very high and pupils excel. Where teaching is satisfactory, the average and more able pupils are well motivated and learn quickly but the learning needs of the less able pupils are not consistently met. One lesson was unsatisfactory but is not typical of the work of the teacher concerned. In that lesson, a breakdown in planning led to some pupils being insufficiently guided and they inefficiently used the time for learning.
12. In nearly all lessons, the pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate pace. They mostly work hard and finish the work in the time allocated. In about 40 per cent of the lessons, learning is quick for all pupils. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the vast majority of pupils are able to work either collaboratively or independently as required. In the substantial majority of lessons, the teaching is interesting and the learning is enjoyable. Resources are used well. This is particularly the case in subjects such as science, art and design, and design and technology, where the pupils gain considerable experience from well-planned opportunities to handle and use materials and equipment. At its best, the teaching is inspirational and pupils sustain their concentration and intellectual effort throughout.
13. The command that teachers have of the areas of learning and subjects that they teach is variable but satisfactory overall. The effectiveness of the methods used in each subject fluctuates, reflecting the changes in teachers over the past two years. It also reflects that lack of continuity in subject leadership caused by that same turnover of teachers which has meant that opportunities to monitor, evaluate and guide the development of teaching methods in each subject have been very limited. This situation is now changing but will take longer for the impact to be seen.
14. Teaching for those pupils identified with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Almost all pupils have full access to the curriculum although occasionally pupils with behavioural difficulties take little part in lessons. In English and mathematics the work is varied appropriately for those who need additional help. Identification of special educational needs is accurate. In most classes, however, planning to meet the specific targets in these pupils' individual education plans is too inconsistent. Teachers and support staff are aware of individual needs but pupils' progress towards their individual targets is not planned and assessed systematically enough.
15. The assessment systems are underdeveloped. Senior management is fully aware of this issue and has been acting to bring about improvement during the present school year. Assessments of one type or another take place in all subjects, reflecting satisfactory improvements made since the previous inspection. However, the variations in the assessment systems, which are not always linked directly to the National Curriculum assessment levels, are making difficult the collation, evaluation, interpretation, and use of the data. In particular, while providing information about individual pupils, the data does not in its present form make it easy to see the bigger

pictures of progress for individuals over time and of performance between groups and classes. Furthermore, assessment is not consistently being used to evaluate learning in the short-term, diagnose learning difficulties, or to identify what the pupils should learn next. Nor is it being used sufficiently to involve pupils in evaluating their own progress so that they know what they should do to improve. Systems to achieve this are being trialled in English. The school is aware of each of these issues and has identified them as priorities for development.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is satisfactory. It is enriched by a good level and range of additional activities. The resources in the school are adequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an impressive range of clubs and events for pupils to enjoy.
- Links with business and the community are good.
- Personal, social and health education is a major strength.
- Some classrooms are too small.
- The accommodation in the Foundation Stage imposes constraints on provision for children's physical development.

Commentary

16. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including those for religious education. It caters adequately for pupils in mixed-age classes. There is appropriate provision for drugs awareness and sex education. Provision for personal social and health education and citizenship is good. The school has compiled lists of skills to be taught in the non-core subjects and uses these to help assess pupils' progress.
17. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of clubs and other activities including French, stamp -collecting, singing, Christian club and art club. They can participate in a range of sports. The time dedicated to sport has increased in line with the school's promotion of healthy living. There are opportunities to compete with other local schools in tournaments. A themed event, Africa Week, enabled pupils to enjoy aspects of other cultures including drumming and mask-making. A successful application for a business-in-the-community grant led to a project using information and communication technology to make a presentation about the Post Office to local people. Links have been established with an inner city, multi-cultural school to broaden pupils' experiences.
18. Pupils regularly visit museums and other places of interest to improve their knowledge and understanding. These include West Stow Anglo-Saxon village and Duxford air museum. There is a regular, residential visit to a centre in Norfolk for the Year 5 and 6 pupils. They are able to take part in adventurous activities and learn to live together harmoniously away from home.
19. The school building is well maintained but Victorian in origin and is not well suited to contemporary needs. Several classrooms are small and cramped, especially for the older pupils. In the Foundation Stage, while imaginative use has been made of the space, there is not enough to provide appropriately for children's physical

development. Other areas of the school have to be used, such as the main playground, which causes constraints. Resources are generally adequate.

20. There is a strong cluster of rural schools feeding into the local high school. A joint arts project involves a visiting sculptor. Transfer arrangements are smoothly coordinated, with sensitivity shown to those pupils with special educational needs who may be more vulnerable moving to secondary school. Teachers visit one another's schools and share good practice, helping all to develop.
21. Provision for those pupils identified with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Individual education plans are clearly written and the targets are specific and measurable. These individual plans outline strategies for support but systems for ensuring that individual targets are tackled systematically are not rigorous enough. Individual education plans do not specify precisely how frequently support is to be given, nor by whom. Teachers do not consistently plan and direct support to help individual pupils meet their targets. Procedures for monitoring individual progress are not consistent.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care welfare and safety are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory support and guidance for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development and consults pupils well on what they would like to see improved.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for health and safety and child protection are secure.
- The school ensures that all pupils can turn to an adult for advice but there is still too much low-level harassment by a minority of pupils.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are good.
- The school values the views of pupils about the way the school is run.

Commentary

22. Most pupils are happy in school and feel secure and confident. Virtually all pupils in the survey agreed that there was an adult they could turn to if they had concerns. Conversations with pupils confirmed that they could mostly rely on members of staff to resolve minor conflicts and personal worries. However, some parents had concerns about the behaviour of a minority and there was an atmosphere of tension in some lessons, with low level harassment sometimes unnoticed by the teacher because of the surreptitious way it was carried out. Pupils in need of support to help them improve their behaviour during lessons were not always given a clear framework for development. The school does not bring together all the records of incidents so that staff can plan achievable targets and monitor their effectiveness. Pupils are given academic targets in English but assessment is not otherwise well used to support progress.
23. The premises are formally inspected annually for safety hazards and any necessary remedial action taken promptly. However, risk assessments need to be more frequent and would benefit from a specific focus. When pupils are taken on educational and residential visits, the appropriate risk assessments are made and recorded. All

equipment is correctly maintained. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place.

24. The school gives parents and children a good introduction to the school when they start, so that children can quickly and happily settle into the routines of school life. Parents meet relevant members of staff and they are given helpful booklets about practical matters and on how to help their child with schoolwork at home. Children from the pre-school group have transfer sessions in the school before they start.
25. The school consults with pupils through the school council and class councils and also by sending out simple questionnaires asking pupils what they like and what they would improve about school; this is good practice. Some of the pupil suggestions are acted on and pupils questioned said that they felt the school valued their views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and links with the community contribute well to school life. Pupils benefit from good links with other schools.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides much good information to parents but there are some shortcomings in communication.
- Most parents provide good support at home for their children's work and work well with staff to raise their standards.
- The school has a central place in the village community.
- There is good liaison between the staff of this school and other educational establishments.

Commentary

26. Although general information to parents, and that on individual pupil progress, is good, nevertheless some parents are dissatisfied and links are only satisfactory. This was demonstrated at the meeting held for parents and in their questionnaire. The school has to spend time trying to placate these parents on such issues as behaviour and bullying, which is a diversion from the main objective of the pupils' education. In some cases the school has not explained what it is doing clearly enough to parents, for example on buddy groups, and misunderstandings have led to further dissatisfaction. Although questionnaires have been sent to parents asking for their views about the school, the school has not picked up some concerns, for example, about the behaviour of a small number of pupils, acknowledged those concerns sufficiently, or explained how it has reacted to them.
27. When their child begins school, parents received appropriate information about what is taught, and how it is taught. They are kept up to date with practical information in regular newsletters. The annual pupil reports meet statutory requirements, describe well what the pupil has learnt in the year and give targets for improvement. Parents also have regular, formal opportunities to meet the teacher to discuss their child's work.
28. Many parents hear their child read at home and give good support with this and other homework. Some parents, as well as other adult volunteers, give valued support in

classrooms and around the school, hearing readers or supporting groups in lessons. The Friends Association organises fund-raising and social events that contribute towards resources and they organise the class coffee mornings that bring many parents together.

29. The school plays an active part in the local community and calls on local people to broaden pupils' experiences and bring lessons to life. Public services like the fire service talk to pupils as part of the personal and social education. The church supports religious education and spirituality. Pupils take part in village events and have contributed to the design of a local playground.
30. Local schools work closely together to improve staff expertise and enrich pupils' learning. They share information on such aspects as planning, teaching, information and communication technology training and general good practice. Local groups meet in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory with good features. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has created effective teamwork.
- Strategic planning for the development of the school is good.
- The systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are underdeveloped.
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

31. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have created a school with typical effectiveness. Although there are a few exceptions, the substantial majority of pupils make the progress that is expected and this reflects the generally successful organisation and management of the school. The headteacher has united her staff and created a good team spirit. Recruitment strategies are successful and the induction arrangements for new members of staff are effective. The school has a good range of documented policies, guidelines and handbooks which are implemented and followed effectively in the main.
32. Governance is satisfactory overall. Governors visit the school regularly and have systems in place that keep them aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They hold the headteacher properly to account for the work and development of the school and influence its direction and key policies appropriately. All relevant statutory requirements are met. The reasons for key policies, however, are not always shared with parents and with others as much as they should be and are not always understood; the communication of key policies is not as thorough or as frequent as it needs to be.
33. The strategic planning for the development of the school is good, reflecting the efforts of the headteacher and governors, but is not based sufficiently on a rigorous system of self-review. Current priorities are relevant to the needs of the school and action to

tackle the priorities is effective. For example, a recent target to place greater emphasis on problem solving in mathematics has been achieved. Financial management is good and properly linked to strategic planning. Senior management and governors work hard to achieve best value when spending money and financial management is prudent.

34. The systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school are underdeveloped, partly reflecting recent turbulence. The basic monitoring procedures are in place but are not activated often enough. The use of performance indicators is not sufficiently fine-tuned to diagnose weaknesses in detail or to alert senior managers soon enough for timely action to be taken. This reflects the underdeveloped use of assessment. It also reflects the underdeveloped roles of subject managers.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	305,846
Total expenditure	313,826
Expenditure per pupil (105 pupils)	2,989

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27,115
Balance carried forward to the next	19,135

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall with some good features and some aspects for improvement. The small numbers of pupils in the Foundation Stage meant that individual areas of learning could only be sampled rather than inspected in full. Achievement is satisfactory in all areas of learning apart from creative development, where achievement is good. The majority of children are on course to attain the early learning goals in all the areas of learning, with about one third exceeding them. More children are exceeding the early learning goals in creative development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in creative development are above average.
- The constraints of the outdoor accommodation affect children's progress in physical development.
- Teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills is good.
- Some planning focuses too much on the task rather than what is to be learnt.
- The teacher is well supported by other adults including volunteer helpers.

Commentary

35. There are currently thirteen children in the Reception class, which also contains Year 1 pupils. Attainment on entry is broadly average. All children start school in September but those who are not five in that term attend part-time. The teacher has been in post since the start of the present academic year and has made satisfactory improvements to the provision. Planning and assessment in particular take fully into account the needs of young children. They are focused upon the steps to the national early learning goals in the six areas of learning that make up the Foundation Stage. In **personal social and emotional development** children make satisfactory progress. They are mostly well adapted to school, and follow routines sensibly. Occasionally some boisterous play can occur, especially if an adult is not nearby. Appropriate strategies are used to control behaviour, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Attitudes to learning are generally good.
36. Teaching is satisfactory in all areas of learning and the basic literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. In **communication language and literacy** children learn letter sounds systematically. They are encouraged to write freely, and the classroom provides areas for them to do this. In an effective session they were encouraged to use story book language while role-playing a fairy-tale outside. In **mathematical development** tasks are well planned to interest pupils. They enjoy number rhymes and join in enthusiastically. In a good session they were taught the language of capacity and invited to estimate how many cups would be required to fill a jug with water. In both these areas of learning good support from the classroom assistant and parent volunteers help pupils to develop their skills.
37. In **knowledge and understanding of the world** children are willing to explore their environment, such as through planting seeds. They have regular use of computers in the classroom with a selection of appropriate programs. The topic around transport is well integrated into all areas of learning but especially this one: a role-play travel

agency enables children to book holidays and show their individual passports. Planning sometimes focuses more on the activity itself rather than what children are intended to learn.

38. Children's achievement in **creative development** is good. This is the strongest area of learning, with the adults' expertise enabling pupils to produce work of a high standard. They use poster paints to create a large collage of animals and plants. A colourful display shows work inspired by the visit of a parent who brought in examples of Moroccan culture and jewellery. In **physical development** the lack of an accessible outside space for large toys imposes constraints, and the use of the playground is not ideal. There are insufficient outdoor toys to go round, which leaves some children waiting for a turn for some time.
39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has a clear idea of the needs of young children and has successfully integrated their curriculum into a mixed age class. A strong team has been built up of support staff and volunteers, who encourage children well. There are effective links with the pre-school playgroup, including shared sessions in the summer term for the new intake.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is satisfactory. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress and attain average standards in reading and writing. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils of all abilities generally achieve satisfactorily and teaching is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in national tests over the past three years show an improving trend.
- Pupils become confident speakers and listeners and have good opportunities to practise their skills.
- Lessons are interesting but work is not always planned to meet the precise needs of all pupils.
- Untidy presentation and careless spelling often mars pupils' written work.
- Teachers' marking does not give enough guidance for future progress.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects particularly in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

40. Results in national tests over recent years have fluctuated somewhat but overall indicate an improvement in standards. In 2004, the pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were above average in reading and writing. Results in Year 6 were not required to be reported because pupil numbers were too low and doing so might infringe pupil confidentiality. Currently standards in reading and writing in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Those capable of achieving at the higher level do so, although at times teachers could challenge them further. Pupils' work indicates that progress over time varies considerably, with average and more able pupils progressing well while less able pupils sometimes make only limited progress.

41. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions, to listen to others and to express their views. The teachers and support staff are good role models for spoken English. Most pupils become confident listeners and speakers and by Year 6 they explain their ideas clearly. Standards in this aspect of English are above average by Year 6.
42. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers value all aspects of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to enjoy reading and to borrow books from the library. Tasks are clearly explained, learning objectives are shared with pupils, and teachers have secure knowledge of the subject. Lessons are interesting and often linked well with other aspects of the curriculum. Teachers vary the activities somewhat to cater for different ability groups within their classes and all pupils have individual targets. The school provides a satisfactory range of support programmes for groups of pupils who need additional help. Pupils whose special educational needs include literacy often receive this support. In lesson plans, only one class teacher referred to specific targets from individual education plans. Planning to meet the needs of these pupils is generally too vague.
43. Standards of presentation and spelling are generally unsatisfactory. Although time is allocated to teaching spelling and handwriting, work that is otherwise good is often untidy and misspelled. Pupils frequently spell key words incorrectly and do not check their work for accuracy. During handwriting lessons many pupils' write in a neat joined style but this skill is not transferred successfully to their other work. When marking, teachers check whether or not pupils have achieved the lesson objective, but comments seldom offer any guidance on how individuals might improve their work.
44. Leadership and management of English are satisfactory. The school has successfully boosted boys' interest in reading by buying a wider range of books. Pupils' progress is tracked but teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough at present. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Teachers mostly plan good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in relevant subjects. Pupils write notes, accounts and instructions and label diagrams. In the combined class of Year 3 and 4 pupils, literacy is used particularly well in history lessons. Pupils learn to use reference books and by Year 6 most have a good understanding of how such books are organised. Although some pupils set out their work neatly, teachers do not have high enough expectations of presentation, and do not ensure that pupils spell specific subject vocabulary correctly, reflecting shortcomings in planning for this aspect.

MATHEMATICS

Provision is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good questioning promotes mathematical thinking.
- Assessment of pupils is inconsistent and those of lower ability do not always do as well as they could.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning because teaching is often interesting.

- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning lacks rigour.

Commentary

46. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2, standards are not as good as in 2004 but the number of pupils involved is very small. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory because teaching focuses on what they need to learn and it is presented in interesting ways. This causes pupils to enjoy their lessons and to be keen. Teachers ask probing questions to explore pupils' understanding of concepts, and prepare activities to involve them to the full. For example, Year 2 pupils organised themselves into groups of four and six when learning about division, and used practical apparatus to help them share between others. The higher attaining pupils are given work that is well matched to their abilities. Those pupils who are less able do not always have work that is entirely suited to them, and sometimes struggle to keep up. This is because assessment is not used effectively to pinpoint accurately the next steps in learning for these pupils. Marking does not always pick up what they need to do next to succeed.
47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new development to improve problem-solving has been effective in helping pupils to use and apply their knowledge and understanding. All teachers received some training and reviewed the impact of the initiative at the end of a trial period. Planning has adopted a common format in the past year, which makes it easier to monitor the provision. While lessons are observed and books are checked, little feedback is given that would help the quality of teaching and learning to become even better.
48. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Small cohorts make it unreliable to comment on trends over time but standards have been maintained. There have been useful links with parents, such as a mathematics evening that was well attended.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is used successfully to support number and data handling. For example, pupils in Year 6 used a spreadsheet to analyse the outcome of a motor cycling event, and commented upon how they found the activity. In design and technology measurement is used, for example in designing slippers. Graphs are drawn to show the results of scientific experiments.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average throughout. Teaching is satisfactory. Subject leadership is satisfactory though aspects of the role are underdeveloped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The more able pupils do well.
- The curriculum places a strong emphasis on learning through experimental and investigative science.
- The role of the subject leader and the use of assessment information are underdeveloped.

Commentary

50. Nearly all of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have made the nationally expected amount of progress since entering Year 1. The average and more able pupils make the most of the wide curriculum and generally make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding in each of the attainment targets of the National Curriculum programme of study. The pupils that are less able experience the same broad curriculum as the other pupils. They are given the same tasks and these are too challenging. Because their literacy skills are generally weaker, they sometimes struggle to complete the tasks set and record results of investigations and experiments.
51. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on investigative and experimental science; this is good practice. In Year 6, 85 per cent of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level for their age by the end of the school year, including more than a quarter who are set to exceed that expectation. In Year 2, all of the pupils are likely to attain or exceed national expectations, including a third who are on track to exceed them. In both year groups, the proportions are broadly consistent with the national averages for the respective year groups.
52. The pupils in Year 6 understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence and they know how to plan fair tests. Their knowledge of life processes and living things is broad and appropriate. For example, they know how to use keys based on observable features to identify and group living things, and understand the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat and describe them using appropriate terminology. In respect of materials and their properties, they understand differences between solids, liquids and gases and they can describe methods such as filtration for separating simple mixtures. In physical processes, they know about forces, including gravity, and can describe directional forces. The pupils in Year 2 have experienced experimental and investigative work across each of the National Curriculum attainment targets and the work covered shows systematic development of key knowledge and skills.
53. The teaching is satisfactory with good features. Lessons use resources well so that pupils can handle materials and equipment or observe their use closely. In a very good lesson in the combined Year 3 and Year 4 class, the pupils designed experiments to explore the preferred habitat of a woodlouse. The pupils thought about the test design to ensure fairness, took variables into account, constructed their own apparatus, made predictions, collected data using observation and measurement, and based their conclusions on the data obtained. These pupils were working at an advanced level for their age, were very enthusiastic, and excelled.
54. The curriculum is well planned and appropriate. The subject leader is placing a strong emphasis on experimental and investigative science but has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of provision or to work alongside colleagues to improve the consistency of practice. The arrangements for assessment are underdeveloped and not sufficiently moderated to ensure compatibility of judgements between classes. Resources are satisfactory. Teaching spaces are cramped in some of the classrooms, particularly for the oldest pupils, constraining the teaching of this practical subject at times.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is good. The pupils achieve well and standards are above average. Teaching is effective. Leadership is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all pupils attain or exceed the expected level for their age and many exceed that expectation.
- Pupils are confident, proficient users of computer technology.

Commentary

55. The pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 are self-assured and competent users of computers, with many of them working at a level that is higher than expected for their age and better than predicted by attainment on entry. In both year groups, keyboard skills are good for their respective ages. Pupils in Year 2 can, for example, operate the equipment, adjust the volume, and select and use relevant programs quickly and accurately. Year 6 pupils have good internet access skills and understand the necessary protocols to avoid misusing the internet. When searching the internet, they know how to frame questions so that search procedures are efficient and effective. They can add to previously saved work, reorganise, and present information, for example through PowerPoint, so that essentials are communicated clearly. They have a good knowledge of word-processing, spreadsheets, databases, and control and simulation programs.
56. Learning is good. Pupils work hard and show good concentration. In the parts of lessons seen, and in the midday clubs, the pupils have plenty of opportunity to use computers and learn from experience. This is a good feature of the provision, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching assistants who support pupils using computers are skilled and knowledgeable. Resources in the small computer suite are of good quality and the range of programs is adequate for the curriculum. Computers in classrooms are old and not totally compatible with each other. In the room used by Years 5 and 6, the computers are bulky, take up too much space, and reduce further the already inadequate teaching area; refurbishment here is necessary. Subject leadership has provided appropriate training for all members of staff and ensured that the subject is adequately resourced.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is planned satisfactorily. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, word processing was used to explore arguments for and against during studies of discursive texts. In the Reception year and Year 1, pupils use computers to assist their learning of phonics. In mathematics, there are programs for each year group to assist with the development of skills of mental mathematics and problem solving.

HUMANITIES

58. No **history** lessons were seen. School documents and samples of pupils' work indicate that the expected programme of study is covered. Standards in the work seen are average in Years 2 and 6. Some of the written work in Years 3 and 4 is lively and interesting and of an above average standard. Pupils in this class enjoy history

because activities are stimulating and the subject is taught well. Visits to places such as West Stow Anglo- Saxon village harness pupils' interest effectively. There are good links with other subjects, such as art and design, literacy and information and communication technology.

59. In **geography** the appropriate skills are taught to all age groups. In Year 4, for example, pupils learn to use a compass and to understand direction. Topics have included the seaside and the local village environment in Year 2; the climate in Year 3; and mountains in Year 5 and 6, which has led to extended writing about the mountain environment that shows satisfactory knowledge and understanding of relevant geographical features.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is satisfactory. Pupils develop positive attitudes to all faiths and cultures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are carefully prepared and teachers have secure knowledge of the subject.
- Most pupils find the lessons interesting and show respect for different religious beliefs and practices.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to make a personal response to the subject.
- Occasionally, a minority of pupils fidget and play little part in the lessons.

Commentary

60. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6. Pupils gain a factual knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions. They gain an understanding of the importance of faith, and recognise the significance of symbolism. Aspects of religious practice are explained and pupils are able to compare festivals and celebrations. Pupils' books indicate that topics are covered in sufficient depth. For example, Year 2 pupils become familiar with the events surrounding Easter, while pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the significance of Holy Communion. Achievement is satisfactory.
61. Two lessons were seen and books from every year group were scrutinised. Teachers prepare lessons carefully and explain complex ideas clearly. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Here the teacher elicited a lively and interested response by showing brief film clips about Sikh life. Pupils showed positive attitudes towards a different culture and a genuine respect for the symbolic traditions of Sikh costume. In both lessons, the teachers' questions were effective in challenging pupils to think. Moral issues about fighting for one's beliefs were tackled in Years 3 and 4. The differences between wanting and needing produced some thoughtful replies in Years 5 and 6.
62. Pupils have good opportunities to link the learning about religions with their own lives. Teachers give them the opportunity for reflection and time for group and paired discussions. Such opportunities contribute well to pupils' personal development. Most pupils behave well in lessons, and take a full part in all activities. A small minority is restless while teachers are talking and some individuals take little or no part in the lesson. This behaviour is not being effectively challenged.

63. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and the school now has adequate resources. Standards have been maintained and leadership and management are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. **Art and design** was not a focus of the inspection. The pupils work was sampled and parts of lessons seen. This evidence shows that pupils are achieving well and that standards are above average overall. The pupils' work in each of the year groups shows well-developed skills of drawing and painting and good imagination and creativity. The range of curricular experiences provided is suitably wide, with opportunities for pupils to explore particular media in depth. During the parts of lessons seen, the pupils were actively engaged in practical activity for most of the time, which is good, and the members of staff provided appropriate guidance, sharing learning with the class on occasions when appropriate. The pupils were very interested in what they were doing and sustained concentration for long periods.
65. In **design and technology**, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory and the curriculum now plans adequately for the development of relevant skills. Year 3 and 4 pupils have made photograph frames and are designing torches. Year 5 and 6 pupils have designed and made slippers, with good attention to the quality of the finished produce and evaluating their finished pieces well.
66. In **music** Year 3 and 4 pupils are learning to appreciate the fantasy Peter and the Wolf with its emphasis on the woodwind section of the orchestra. Singing in assembly is tuneful and robust. Many pupils learn musical instruments in school. There is a singing club and regular productions as well as opportunities in assembly and at church services.
67. **Physical education** was not a focus for the inspection and no lessons were observed. School documents indicate that pupils have good access to all aspects of the subject including outdoor and adventurous activities. The school has recently reviewed provision and has increased the time allocated to physical education. All pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 attend swimming lessons and achieve at least the expected standard. Many exceed this. The school football and netball teams compete successfully against other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. Provision for personal social and health education and citizenship is good. No lessons were seen but the school has a good programme of work to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in these aspects of the curriculum. This provision is through circle time, religious education, assemblies, and other subjects. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to have responsibilities and to make a contribution to the school community. The substantial majority of pupils have a satisfactory awareness of themselves and others and they are acquiring the skills that are necessary to deal with life's challenges. The school has an effective school council for pupils to express views about the school and influence its development. Good use is made of questionnaires to involve pupils. The buddy scheme makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
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	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).