

INSPECTION REPORT

MONTGOMERY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114750

Headteacher: Mr Graham Eskill

Reporting inspector: Godfrey Bancroft
3687

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 November 2002

Inspection number: 247482

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Baronswood Way Colchester Essex
Postcode:	CO2 9QG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sharon Kirwan
Date of previous inspection:	11 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3687	Godfrey Bancroft	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography Information and communication technology Education inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9958	Tim Page	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17709	Alan Giles	Team inspector	Mathematics Science History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23413	Robert Allen	Team inspector	English Music Religious education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school mainly serves a garrison community. The majority of pupils come from families with parents in military service. A few pupils come from other sections of the community. The school is smaller than other primary schools. At the time of the inspection there were 194 pupils on roll. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is usually lower than that expected for their age. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than found in most schools, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is higher than generally found elsewhere and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils on roll including those from differing ability groups, the number from differing ethnic backgrounds and the number speaking English as an additional language often changes significantly from week to week and from term to term. Very few pupils are able to stay at the school for more than two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Recent national results in these subjects are very high when compared with those in similar schools. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour are very good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities, including the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.
- Arrangements to meet the needs of pupils who are new to the school and to include all pupils in the activities the school offers are excellent.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body are excellent.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for pupils to become increasingly independent learners and to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- The use of the classroom computers to enhance pupils' learning and to supplement the very good use made of computers in the computer suite
- Pupils' achievements in physical education, to match those found in other subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Improvement since that time has been very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science and in many other subjects have risen steadily. The provision made for teaching information and communication technology has improved very well. Very good improvement is also evident in the quality of teaching and learning, the quality and range of opportunities for learning and the leadership and management of the school. The issues identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Common strategies for teaching and learning have developed very well, particularly those designed to ensure that pupils new to the school are included effectively. The headteacher and senior staff now monitor and evaluate the work of the school much better than before. The assessments teachers make of pupils' attainment are now linked more appropriately to the National Curriculum requirements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	C	A
mathematics	C	B	B	A
science	C	A	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the most recent national tests attainment in English was average and attainment in mathematics and science above average. When compared with standards in similar schools attainment in English, mathematics and science was well above average. Inspection findings show that attainment in these subjects is average for the current Year 6 pupils. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their previous attainment and make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. Appropriately challenging targets are set for pupils' attainment in these subjects. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 their attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music exceeds that expected for their age. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in these subjects. Attainment in information and communication technology and physical education is in line with that expected for pupils' ages. Pupils generally achieve very well and make very good progress in all these subjects. The exception is in physical education where pupils achieve satisfactorily. In religious education standards are in line with those expected and pupils achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well and make very good progress. Those pupils regarded as gifted and talented, those from differing backgrounds and those from ethnic minority groups also make very good progress. This progress is remarkable because many pupils are only at the school for a relatively short time.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes. They are enthusiastic learners who clearly enjoy coming to school. They work hard and participate readily in all aspects of their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils co-operate and work together very well. They are trustworthy, courteous and show respect for each other and for property.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and the relationships they form with each other and with adults are very good. This feature is central to the school's excellent arrangements for welcoming new pupils and ensuring that they settle in well. Pupils are able to achieve very well, in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour and from any form of bullying, racism or sexism.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, exceeding the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

In the lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was excellent in almost one in five and very good in well over half. Teaching in English and mathematics is very good. Within these subjects teachers apply the principles advocated by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively and they also teach the basic skills required very well. However, opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' speaking abilities are sometimes missed. Many pupils acquire basic skills well in other subjects. For example, in information and communication technology, art and design, and geography. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of the differing ability groups within their classes. They ensure that pupils are included very effectively in all aspects of the provision made for their learning. Teachers often revisit aspects of their pupils' learning. This helps to consolidate pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding very well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, thus helping pupils to make very good progress in many areas of their learning; for example, teachers make very good use of the computer suite and pupils learn well. Computers are not used enough, however, in other lessons. Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will behave and how well they will learn. Pupils respond well to these and many are enthusiastic learners. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently and take responsibility for their own learning. This is partly because many pupils stay at the school only for a short time and teachers are rightly eager to establish the strategies that underpin their learning. Teachers do this very well and their management of pupils is excellent. They are particularly successful at helping pupils who are new to the school to settle in very quickly. Teachers make good use of the latter part of lessons to establish what pupils have learned, by questioning them skilfully. Sometimes teachers do not create enough opportunities for pupils to consider for themselves how well they have done. Teachers mark work regularly and often include helpful advice on how pupils might improve their work in the future. However, this advice is not always followed up to ensure that pupils have responded appropriately. Teachers use the available time and resources well. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly that of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The teaching of these pupils is very good and they make very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities is very good. The curriculum is planned very effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. Areas of learning in many subjects are revisited each year, consolidating pupils' understanding very effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; these pupils make very good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that the needs of these pupils are met very effectively and learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the very good learning of these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good, and these pupils are supported very well. The school often receives pupils who speak no English. They usually make rapid progress, quickly becoming fluent speakers.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, very good. Provision for spiritual development is very good, with many opportunities for pupils to be inspired and to reflect. The promotion of moral development is excellent and pupils' sense of honesty and fairness is encouraged successfully. Provision for social development is also excellent. As a result pupils establish excellent relationships and are very aware of each other's needs. Provision for cultural development is good. Learning through art and design, music and the use of the locality in geography and history makes a significant contribution to this.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are very good and those to monitor and promote good behaviour and to monitor and support pupils' personal development are excellent. The arrangements to ensure that new pupils are welcomed into the school and settle in quickly are also excellent.

The school has excellent links with parents and the impact of their involvement on the work of the school is very good. The quality of information provided for parents about how well their children are getting on is very good. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to the quality of their children's learning at school and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. These staff provide a clear educational direction and ensure successfully that the aims and values of the school are reflected in its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils those duties required by law fully. The governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and their role in shaping its direction are excellent, as are shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Arrangements to monitor the school's performance and to take effective action are very good. Appropriate priorities for development are identified and there is a very clear plan for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Arrangements to support educational developments through the school's financial planning are excellent. Specific grants, such as those to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and to support the development of information and communication technology, are used very well.

The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school's potential for the training of new teachers is excellent. The accommodation and the resources to support pupils' learning are good. The excellent work of the site manager helps to maintain the accommodation in good condition. The extent to which the principles of best value are applied when purchasing goods and services is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.• Behaviour in the school is good.• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.• Children make good progress.• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work their children get to do at home.• The range of activities provided outside lessons.

Many parents feel the school makes excellent provision for their children's learning. Inspectors agree with parents about what they like most about the school. Inspectors judge that the amount of work that children get to do at home is satisfactory and that the range of activities provided outside lessons is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Patterns of attainment and the progress pupils make are affected significantly by the very high proportion of pupils who come from military service families. Few such pupils stay at the school for more than two years and many who start in Year 3 leave before the end of Year 6. Similarly, most pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 have not started their time at the school in Year 3. The understanding and analysis of these features are helped greatly by the excellent procedures, devised by the headteacher for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress as they pass through the school. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the attainment of the present cohort of Year 3 pupils is below average in reading and writing, but average in mathematics.
2. In recent years, and since the time of the last inspection, standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly. In the most recent national tests attainment in English was average and attainment in mathematics and science above average. When compared with standards in similar schools, on the basis of the number of pupils eligible for free school meals and of the significant effect of pupil mobility, attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average. Inspection findings show that attainment in English, mathematics and science is average for the current group of Year 6 pupils. Close analysis of the data about pupils' progress kept by the school shows that many achieve very well and make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils' attainment in these subjects.
3. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 their attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music exceeds that expected for their age. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in these subjects. Attainment in information and communication technology and physical education is in line with that expected for pupils' ages. Pupils generally achieve very well and make very good progress in all these subjects. The exception is in physical education, where pupils achieve satisfactorily. In religious education standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject, and pupils achieve very well.
4. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. Those regarded as gifted and talented also make very good progress. Pupils from differing backgrounds and those from minority ethnic groups also make very good progress. Many of these pupils make remarkable progress, given that they are often only at the school for a relatively short time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils are keen and eager learners and have very good attitudes to school. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The pupils are good listeners who show interest in their lessons, and strive to do their best. They like their teachers and say that lessons are fun. They respond magnificently to the school's high expectations by working hard and taking pride in their work. They enjoy each other's company, make instant friendships, and support each other very well.
6. More than half of the pupils regularly take part in extra-curricular activities, which range from football and netball to choir, recorders, and country dancing. There is a democratically elected school council, and subsidiary class councils, which give all pupils a voice in the running of the school. Pupils help in class and around the school by undertaking allocated tasks diligently, and offer help spontaneously when they see a need, such as tidying the school hall, or helping to sell poppies in the playground.

7. Behaviour in lessons is very good and has a positive impact on learning because pupils remain on task and teachers have little need to interrupt their teaching in order to maintain discipline. Overall, the school is an orderly and considerate community where pupils show courtesy towards adults and to each other, are trustworthy, and treat property with respect. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
8. Personal development is very good. Pupils are reliable, dependable and most are confident and outgoing. When they are able to take responsibility for certain aspects of their work, such as presentation and productivity, they perform very well. However, they are sometimes held back from developing fully as independent learners. This is because teachers sometimes provide too much direction for pupils and insufficient time is allowed for looking up information, and for discussion.
9. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. There is a respectful yet easy-going rapport with all adults who work in the school, enhancing pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Because most pupils have shared experiences of army life, they have an unusually deep understanding of each other. Pupils from ethnic minorities are fully included in the family of the school as are the relatively few pupils who are not from military families. Pupils are able to learn very well in an atmosphere free from bullying, oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism. The school is a genuinely happy place that helps all pupils to thrive. Attendance is very good, being well above the national average. There is relatively little lateness, and no truancy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In the lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was excellent in almost one in five, and very good in well over half. Because of this, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in many subjects, often in a very short time.
11. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good. Within these subjects, teachers apply the principles advocated in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively. They also teach the basic skills required by pupils in these subjects very well. This results in many pupils making rapid progress. Occasionally, opportunities to enhance pupils' speaking skills when they address the rest of class are missed, with teachers quickly reflecting or rephrasing what pupils have said, rather than giving them time to restructure what they are trying to say. Many pupils also acquire basic skills well in other subjects, for example in information and communication technology, art and design, and geography. This is partly because of the very good day-to-day and medium-term planning of their teachers. Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of the differing ability groups within their classes. This ensures that pupils are included very effectively in all aspects of the provision made for their learning. Teachers regularly revisit aspects of their pupils' learning daily or weekly which helps to consolidate skills, knowledge and understanding. They also revisit many topics taught within subjects each year. This enables teachers to build on pupils' previous learning very effectively, enabling pupils to study the topics in increasing depth. These principles are applied less effectively in physical education.
12. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and apply this very effectively to help pupils in their learning. For example, in art and design pupils learn very well and make very good progress because teachers explain the techniques required very clearly and provide very good opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they acquire. The same applies to the teaching of information and communication technology. Teachers make very good use of the available training opportunities to extend their knowledge of this subject. Consequently, very good use is made of the computer suite and pupils learn well. The use of computers in lessons not dedicated to the development of information and communication technology is less secure and they are not used with sufficient frequency.
13. Teachers have high expectations of how well pupils will behave and how well they will learn. Pupils respond well to these. Teachers apply these expectations consistently within classes and

across the school. Consequently, pupils are very clear about how they are expected to learn. Pupils invariably work very hard because of this and pupils of all abilities apply themselves very well to the tasks set for them, maintaining their interest and concentration very well. Many pupils are clearly enthusiastic learners. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently and take responsibility for their own learning, such as using the computer suite or library for research purposes on their own. This is partly because many pupils stay at the school only for a short time and teachers are rightly eager to establish the protocols that underpin pupils' learning. Teachers do this very well and their management of pupils is excellent. They are particularly successful at helping pupils who are new to the school to settle in very quickly.

14. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning and of the progress they are making is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the latter part of lessons to establish what pupils have learned by questioning them skilfully. Sometimes teachers do not create enough opportunities for pupils to consider for themselves how well they have done. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often include helpful advice on how pupils might improve their work in the future. However, this advice is not always followed up to ensure that pupils have responded appropriately. A similar situation is evident with regard to pupils' individual targets for learning. Teachers set targets in many subjects but do not remind pupils often enough about them or create enough opportunities for pupils to reflect on the progress they have made towards meeting the targets. However, there is clear evidence of these procedures working well in many mathematics and science lessons. Homework is used satisfactorily to enhance pupils' learning in a range of subjects, but most frequently in English and mathematics.
15. Teachers use the available time and resources well. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly that of pupils with special educational needs and of those who speak English as an additional language. The teaching of these pupils is very good and they are supported very well.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all lessons, where most additional support is provided, where teaching is generally at least good, and where lesson planning takes account of specific needs. As a result, they make good progress. From time to time, some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group work, designed effectively to meet their particular needs. This withdrawal is carefully controlled to ensure that there is a minimum disruption to the curriculum provided for all. Learning support assistants work well in providing support both in the classroom and by withdrawal. They know the objectives and content of each lesson, and they are familiar with pupils' Individual Educational Plans. Individual Education Plans are of good quality, embodying descriptions of pupils' needs and advice on how to meet them. Targets and review dates are set. Good use is made of the support services provided by the local education and health authorities, with whom there is good liaison.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

17. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a very good range of learning opportunities for all pupils in the school. Those aspects of the curriculum required by law are all in place. Schemes of work are providing an interesting range of activities and the annual cycle of work planned in each subject provides an excellent solution to the difficulties experienced through the very high levels of pupil mobility. This is an excellent response to the issue raised by the last inspection to strengthen the structure and progression in pupils' learning. The school has also addressed the issues concerning the provision of information and communication technology very successfully. The use of the new information and communication technology suite means that pupils now make very good progress in developing their skills. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory but has yet to be fully developed in all subjects. The scheme of work currently used for physical education does not aid teachers' planning in the way that other very good schemes of work do in other subjects.

18. Policies and schemes of work for subjects are created from an appropriate combination of nationally recommended guidance and other materials developed by the school. These provide teachers with clear guidance on how to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is further aided by joint planning in year groups to provide very good continuity in pupils' learning as they move through the school. Teachers plan their lessons carefully so that pupils of differing abilities and gender have excellent opportunity of access to the curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies continue to be implemented effectively and their use is a major reason for the rise standards in English and mathematics. Good opportunities for developing skills learnt in these sessions are provided in other curriculum areas. In science Year 4 pupils use sophisticated sensors to graphically measure boiled water as it cools to room temperature. Year 5 pupils create very good observational drawings and measurements to show the volume of air contained in different soils. There are very well planned links between literacy and history lessons. Excellent narrative skills developed in literacy lessons enable pupils to evaluate, reorganise and present information - for example, about the siege of Colchester during the Civil War, using appropriate language and dates.
19. There has been very good improvement in this area of the school's work since the last inspection. The headteacher has continued to work closely with subject co-ordinators to determine the aims and objectives for the curriculum, especially in considering the implications of the changes made to the curriculum required by law in recent years. Planning now incorporates consistent and explicit principles to guide the quality of learning experienced by pupils. It embraces a range of appropriate learning outcomes and focuses on key skills across the curriculum. The co-ordinators are involved in detailed monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the taught curriculum.
20. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Clubs, such as football, netball, rounders, dancing, orchestra and choir, further enhance pupils' learning. The curriculum is further enriched with a range of visits to places of educational interest and by the use of visiting speakers. Colchester Castle is used as a major local learning resource in history. All Year 3 pupils develop investigatory skills by carrying out a range of archeological tasks using Roman and Celtic artifacts. Scientific studies of habitats are enhanced by the visit to Fingringhoe Nature Reserve, and the port of Harwich is used as a geography trail in a contrasting study on settlements. A visit to the Maritime Museum allows pupils to become involved in music workshops where they create a story with music. They observe Tudor paintings and dress up in period costumes to further enhance their studies of this period in history.
21. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equality of access and opportunity to all aspects of provision made for their learning. Arrangements to ensure the inclusion of all pupils are excellent. Very few pupils who begin at the school in Year 3 stay until Year 6 and the majority of pupils who leave at the end of Year 6 have not started at the school in Year 3. However, the excellent organisation of the curriculum ensures that all pupils achieve very well and make very good progress during their time at the school. This is because the curriculum is organised very well and builds on pupils' previous learning very successfully. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including that for sex education and for raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of abusing drugs, are good.
22. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because of the care which is taken with planning teaching and assessing progress, and because of the very good knowledge of individual pupils which teachers and learning support assistants apply effectively. The revised Code of Practice is in place and is being operated appropriately, although some of the supporting documentation needs updating.
23. The provision which the school makes for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to explore feeling, values and beliefs. In assemblies, pupils are encouraged to think about special things, about friendships and each other's feelings, about co-operation, and about gratitude. During the inspection the theme for one assembly was 'Remembrance', of particular relevance at this time (the week before 11th November) and to this school. Prayers form an integral part of the assemblies. Led by teachers, the prayers are informal but sensitively worded. Pupils usually sing in assemblies, and this extends their spiritual

experience as they join together to make a beautiful sound. Moments like this in music, in art and in other lessons provide pupils with contact with and understanding of those things which make the human spirit special. The school's personal, social, and health education policy focuses well upon 'emotional literacy', and helps pupils to talk about their emotions and responses in a clear and mature way.

24. The arrangements to promote pupils' moral development are excellent. Clear distinctions between right and wrong are made and consistently observed. The school promotes honesty, fairness and justice extremely well, and truth is valued and respected by the vast majority. Equality of opportunity and personal entitlement are well developed. Rules of personal conduct are clearly set out, and teachers unobtrusively remind pupils that they are committed to them. Breaches of agreed moral codes are sensitively handled, with the result that there is an absolute minimum of misbehaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions in respect of people and of property (each other's and the school's) and in care for the environment. Teachers provide good role models in themselves, in their relationships with pupils, and in creating a safe learning environment in which pupils feel free to express their views and develop their own codes of morality along the lines of what is right.
25. The social development that pupils demonstrate is witness to the school's excellent provision. In this unusual school, with frequent arrivals and departures, it is said that, 'You are only new until play-time'. This high quality of educational inclusion is observably the case. Many pupils are accustomed to the temporary nature of their stays in schools, and their social skills are highly developed. The school confers additional confidence on pupils and they are sure that teachers are doing their best. They trust them and they trust each other, and the result is a kind of poise rare among children of these ages. With visitors to the school pupils speak in an open, respectful way, and they readily offer help if one of them looks lost.
26. The school provides a good variety of cultural experiences, in its strong art and music, and its good teaching of English, where books and literacy are the focus of a strong cultural approach. In history, pupils can follow the development of local culture in Colchester from Roman times. Most pupils understand the value of their cultural traditions and those of the small number of other pupils who come from more diverse backgrounds. Their understanding of other cultures is enhanced through their work in religious education as they study Judaism and Hinduism, and through their work in geography. The annual Christmas productions, in which all pupils participate, are spectacular and make a significant contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development. These events are very popular and very well attended by parents, the Mayor and Mayoress of Colchester and by the local Member of Parliament. The school is preparing pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society.
27. The school has developed good links with its community. These contribute well to pupils' learning, and to their personal development. The local area is used very well for case studies in science, history and geography. The pupils' learning in English has been supported by a local theatre group's performance of 'The Odyssey'. Trips to the Maritime Museum at Greenwich, the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and Fingringhoe Wick nature reserve have all supported, broadened, and enhanced pupils' school-based activities. During the inspection, a Normandy veteran spoke to the pupils about the importance of supporting the annual Poppy Appeal. The community Ministry of Defence police officer, 'PC Pete', speaks to pupils about Internet safety, and organises cycling proficiency tests. Teachers have enabled Year 6 pupils to build effectively on a visit by the local Member of Parliament to discuss current affairs by encouraging them to write a number of letters which highlight their well-developed awareness of a wide range of international topics.
28. Pupils have also benefited from the good links the school has with partner institutions. Trainee music teachers from the Colchester Institute have been placed in the school and shared their talent and expertise. The Army chaplain regularly attends Wednesday assemblies, which are amusing and thought-provoking, and the regimental bands play for the pupils. Good links have been established with the main receiving secondary school. These help to ensure that the transfer of pupils takes place smoothly and that pupils settle in quickly at their new school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school takes very good care of the pupils. This judgement represents an improvement since the last inspection. Arrangements to ensure their health and safety include comprehensive policies that show clear lines of responsibility, and provide for governors and staff to carry out risk assessments at regular intervals. Effective procedures for child protection are now fully in place, and secure links have been established with support agencies. A safe and healthy lifestyle is effectively promoted through the curriculum.
30. The school provides excellent pastoral support, which often extends beyond its boundaries. Because of the nature of military postings, most pupils are in the school for less than three years. Teachers quickly get to know them very well and gain their confidence. The school is especially sensitive to the needs of pupils and their families when parents are away on military duties for long periods of time and stands ready to offer support and guidance. This provision is valued and appreciated by parents and their children. The school's arrangements to welcome new pupils and to help them settle in quickly are excellent. A commonly heard saying is, 'You are only new at Montgomery until morning break on your first day.' This very high quality of care extends throughout the period of pupils' stay at the school, and arrangements to monitor their personal development and their academic progress are also excellent.
31. The school has very sophisticated procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress and for identifying what needs to be done to improve their attainment, especially in English, mathematics and science. The procedures are linked very effectively to the differing periods of time for which pupils attend and enable the school to make very accurate assessments of the progress that pupils make. The effectiveness of these arrangements also means that the school can supply any receiving school with very good information about pupils' academic performance.
32. Teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress thoroughly, frequently and accurately. This means they have detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress. They also make very good use of the information they gather from their ongoing assessments to decide what to teach next and if any alterations should be made to the curriculum. This information is not always adapted suitably for sharing with the pupils, who are sometimes not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing. For example, teachers set targets for pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics, and these are often shared with pupils shortly after they have been established. However, not enough is done to remind pupils of the targets and to make them aware of the progress they are making towards them.
33. Good behaviour is promoted and monitored very effectively. A short list of school rules, 'Give me Five', is prominently displayed in each classroom and sets clear expectations for pupils' attitudes to their learning and for their behaviour. Pupils' understanding is further consolidated in discussions between themselves and teachers that lead to agreements about the application of rules. Good behaviour and achievement are recognised by the award of spots and stickers, which pupils value highly. It is the pupils' mature attitudes and respect for others which act as the bulwark against unacceptable and oppressive behaviour. The school has very effective policies and procedures in the background to deal with incidents should they arise. Parents are involved at an early stage on the rare occasions when more specific support is needed. Outside agencies are involved appropriately, but this is rarely necessary.
34. Attendance is well above the national average. This is achieved through the support of parents, effective and regular monitoring, and the school's prompt procedures for making enquiries about unexplained absence.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents view the school extremely positively and they are very supportive. Many hold the school in very high regard, referring to the provision made for the children's education as 'excellent'. Links between the school and parents are excellent. All parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed. They are also unanimous in their agreement that teaching is good, that behaviour in school is good, and that the school sets high expectations. A minority disagreed that their children were set the right amount of work to do at home, and that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection confirms parents' very positive views. Homework is judged to be satisfactory whilst the range of activities available to children outside school is good, with more than half of the pupils across all age groups taking part in one or more cultural or sporting activity.
36. Communications with parents are very good, including information about their children's progress. There are two formal consultations arranged each year but the school always welcomes parents if the need arises. Pupils' annual reports give a clear overview of the curriculum covered and identify areas for improvement, or 'next steps', in English and mathematics. Levels of attainment tend to be shared and discussed at parents' meetings when specific advice is given on how they can be raised. Given the irregular timing of pupil admissions, and the wide variety of previous educational experiences, these procedures appear to match the needs of the parents.
37. The school supplies parents with information each term informing them of the work being undertaken by their children. There is also a home reading diary but it is not always used consistently. Newsletters are sent out every two to three weeks in order to update parents on the life of the school. Parents of Year 6 pupils also receive newsletters from the local secondary school. There are about half a dozen parent volunteers who regularly help in school, and three past helpers have since become learning support assistants. Many more parents support the Friends Association, which raises approximately £1,500 each year. Recent spending on a new stage sound system has enhanced the quality of pupils' musical productions, which have established a high reputation in the community. Most parents sign their home-school agreements and all satisfactorily support their children's learning by ensuring that the latter arrive on time and properly equipped.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent. There is an excellent working partnership in place between the governing body and the headteacher that makes a significant contribution to the high quality of education that the school provides for its pupils. The headteacher is held in very high regard by the parents and by the community served by the school. His leadership and that of the governing body ensures that there is a clear educational direction and the school's aims and values are reflected in all aspects of its work.
39. The delegation of duties to staff with management responsibilities and their contribution are very good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very effectively to maintain and enhance the high quality of educational provision. A senior member of staff undertakes detailed analysis of the school's test results and of other assessment information, ensuring that the progress of pupils is monitored very closely. These systems work extremely well and are vital in tracking the progress made by pupils, as often they do not stay at the school for very long before they have to move. The monitoring of the quality of provision by subject co-ordinators is very good. They regularly monitor the quality of their colleagues planning to ensure that the curriculum is covered correctly. They also analyse very closely the assessments made by their colleagues of the attainment and progress of pupils in each subject. Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching are good. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly by the headteacher through direct observations, and plans are in hand to increase the opportunities for subject leaders to do more of this work.
40. The co-ordination of special educational needs provision is very good. The co-ordinator - the deputy headteacher - is a very experienced and skilled teacher with a very good knowledge of the school, the pupils and their needs. She brings this to bear very effectively in promoting pupils' progress. Her records are very detailed, and she offers very useful advice to her colleagues,

particularly in the shared process of drawing up Individual Education Plans. Her contacts with external services are good and are well focused on obtaining the maximum benefit for pupils. Learning support assistants are well briefed and well deployed.

41. The quality of the work of the governing body is excellent. Governors undertake the duties required of them by law fully. Their role in shaping the direction of the school and in understanding its strengths and weaknesses is excellent. This is based on a very strong and supportive working relationship with the headteacher. Procedures to evaluate the quality of the school's work are very good. The governors are involved at all stages in the arrangements to identify areas for improvement, in deciding ways to bring about the necessary improvements, and in judging their success in addressing the identified improvements. All governors are involved in monitoring the quality of provision at first hand. A member of the governing body is linked with the co-ordinator for each subject and governors provide excellent support for the subject co-ordinators. They meet regularly to discuss how well pupils are attaining and progressing and what aspects of provision need to be improved. These arrangements are very effective and ensure that governors are very knowledgeable about all features of provision and about the quality of education provided by the school.
42. The school's improvement plan is detailed, clear and well structured and identifies appropriate priorities for development. Governors and staff work well together under the leadership of the headteacher to prepare the plan and monitor closely the progress made in addressing the improvements identified in it. Governors and the headteacher also set appropriately challenging targets for the attainment by pupils in the annual national tests for the end of Year 6. Because of the mobility of pupils this is a complicated and challenging process. It is undertaken very well because the school's arrangements to track pupils' attainment and progress are excellent. The strong working partnership between the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body means that the shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed are excellent.
43. Arrangements for the appraisal and performance management of teachers are very effective. These are linked appropriately to the professional development needs of staff and to the educational priorities identified in the school's improvement plan. Arrangements for the induction of teachers new to the school and those new to the profession are excellent. The potential of the school to provide a venue for the training of new teachers is excellent. This is because of the high quality of support that teachers provide for each other and the support provided for all staff by the headteacher and senior managers. The curriculum is planned very well and there are many examples of teachers providing models of excellent practice in their teaching.
44. The links between the financial management of the school and the support provided for the educational priorities identified in the school's improvement plan are excellent. It is very difficult for governors to plan the use of financial resources far into the future. This is because it is impossible to predict accurately how many pupils will be attending the school at any time. Governors consider the allocation of funding to support educational priorities very carefully. They also monitor the progress of spending on priorities very closely. The financial reports provided by the financial administrator are excellent and provide governors with detailed and helpful information. Governors, in turn, oversee the financial administration of the school very effectively, ensuring that resources to support pupils' learning are used wisely. The extent to which the governors apply the principles of ensuring best value is excellent. Specific grants are used very well to support pupils' learning and the governing body and headteacher work very effectively to ensure that such resources are used wisely. This includes resources dedicated to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
45. The use of new technology to support the administration of the school is very good. The office staff make very good use of the available training opportunities and day-to-day administration is very efficient, ensuring that the school runs smoothly. Teachers make good use of the computer suite to enhance pupils' learning in many subjects. However, pupils rarely make use of this good facility independently and not enough use is made of the computers in classrooms to support pupils' learning. Teachers use new technology well to undertake their day-to-day planning and for

developing the very good medium-term plans and schemes of work that help to ensure that the curriculum is planned and taught very effectively.

46. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources all meet the needs of the school well. There are sufficient teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum and a sufficient number of learning support assistants. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to enhancing the quality of pupils' learning. The accommodation is maintained well and the governing body have invested wisely to ensure that this is the case. Staff and pupils benefit from the very good quality of service provided by the site manager and his staff. This creates a clean and pleasant environment in which the pupils learn very well. The majority of subjects are resourced appropriately.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to improve provision the governors, headteacher and staff should -

- (1) Create more opportunities for pupils to become increasingly independent learners and to take greater responsibility for their own learning by –
 - allowing pupils more frequent opportunities to undertake their own research and find things out independently - for example, by increasing the opportunities for pupils to use the library and the computer suite for their own research.
 - ensuring that pupils are reminded with appropriate frequency about the targets that are set for their learning.
 - involving pupils more often in setting targets for their learning.
 - reminding pupils of the need for them to be mindful of and respond to points for improvement that teachers make when marking pupils' work.(Paragraphs: 8, 13, 14, 32, 45, 50, 52, 53, 58, 59, 64, 92 and 97)

- (2) Increase the use of the classroom computers to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects and to supplement the very good use made of the computers in the computer suite.
(Paragraphs: 12, 17, 45, 54, 60, 65, 92 and 99)

- (3) Improve pupils' achievement in physical education to match that in other subjects by –
 - reviewing the scheme of work and ensuring that its content is matched appropriately to pupils' abilities.
 - making full use of the nationally available guidance to assess pupils' attainment and progress and to guide what is taught next.
 - ensuring that the apparatus and equipment available for pupils to use is matched appropriately to the stage of progress and provides appropriate challenges.
 - making greater use of the expertise available from partner schools and from the community to enhance pupils' learning.(Paragraphs: 3, 11, 17, and 101 – 104)

The school recognises these issues for development and has already begun work on addressing them.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	17	12	5	0	0	0
Percentage	17%	41%	29%	12%	0%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	194
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	82

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	60
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	68

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	21	14	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	20
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	27	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (79)	86 (79)	91 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	18	20
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	30	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	86 (79)	91 (83)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
180	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
9	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

0

0

0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	24.25

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	148

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 02
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	£
Total income	475123
Total expenditure	478200
Expenditure per pupil	2519
Balance brought forward from previous year	33229
Balance carried forward to next year	30152

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	194
Number of questionnaires returned	74

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	39	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	49	15	1	3
The teaching is good.	65	35	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	35	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	15	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	36	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	37	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	45	8	3	7

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

48. In the national attainment tests in 2001, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 was close to the national average, and the percentage reaching higher levels was above the national average. In 2002 the percentage reaching Level 4 was above the national average, but the percentage reaching higher levels was slightly lower. Year on year comparisons are difficult because of the very high turbulence factor, but when compared with similar schools attainment is well above average. The trend over time is of steady improvement, and progressively higher targets are being set. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 6 are average. This applies to all elements of National Curriculum English: speaking and listening, reading, and writing.
49. In speaking and listening, pupils are encouraged to develop their skills through teachers' careful questioning and expectations. There is much in the school environment and in teachers' good relationships with pupils that enhances pupils' confidence as speakers, especially for those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Listening is careful, respectful, and generally produces relevant responses. Pupils are well motivated, and want to give the right answers and say what they mean. Nevertheless, in spite of their confidence, there is still a lack of recognition of the range of requirements which each speaking situation demands. While they speak spontaneously, sometimes the words tend to spill out without much structure and consideration. Pupils do not seem adequately to understand the needs of their audiences, and are not used to making good formal speech presentations. Sometimes opportunities to enhance pupils' speaking abilities are missed when teachers do not require pupils to plan what they intend to say in sufficient detail or to revise what they have said to improve its clarity.
50. The same applies to reading aloud: it is seldom consciously adjusted to suit the needs of the listeners. Very few of the pupils heard reading communicated meaning effectively through intonation, and even very good readers are often not as audible as they should be. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils read accurately, often tackling quite hard words successfully. In Year 3, words like "cathedral", "considerable" and "nautical" are read correctly. There are pauses in the right places for full stops and commas, but speed is often too fast, and prevents clear understanding. Average attaining pupils in the younger age groups are competent, average readers, and those who are more familiar with books are fluent, though expression is inconsistent. Even those with below average attainment for the school recognise the value of books, although they may be defeated by some simple words to the extent that when they read the meaning is obscured. Older pupils are in the main strong and fluent readers, and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have a good idea of authors' intentions and of the recipe for an enjoyable book. Both higher and average attaining pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors, and some can say why they find them special. Even at this age, lower attaining pupils read simple texts only with understanding, and would find even a simple newspaper difficult. Research skills associated with reading are not well developed. During the inspection no pupil was seen consulting a dictionary or thesaurus, nor was the library much used as an information resource, though in fairness, for much of the time it was in use for work with individuals or small groups.
51. In writing, attainment is below average when pupils enter the school in Year 3. Some join their handwriting, but in most cases it is not well formed or positioned. Higher attaining pupils understand more difficult punctuation, like speech marks, but for most, sentence demarcation is still developing, and there is some confusion about the use of capital letters. In Year 6, all pupils join their handwriting, and presentation is often good. Punctuation is generally accurate, and all pupils try to use the right word, though the vocabulary to which they have access is no more than average, even among higher attaining pupils. Not much extended writing was seen during the inspection. What was seen was well structured and sequenced, if perhaps a little short and rarely divided into paragraphs.

52. The quality of pupils' learning is good across the school. From a below average level of attainment on entry in English, they achieve at least average levels by the end of Year 6, making good progress. For some, particularly those who are able to stay in the school for the full four years, progress is very good. This is a result of very good teaching, and the positive approach which characterises the school, making learning an enjoyable experience and promoting the confidence which, when linked with pupils' high motivation, is a powerful influence upon improvement. Pupils enjoy English and respond very readily to the demands teachers make of them, particularly as they are expressed clearly, engagingly and collaboratively. They stay on task for what are often quite prolonged periods of time. However, they still have fully to develop habits of independent study, and examples of self-evaluation are still rare. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language learn very well and make good progress with the additional support which is provided for them: this enables them to be included in all the opportunities available.
53. In two lessons, teaching was judged to be excellent, and in the rest it was very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, due partly to the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, but more particularly to teachers' own skills, motivation and training. Planning is meticulous in all of the long, medium and short term. This, together with very careful preparation of resources, supports lessons of very good pace and structure. The planning includes work for the full range of abilities, and this is usually challenging and stimulating. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are high, and they apply the school's and their own control strategies very well. Questioning is skilled, and designed to probe, to motivate, to provoke thought, and to drive progress forward. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils at the beginnings of the lessons, and progress towards them is usually evaluated at the ends. This, however, is almost always by the teacher, and not by the pupils, who may estimate how well they have understood, but who are not asked to examine their learning more analytically. Homework is consistently and appropriately set. Marking is carried out thoroughly, and often work is evaluated in extended comments, some of which may contain recommendations for improvement. Nevertheless, this process does not continue as far as the systematic checking of future work to see whether the advice has been followed.
54. The management of English is very good. The co-ordinator provides leadership of high quality through both precept and example. She has overseen the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, and has adapted it to the form most suitable for the school and its pupils. She has a clear vision of the priorities for the subject and the school. The subject documentation is an effective guide for teachers, especially when combined with the very strong long and medium term planning. Assessment is regular and thorough in reading and writing, but progress in speaking and listening is not formally assessed. A start has been made with setting individual targets for pupils, but this needs further development so that targets are more short term, memorable and therefore attainable by pupils. Resources are good, well stored and accessible. Teachers make good use of their classrooms, and enhance their appearance with pleasant and informative displays. The supply of graded reading books is good, and there is a good stock of books which pupils may take home on loan. No example of the use by pupils of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection.
55. Literacy is promoted well throughout the school. The National Strategy is very successful, and teachers ensure, in other subjects than English, that key words are known and used, and that technical errors in the use of English are corrected. Pupils are encouraged to respond carefully in class, but there is a lack of focus upon structured speaking. Individual presentations or formal debates/discussions are rare, and this is an area for development.
56. English makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development, in encounters with the beauty of great literature (or even the thrill which pupils find in their own writing), and through personal interactions in lessons and through discussions of moral questions in class. There is also good cultural development, although the need for additional focus upon cultures other than our own needs further to be met.

MATHEMATICS

57. The results of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 show that standards in mathematics were above average. The results of the 2002 tests are an improvement on the previous year and standards remain above average. When these results are compared with those for similar schools they are well above average. Results in recent years have improved at a rate that exceeds the national trend. Inspection findings confirm the impact of this trend on standards throughout the school. The standards of the present Year 6 pupils are average. The successful use of the National Numeracy Strategy is impacting well through identified improvements of pupils' mental strategies, their understanding of place value and the presentation of their written calculations.
58. Throughout the school pupils achieve very well. As a result of the use of the National Numeracy Strategy pupils are making very good progress in improving their ability to work with number mentally. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make very good progress, using a range of written and mental strategies when problem solving with addition. Lower attaining pupils make significant gains in their learning because of the very good support provided by learning support assistants. In many lessons pupils' comprehension of basic skills in number work improves considerably. Learning support assistants are very aware of the planning for the lesson. In Years 5 and 6 they successfully help pupils to master different strategies for adding 2-digit and 3-digit numbers. Without classroom support pupils with different abilities still maintain similar levels of progress. In a Year 3 lesson excellent teaching guided pupils to different targets using appropriate strategies and helpful tips. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress, once they have overcome the initial language barriers. The progress of all pupils is enhanced by the very good relationships teachers have with their pupils. Teachers are respectful of and sensitive to the varied needs of their pupils and have very good knowledge of pupils' abilities. This enables teachers to offer challenges in numeracy in an increasing range of contexts across the curriculum. As a result, and when given the opportunity, pupils are confident whilst solving problems. Their number work provides good examples of identification of patterns, mathematical reasoning and the communication of results. However, teachers do not always strike an appropriate balance between directed work and problem solving and investigative work. For example the higher attaining pupils in a Year 3 lesson made very good progress when identifying the properties of a prism, but opportunities to use the available worksheets, requiring them to investigate the relationships between this and the number of edges, were lost due to, in this instance, an over-reliance on text books. Similarly, Year 4 pupils who have a very good understanding of the distributive law in multiplication are not always extended to investigate patterns further because they sometimes follow worksheets being used by other, less able pupils.
59. The quality of teaching is very good, often it is excellent. The daily numeracy lessons are very well planned and consistently used throughout the school. All teachers have a good working knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy. They are aware of the organisational strategies within the scheme and this enables the school to consistently achieve, and often exceed, their own and national targets for pupils' attainment. Planning ensures that all pupils make very good progress towards the long-term targets set for them. The good use of opportunities for pupils to do mental calculations and the effective use of the plenary section of lessons by teachers helps pupils to communicate their mathematical knowledge well. However, not all whole-class teaching considers fully the differences in pupils' abilities to do calculations mentally and this inhibits the full involvement for some pupils. Good teaching encourages pupils to estimate their findings, further encouraging them to take part in discussions. Teachers' planning is very thorough and teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn. Excellent teaching in Year 5 takes this further by giving pertinent examples of the outcomes for the lesson and discusses these with pupils of all abilities to gauge understanding before starting. All teachers effectively evaluate their lessons based on whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. Occasionally lessons do not move on with sufficient pace and some pupils become restless, drifting off task. When more varied teaching strategies are used this enables pupils to persevere and work independently on a range of exciting practical tasks. In a Year 5 class this especially gave lower attaining pupils confidence to express their thoughts and strategies. Although these and other pupils gain confidence when working at the white board, teachers need to consider the loss of focus that

sometimes happens with other pupils at these times. Less varied work in some lessons is inhibiting independent learning and the ability of pupils to reason the problems set for them.

60. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management and a clear direction for the subject. As a result the school is successfully maintaining the high standards in mathematics achieved in recent years. This represents very good progress since the last inspection. Strategies for recording achievement and for evaluating test results have been instrumental in this success story. This is a major reason why standards are maintained in spite of the mobility of pupils entering and leaving the school frequently. There are effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating teachers' planning and standards in pupils' books. These check the appropriateness of the breadth and balance of the programme being offered. As a result the school is aware that information and communication technology is presently under-represented in the mathematics curriculum and that this also restricts the breadth of work done in areas such as spreadsheets and graphs. Pupils' numeracy skills are applied very well in science to communicate conclusions from experiments by illustrating them with graphs and charts.

SCIENCE

61. The results of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed attainment to be well above average. Attainment in the 2002 national tests was also above average, confirming a rising trend over recent years. Inspection findings show standards in the present Year 6 to be average. This represents a difference at present between these standards and previous national tests results and is symptomatic of the fluctuation in standards as a result of the very high levels of pupil mobility. Standards of work are improved by teachers' consistent expectations for pupils to systematically record and communicate findings in appropriate detail. Learning is improved by pupils accessing a wide range of reference materials, very good use of the locality to enhance pupils' learning and the effective use of sophisticated resources when conducting investigations.
62. Pupils achieve very well. At whatever stage the pupils arrive at the school they make very good progress in relation to their prior learning. Teachers are encouraging guided discovery and the independent learning needed to conduct experiments successfully. This was observed in a Year 3 lesson on forces. As a result of open investigations pupils explained clearly the forces of pushing and pulling using magnets. They presented their work well and used scientific vocabulary when explaining the outcomes of their investigations correctly. Teachers' very good planning ensures that when Year 4 pupils study the same topic they are challenged very effectively to use their previous learning to move them on further. For example, in a lesson on forces pupils used their knowledge and understanding of pushing and pulling to apply force to a variety of objects and measured the force applied accurately, in Newtons. The highest attaining pupils make very good progress in using different scales of measurements to identify stronger and lighter forces. This detailed level of planning is a major reason why the school does very well to overcome the problems of pupils leaving and arriving at different times. Teachers are creating good opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy and information and communication technology skills well in science lessons. Year 4 pupils use sophisticated sensors to graphically measure boiling water cooling at room temperature. Year 5 pupils create very good observational drawings and measurements to show the volume of air contained in different soils. Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge of forces by measuring the relationship between the weight of the force applied and the subsequent stretch of an elastic band. Teachers have excellent knowledge of their pupils' abilities. This is another reason why pupils of all abilities make such rapid progress. However, swifter progress is achieved in lessons where pupils receive clear guidelines to help them explain in writing the various stages of an experiment. When this happens pupils write clearer predictions and record their findings and evaluations more appropriately.
63. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' planning expertly identifies specific and relevant targets for learning and is ensuring that there is continuity in learning from year to year. Experiments are consistently based on the concept of 'fair testing'. Teachers also evaluate pupils' end of module achievements and use this information to guide the next stages of teaching and learning. Teachers have very high expectations that require pupils to systematically record and communicate findings in appropriate detail. Work during lessons and in pupils' books has a very good focus on exploration and

investigation to acquire skills and knowledge and to use recording conventions, such as graphs, tables and charts, well. Many opportunities are given to pupils to reflect on their work and to evaluate what they have achieved. Their responses to scientific enquiry are consistently very good. They naturally explore through questioning and by interpretation. In a Year 6 lesson on the solubility of materials pupils excitedly reported that experiments with salt can be reversed, suggesting the phenomena of evaporation. Planning and teaching almost always show an appropriate awareness of the differing ability levels and ages in classes. Teachers phrase questions skilfully to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully involved. Teachers often provide useful prompts to support pupils when they are recording their investigative work. In a Year 3 lesson about forces this resulted in some higher attaining pupils describing forces as 'invisible' and using the terms 'attract' and 'repel' correctly in reference to magnets.

64. Very occasionally teachers talk for too long and the pace of lessons becomes too slow. When this happens there is insufficient time for pupils to spend on their investigations, because they are expected to sit and listen for too long. Further evidence of this is seen in some books where experiments have not been concluded or observations are limited.
65. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. There has been excellent direction in formulating appropriate action plans to maintain the very high standards achieved in recent years. Pupils' work is systematically monitored and subsequent audits have revealed how a focus on the key skills of thinking, reasoning and enquiry in planning is very significant in pupils' learning. The most recent audit notes some inconsistency in using relevant frameworks for systematic inquiry and in the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning. The high quality of the procedures to assess pupils' attainment when they enter the school and subsequently to plan appropriate challenges for them is a major strength of the science programme. Teachers evaluate thoroughly whether learning objectives have been achieved in programmes of study, but have still to use National Curriculum levels of achievement to inform planning on a day-to-day basis. Further targeting and tracking, similar to the mathematics and English systems, would also help pupils who arrive late in Years 5 and 6 and who are struggling with the subject to be more effectively challenged in the short-term.

ART AND DESIGN

66. Standards by the end of Year 6 exceed those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well and make very good progress. This is because pupils are included well in all aspects of the provision made by the school for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are also very good. Teachers, and particularly the subject co-ordinator, have good subject knowledge. They plan their lessons in great detail with activities to meet the needs of the full range of differing abilities very well. Teachers' knowledge of the basic skills of drawing and painting is very good. This enables them to provide their pupils with advice and guidance that help them to improve their work significantly. In many lessons teachers demonstrate the techniques that pupils need to acquire to improve the quality of their work. Pupils find these occasions very helpful.
68. Throughout the school pupils use sketch books very well to plan their painting and drawing. For example, pupils in Year 4 use viewfinders with great precision to identify and reproduce sections of patterns from the work of well-known artists in their sketch books. They do this as they plan their designs for tiles which they will later use to produce repeating patterns. The oldest pupils also use sketch books very well when they practise observational drawings of Greek pottery from photographs and reproductions. Many pupils produce very clear sketches, responding well to the helpful advice of their teacher about experimenting with different types of pencil for shading.

69. Good provision is made for pupils to experience working in three dimensions. Pupils in Year 5 make coil pots from clay. Their learning is enhanced considerably and they achieve very well because of the knowledge of their teacher. She demonstrates the techniques required and questions pupils skilfully to draw on their knowledge of the techniques they require to complete the pots. This ensures that pupils understand and apply very well the key points of the skills they require.
70. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in the subject are very good. The subject also makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is organised very well and is based on a very good scheme of work, developed by the subject co-ordinator. All aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study for the subject are covered very effectively, enabling pupils to build very well on their previous learning and further develop their skills, knowledge and understanding progressively in each year.
71. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. Pupils in all years use paint and draw programs on the computer confidently and experiment to reproduce aspects of their art work using these programs. Art is also taught very effectively to all year groups to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects, such as geography and history. This contributes greatly to the good quality of presentation of pupils' work these subjects. In addition to visiting art galleries pupils in Year 6 have researched art galleries using the Internet.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has produced a very good scheme of work to guide the work of her colleagues. She also regularly monitors samples of pupils' work from all classes in order to ensure that standards are as high as they should be. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' performance and for assessing their attainment and progress are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Standards by the end of Year 6 exceed those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well and make good progress. This is because pupils are included well in all aspects of the provision made by the school for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are very good. The youngest pupils make very good models with pneumatically powered moving parts, showing considerable understanding of how these mechanisms work. Pupils in Year 3 make sandwiches as part of their work on food technology and teachers link this very effectively to pupils' learning in science, enhancing pupils' understanding of healthy eating very effectively. Pupils in this year also make moving monsters and photo frames, illustrating attainment that exceeds that expected for their age. The work Year 4 pupils do when they make hats and torches that light up, using battery powered circuits, is also linked well to their learning in science.
75. Pupils in Year 5 show good knowledge of the designing, making and evaluating elements of the curriculum for the subject. This is clearly evident when they explain the good points and the weaknesses of materials used to make various examples of slippers. They express their likes and dislikes for these products clearly and higher attaining pupils do so confidently when they address their classmates. Sometimes these opportunities are not used fully to develop the speaking and listening abilities of lower attaining pupils to share their thoughts. This is because these pupils are not given sufficient guidance in how they might present what they wish to say more effectively and clearly. In food technology pupils in this year make biscuits. In other aspects of the subject they make moving toys and musical instruments. In all cases their work shows good understanding of the processes of designing, making and evaluating their work.

76. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in the subject are good. These make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because the curriculum is planned well. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. For example, pupils in Year 6 make very good models, powered by electric motors, and programmed through the computers. They also make models that are linked to computer programs that illuminate lights on the models in sequences decided by the pupils. The model shelters these pupils make also illustrate good understanding of what they need to consider when deciding to use different materials for different purposes and when considering how to improve their products.
77. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is recently appointed and very enthusiastic. A helpful scheme of work is in place and this sets out what should be taught very clearly and in considerable detail. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards because of her thorough analysis of pupils' work from each year. This helps to affirm standards accurately and to identify areas for further development. However, the co-ordinator has not yet had opportunities to observe teaching at first hand. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and resources to support their learning are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

78. Standards by the end of Year 6 exceed those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good progress. This is because pupils are included well in all aspects of the provision made by the school for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are very good. Pupils in all years use maps and atlases appropriately. As part of their work on 'Where in the World is Colchester', pupils in Year 4 make very good use of maps and atlases. Their knowledge of where different places are in the world exceeds that expected for their age and their understanding of directions is established very well. They also relate the size of different communities to the type of services that are typically provided. The youngest pupils map the land use of the area around the school very accurately. These pupils derive evidence from photographs very well when they compare contrasting geographical areas, such as parts of Britain with parts of India. They also identify and explain correctly the geographical reasons why Colchester is sited where it is.
80. The oldest pupils undertake river studies. They are very clear in their knowledge of the different features of rivers at different points in their development from source to estuary. They also understand the impact of precipitation and evaporation and permeable and impermeable rocks on the development of rivers. This work builds very effectively on that covered by pupils in Year 5 who consider the impact of creating reservoirs on the environment and the effect of flooding on the communities that suffer from inadequate flood control measures. As do younger pupils, the oldest pupils also look at the changes that affect communities. However, their work, when looking at the development of the London docklands, is far more sophisticated than that of pupils in earlier years.
81. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in the subject are very good. This is because the school has an excellent scheme of work that covers very well what is to be taught. The structure of the scheme enables the topics taught each year to be revisited in an increasingly sophisticated way. This extends pupils' learning very effectively by building very well on their previous learning and enhancing their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
82. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance pupils' learning in the subject. For example, pupils access the Ordnance Survey website to compare maps of Colchester from different decades and identify from the maps those features that have changed. Links with mathematics are also good and pupils are very clear about the cardinal points of the compass.

and the directions in which they would travel in going from one place to another, deriving this information correctly when they look at maps. They also use coordinates correctly to identify precisely the position of places on maps. Good use is also made of educational visits and visitors to the school to enhance pupils learning in the subject. Pupils in Year 5 visit Harwich and map the land use. Pupils in Year 6 visit the Hythe area of Colchester to look at the rejuvenation that has taken place and consider the environmental impact of the developments. Pupils speak very knowledgeably on both these subjects and this typifies the very good contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

83. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator has provided an excellent scheme of work that ensures the curriculum is covered well and provides excellent support for the teaching of her colleagues. The work of the co-ordinator is supported well by the governor attached to the subject. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and the co-ordinator frequently analyses samples of pupils' work from all years to ensure that standards are as high as they should be. The co-ordinator provides her colleagues with helpful reference sheets to assess the progress made by pupils at the end of each unit of work in the subject.

HISTORY

84. Standards, by the end of Year 6, are higher than expected for pupils of this age. Pupils respond enthusiastically in lessons and show very high levels of interest in the lives of people from the past. Studying the history of Colchester has had a significant impact on pupils' attitudes and their enthusiasm for their work.
85. Pupils achieve very well. As a result of excellent planning, they remember what they learn from year to year and develop increasingly deeper understanding of the periods they study. Local expertise and resources are used very well to develop an understanding of Colchester through the ages. The youngest pupils expertly illustrate the Roman period on time-lines. By studying the characteristics of the 'Celts' and of key people from the era, such as Boudicca and Claudius they begin to understand the legacy of invasions and ask questions such as, 'Why did the Romans come to Britain?' This lays a good foundation for historical study in subsequent years. Year 5 pupils continue to account accurately for the impact of Boudicca's life on local history. They show a very good understanding of the use of source materials depicting events and can evaluate and compare the accuracy of accounts from different sources. They develop further local historical knowledge when studying the siege of Colchester during the Civil War, again by evaluating first-hand evidence well. There is a strong correlation between pupils' achievements and teachers' very good planning for each module of work. Pupils in Year 4 write expertly about the use of Anderson shelters and the different sizes of gas masks during the blackout periods in World War II. They communicate these facts with feeling. Their work on Viking longships identifies very well the differences between war and trading ships and how designs of ships can be interpreted to show evidence of other aspects of the period.
86. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Tasks given in lessons encourage pupils successfully to develop the skills of making deductions and evaluations from historical evidence. They acquire good historical vocabulary and they use this appropriately in identifying the consequences of change in Roman, Norman and Medieval Colchester. There are very well planned links between literacy and history lessons. Excellent narrative skills, developed in literacy lessons, enabled pupils to evaluate, reorganise and present information about the siege of Colchester during the Civil War very well, using appropriate language and dates. Further historical data is added by researching pictures and architecture in the town. Teachers' planning is very good. Lesson objectives identify knowledge to be gained and the understanding and relevant skills that are needed to evaluate the reasons for the way certain periods in history have evolved. Tasks given enable pupils to link the past and present and interpret the causes and effects of change. For example, they compared some of the reasons for the Civil War in Britain with the more modern Northern Ireland crisis. They also compared the similarities between Ancient Greece and Egypt to support their understanding of the rise and fall of civilizations. Lessons are imaginative,

with a wide range of teaching resources used to support learning. Very good cross-curricular themes are used in the study of the Tudor period. Year 4 pupils use very good sketches on which to base their models of Tudor houses. Year 5 Pupils also use information and communication technology and design and technology well to design the figureheads for their models of Viking longboats. They write very good pen-portraits of Henry VIII and his wives. Literacy work studying Shakespeare's Richard III and Midsummer Nights' Dream uses interpretation of friezes to gather further information about ceremonies and battles. Pupils regularly use maps to locate and compare places being studied. Teachers also develop pupils' investigatory skills well through aspects of archaeology. All Year 3 pupils are provided with good opportunities to carry out a range of archaeological tasks at Colchester Castle. They sort and classify bones, eggshells and seeds to discover what people might have eaten in the past. They work in teams to build a Celtic Round House and a Roman Villa and record the differences in materials and skills. During the inspection some pupils talked excitedly about their work in history and especially recounted their visits to Roman vaults to find out more about Boudicca and the revolt of Colchester.

87. The leadership and management of the subject are very good There have been very good developments in the provision for history since the last inspection. The subject has been a focus within the school improvement plan and this is a major reason why the most recent work is revealing high standards and levels of achievement. The new curriculum uses local environment and exciting literature and items of historical interest to promote learning very well. Good progress is also being made in using the key historical skills to record and evaluate the work pupils do and to use these assessments to plan future lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well and make good progress. This is because pupils are included well in all aspects of the provision made by the school for the subject. Improvement since the time of the last inspection is very good.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are very good. The school has a system in the computer suite that allows teachers to 'freeze' the work displayed on pupils' computer screens when teachers wish to demonstrate the correct use of actions and programs. Teachers use this system very well and it contributes effectively to the good progress that pupils make. During the inspection pupils in Year 3 were taught to use e mail. Because of their teacher's very good subject knowledge and her clear explanation of what they needed to do pupils made very good progress. By the end of the lesson they were able to send e mails to each other and to their teacher confidently. Pupils in all years use computers appropriately to word process their writing in several subjects, including English.
90. Teachers in Year 4 use information and communication technology well to enhance pupils' learning in art and design. Pupils in this year use the 'Colour Magic' program very competently to reproduce paintings in the 'pointillism' style of George Seurat. Pupils learn very well when they do this because their teacher frequently reminds pupils of the learning objective for the lesson and pupils use the program very well to alter the size of the brush and the colours they are using. These pupils are enthusiastic learners. They apply their previous learning very well to new situations and are sufficiently confident to experiment with new techniques when encouraged to do so by their teacher.
91. Pupils in Year 5 are confident in the use of spreadsheets to record and store data. During the inspection these pupils correctly entered details about the cost of a package holiday onto a spreadsheet. As a result of very good teaching they know how to alter the size of the lettering they are using and the size of the spaces on their spreadsheets. Like the pupils in Year 4 they are not afraid to make mistakes as they investigate new techniques because their teacher encourages them successfully to be confident learners. These pupils also benefit from the very clear demonstrations provided by their teacher. Pupils in Year 4 also showed good understanding

when they instructed the computer to draw a flower by entering a series of instructions correctly. The oldest pupils use computers appropriately when they write reports - for example, on football matches. When they do this they split the text on the page to present it attractively in the style of a newspaper. They also know how to enhance the presentation and quality of their work by transferring information and photographs from the internet and other sources into the text they are preparing. When they do this type of work many pupils are very good at helping each other to solve any problems that arise.

92. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in the subject are good and all strands of the curriculum for the subject are covered well and in appropriate depth, building well on pupils' previous learning. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn well and make good progress when they are taught in the dedicated computer suite and teachers use this facility very effectively. When they teach in the computer suite teachers combine opportunities for pupils to develop their information and technology abilities well with opportunities for pupils to enhance their knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Generally these opportunities are used well. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the computer suite independently and to undertake their own research into the work they are covering in a range of subjects. Teachers also tend to make insufficient use of the computers in each classroom to enhance pupils' learning in other subjects. The school has plans in place to address this issue.
93. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is very good. The subject co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and provides very good support and guidance for her colleagues. Much of the very good improvement in provision since the time of the last inspection is attributable to this very good leadership and management, including a very good plan that sets out clearly how provision is to be improved and how the success of new initiatives will be evaluated.
94. Arrangements to monitor pupils' performance in the subject and for assessing their attainment and progress are very good. These arrangements are related closely to each unit of work covered and give teachers with a very clear understanding of the standard of pupils' work and of the progress they are making. Resources to support pupils' learning are good. The school has invested dedicated resources wisely to enhance provision and to ensure that teachers are able to benefit from good training opportunities.

MUSIC

95. The last inspection judged that attainment in music was satisfactory. Standards are now higher than those expected for pupils' ages. Whilst pupils' knowledge and appraisal skills correspond broadly to national expectations, performance, particularly in singing, is very good and sometimes excellent.
96. Throughout the school, pupils sing with enjoyment, confidence and a good sense of timing and rhythm. Volume, diction and breathing are well controlled. That is because these features of singing are taught very well. Above all, in assemblies and in singing lessons, pupils understand what is meant by tuneful singing. When asked to sing sweetly they respond very well, and are a joy to hear. They follow a conductor well, and improve rapidly in rehearsal. As a result, pupils' performance in singing is a strength of the provision.
97. Technical knowledge is in line with national expectations. Pupils understand the ways in which combinations of different musical elements produce a variety of musical effects. By Year 6 pupils use a number of technical terms correctly and understand simple graphic notation. They can identify the sounds made by different instruments in an orchestra. The way in which their performance improves shows that they have a good understanding of the impact on others of the music they make. However, their skills of description and evaluation are not developed to the same extent and there are few opportunities for them to appraise their own and each other's work, and to suggest improvements.

98. Pupils' learning is good as they respond very well to challenging performance situations. Enjoyment is shared, and progress is swift. Subject knowledge is, however, variable, and there is a need to develop a scheme of work which covers all the National Curriculum requirements. The quality of teaching is very good. In two lessons seen during the inspection it was excellent. All pupils are fully included, and those with English as an additional language or with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers, and have the same quality of learning. There is additional enrichment to the music provision through the choir, the recorder group and the country dance club. The annual Christmas productions, in which all pupils participate, are spectacular and include performances of the highest quality that can reasonably be expected of pupils of this age and musical experience.
99. The management and leadership of music are in a stage of transition. Until very recently, the subject content and much of the teaching have been the responsibility of a well-qualified and competent part-time specialist. She still provides expert and effective advice and a limited amount of teaching. Now, however, it has been found necessary to move towards the teaching of music by non-specialist class teachers, and there is a strong need for a scheme of work for each year group which, backed by recorded music, may be used in this context. There is at present no systematic assessment of progress in music. Apart from the use of electronic instruments, no other applications of information and communication technology are evident. The headteacher temporarily acts as co-ordinator and, as a highly skilled musician, gives exceptional leadership to pupils' performance. Nevertheless, there is a need for the structured development of pupils' knowledge, of composition and evaluation. Resources, in terms of instruments, are good, easily accessible and in good condition.
100. Pupils' social and moral development is very well promoted through the sharing and mutual support required in ensemble work, their spiritual development in the beauty of their own performances and others' compositions, and their cultural development through their contacts with a variety of kinds of music from their own and different cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Standards, overall, are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Of the Year 6 programme for physical education programme only gymnastics could be observed during the inspection. Standards in this aspect of the subject are below those expected nationally. Pupils have not developed appropriate sequences of movements over time and do not improve their movements sufficiently during lessons. There is no large, fixed, gymnastics apparatus, such as a climbing frame or ropes. This significantly reduces the scope for older pupils to acquire and apply their skills and undertake appropriately challenging work. Many pupils also have limited experiences of swimming and the school does not keep records of their achievements to ensure that the expected standards are being met. Standards in games are satisfactory in comparison.
102. Pupils' progress in games lessons is satisfactory, although inclement weather during the inspection hampered restricted what could be taught. The younger pupils show satisfactory techniques in catching and passing in netball. They progress satisfactorily when applying the common skills of using space and passing, learned during netball, to their learning in football. In some games lessons pupils use inappropriate equipment, such as balls that are too large or heavy. This restricts their confidence and the development of their skills. Progress in a Year 5 rugby lesson was hampered, unavoidably, during inclement weather, by the restricted indoor space. Planning for this lesson was appropriate but did not require pupils to work at a sufficiently fast pace. In Year 6 gymnastics pupils make satisfactory progress when the teacher guides them to perform a variety of jumping movements. However, pupils are unable to perform an appropriately wide range of movements sufficiently well for their age. Their ability to plan, perform and evaluate sequences of work is not developed sufficiently well. Sometimes in gymnastics and rugby a few pupils become restless and inattentive and this further limits the progress they make. This is mainly attributable to the lack of challenge in the work they are expected to do.

103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' learning, over time, is also satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress, but it is not as good as that found in other subjects. Teachers plan consistently for a broad and balanced curriculum. They are aware of the relevant skills that pupils need to acquire in the variety of games they play and use appropriate themes to develop pupils' abilities in dance. However, planning does not give sufficient attention to providing opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they acquire or for them to evaluate their work and that of others. In lessons and in planning teachers are not making enough use of the National Curriculum Levels for attainment to assess pupils or to guide the next stages of their teaching. The commercial scheme of work currently in use does not provide teachers with enough information on how to develop fully these aspects of the subject. Planning for the teaching of games in Year 3 identifies appropriate skills in netball that pupils need to learn. However, the organisation of the lesson, with over 40 pupils being taught by one teacher and the other teacher supporting, adversely affects the pace of learning and the responses of pupils.
104. The school is aware that development in physical education has lacked the emphasis and focus given to other subjects. For example, the commercial scheme of work currently used does not aid teachers' planning and understanding in the way that many excellent schemes do for other subjects. In lessons where teachers' knowledge and understanding of relevant age-related tasks are insecure, pupils' achievements are not as high as they should be. Opportunities to further teachers' professional development in the subject have also been limited. Liaison with specialist staff at the secondary school and with sports coaches based in the community is under-developed. Extra-curricular sporting clubs are popular with pupils, enabling them to develop their knowledge and understanding well in competitive games and in dancing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. The last inspection found that pupils attained appropriate levels in relation to the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. A new Syllabus has been introduced since then, but it remains the case that standards are in line with those expected. The quality of learning is very good over time, and the progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, from Year 3 to Year 6 is consistently good.
106. The Agreed Syllabus (*Open Worlds*) followed by the school offers the choice of study from a number of world faiths. The school has opted for a focus upon Judaism and Hinduism for one third of the time allocated, upon Christianity for one third, and upon implicit religious education for the remaining third. These are well covered in the school's provision. Pupils show good knowledge of both Old and New Testaments, and of the special features of Judaism and Hinduism. They retell stories from all of the traditions, and show satisfactory understanding of distinctive features, like special rules of life or aspects of dress. They know the significance of a number of different festivals and celebrations, like harvest, or weddings. In Year 3, pupils show that they understand the serious nature of vows, and what is meant by a "special place" in religious terms. In Year 5, pupils write sensitively about problems of personal relationships, of bullying and of suffering. In Year 6, there is good understanding and factual knowledge, though there remains a need here to extend the work on people's response to religious experience.
107. Sensitivity to the feelings of others and good motivation characterise pupils' response to this subject. These are encouraged and enhanced by good teaching which respects and includes all. Teachers know their pupils well, and take account of personal feelings. The school's approach to the consideration of religions - particularly embodied in the daily act of worship - is positive, especially in providing pupils with the confidence to discuss and learn freely. The quality of work in this subject makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. No applications of information and communication technology were seen.
108. The very recently appointed co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She has a clear view of the priorities for the subject, and has ensured that she is very well informed. It is acknowledged that some improvements need to be made to the already sound scheme of work, particularly in the area of learning from religion as well as learning about it. She has already

taken good developmental action by introducing a system of assessment of progress. Resources, in terms of texts and artefacts associated with different faiths, are good.