

INSPECTION REPORT

CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL

Leigh-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend-on-Sea

Unique reference number: 114719

Headteacher: Mrs Elaine Palmer

Lead inspector: Mrs Judith Charlesworth

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 255749

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	313
School address:	London Road Leigh-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS9 3NL
Telephone number:	01702 478 533
Fax number:	01702 471 420
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jeanne Levoir
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is accommodated in a Victorian building. It shares a site with Chalkwell Hall Junior School, to which pupils transfer at the age of seven, and the two schools share some facilities. The school is larger than average and most of the 313 pupils live close by. The local area has a lower than average number of families from minority ethnic groups, which is reflected in the school population where the majority are white British. A few pupils are from Chinese, black, Asian, mixed race and other white ethnic groups. Very small numbers of pupils do not have English as their first language, and are refugees. The local area is broadly advantaged. Families are well settled so pupils generally do not move in and out of the school at odd times, and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is at the low end of the national average.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception classes is average. Well below average numbers in the school have special educational needs. The main problems experienced by these pupils are moderate learning difficulties; social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; and speech and communication difficulties.

The school is involved in a *Safer Journeys to School* initiative and gained the *Healthy Schools* award in 2003. It is piloting the new arrangements for the national tests (SATs) for seven year olds.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21501	Judith Charlesworth	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; science; art and design; design and technology; personal, social and health education; English as an additional language
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector	
25778	Andrew Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; music
32747	Kathy Faulkener	Team inspector	English; physical education; religious education; history; geography; special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. Leadership and management are good overall, and the school is improving well under the influence of the head teacher's very good leadership. Standards are high and the pupils' achievement is good due to the good quality of education provided and pupils' very positive attitudes. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership by the head teacher provides vision and a sense of purpose. This unites staff in their commitment to provide high quality education and care for the pupils in a fully inclusive school;
- Pupils are very positive about school. Their confidence, maturity and self-esteem are exceptional for their age and they are becoming very successful independent learners;
- The provision for children in the Reception year is very good. Standards attained are high and they achieve very well;
- The quality of teaching is good. All pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and the majority attain high standards;
- Some managers are too new in their roles to be fully effective;
- The system for tracking pupils' developing skills in subjects other than English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is not always systematic or rigorous enough;
- Some parents feel that communication with the school could be improved.

The school has made **good** progress since the previous inspection. The key issues relating to better provision for the higher attainers have been well addressed, and standards and achievement of all pupils have improved. Leadership and management are considerably improved, although some middle managers' contribution to the processes is underdeveloped. The quality of education - particularly the curriculum - has improved. Rigorous assessment of pupils' skills has begun very well, but has not yet spread into all subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	B	B	B	A
writing	B	B	A	A
mathematics	B	C	B	B

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall, and very good in the Reception year. The standards of the Reception children are on line to be well above average for their age in personal, social and emotional development, and communication language and literacy by the end of the Reception year. They are well above average in mathematical development, with a good number doing even better. Year 2 national test results in reading, writing and mathematics have risen faster over the past three years than the national trend. All pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs, or who have English as an additional language are given good support with minimum disruption and fuss, and generally catch up quickly. Data analysis shows that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils. The 2003 test results show pupils are, overall, well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics in comparison to schools with similar intakes. Pupils do particularly well in writing, due to the whole-school focus on improving these skills, and the school's national test

results have risen steeply in this area. Current work shows that pupils in Year 2 are working at well above average levels in English, science and some aspects of art and design. They are working at above average levels in mathematics, and at expected levels in ICT (although improving fast) and religious education. It was not possible to judge standards in other subjects. Pupils' personal development, supported by the PSHE curriculum is **very good**, as are their attitudes to work and school and their behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory**, as too many parents take their children on holidays in term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching is **good** and pupils learn well because they are interested and motivated by their lessons. It is particularly good in the Reception Classes and Year 2. Teaching generally challenges pupils at exactly the right level to keep them learning at a good pace, although occasionally lessons miss the mark and are over-ambitious or do not provide enough challenge. The teaching of literacy skills is a particular strength, and pupils learn very successfully because they are given very good opportunities for using and practicing literacy skills in other subjects. This is also the case for mathematics and ICT, and to a degree skills in art and design, but other subjects of the curriculum are generally treated separately which can make them less exciting. Nevertheless, the curriculum is good and well resourced, and enrichment is very good. Assessment is very good for English and mathematics, and the information is put to good use, but assessment is inconsistently carried out and used in other subjects. The school has good arrangements for providing for the care, welfare and support of the pupils; and the support, advice and guidance given to them is very good. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance, leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and is driving school improvement forward. Staff share her vision, and are committed to providing high quality education and care for the pupils. Management is satisfactory overall. Systems and procedures have been established which help the school evaluate its performance in various ways. However, these have yet to spread out across all of the school's provision – for example to look at pupils' performance carefully in subjects other than English and mathematics, and become the responsibility of the middle managers. Governance is satisfactory and statutory requirements are met. Governors are increasingly involved in the school. They are developing a strategic view of the school's development, and a deeper understanding of the detail underlying its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are enthusiastic, happy and enjoy school. Some are concerned about behaviour, particularly on the playground. Parents generally support the school strongly, but a number are concerned that their involvement in developments and communication with the school could be better.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop and implement the roles and responsibilities of the subject leaders;
- Develop an effective system for tracking and recording pupils' progress in subjects where it is currently under-developed;
- In collaboration with parents, review the two-way partnership between them and the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The pupils' achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage, and standards attained in the areas of learning are, overall, well above average for the children's age. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2, and standards attained are well above average in English, and above average overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards attained and pupils' achievement have improved considerably since the previous inspection;
- Children in the Foundation Stage attain high standards in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and mathematical development;
- Standards in English are well above average in Year 2 and pupils throughout the school achieve particularly well in writing;
- The school's middle attaining pupils are working close to the level of the higher attainers.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs achieve well;
- Occasionally, higher attaining pupils' achievement is limited by a lack of challenge in their work.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, only the standards attained in English and by pupils in the Foundation Stage were judged to be above average. There was substantial under-achievement by the higher attaining pupils in all subjects except English. National test results show improvement in reading, writing and mathematics and science year on year. In the most recent national tests and teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2, and in comparison to schools with similar intakes, the results were well above average in reading, writing and science, and above average in mathematics.

2. Children learn very well in the Foundation Stage due to a very well structured, challenging curriculum, and meticulous records of their developing skills. These enable staff to match activities accurately to children's needs, and give them very well focused support to ensure that they learn effectively in all their activities. Children with special educational needs are quickly identified, and highly appropriate support given to help them achieve well. Similar support is given to children who are at an early stage of learning English. Both these groups of pupils are included very well due to the high quality support they are given. Halfway through their Reception year, most have already reached the standards expected at the end of the year, and the majority have exceeded them in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. At the time of the inspection, the children were very happy and settled and able to apply themselves for remarkably long periods of time. They very much enjoy the challenge of their tasks, such as writing an account of their favourite toy, or playing number games outdoors. Children leave their reception year very well equipped for National Curriculum work in Year 1.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.1 (15.0)	14.6(14.4)
mathematics	17.0 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 105 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and particularly well in Year 2. The school's middle attaining pupils are generally working at levels above average for their age, and are moving close to the levels attained by the highest attaining pupils. Although certainly no longer under-achieving, the higher attaining pupils could do even better, and the school is appropriately working towards this end. A few pupils reported that they sometimes finished their work early and were not given more to do. This was observed in a lesson in religious education. The school analyses pupils' attainment and achievement by ethnic group. This shows that pupils from minority ethnic groups attain as well as their white British peers, unless there are specific reasons why they should not, for example that they have special educational needs or are in the early stages of learning English. Overall, however, these pupils achieve well.

4. The well-considered management decision to focus closely on improving pupils' writing skills, to help them achieve better in all subjects, has had a very good effect. Pupils' writing has improved considerably over the past two years, and the pupils' attainment and achievement across the whole curriculum have improved as a result. In addition, the school has adopted the national guidelines for work in all subjects of the National Curriculum, and this too has had a very good effect on standards and achievement. The standards attained in subjects inspected in depth are above average, other than in English where they are well above, and in religious education. In this subject standards are average due to a lack of challenge in some lessons, compounded by under-developed subject leadership and management.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are very good. Their spiritual development is good, moral and social development are very good, and cultural development is satisfactory. This makes these aspects of personal development good overall. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality to school in the mornings is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' positive attitudes lead to a desire to learn.
- Pupils are confident and mature with high levels of self-esteem. They enjoy responsibility and are becoming successful independent learners.
- Pupils respond well to the school's supportive ethos and enjoy school. They develop very good moral and social values;
- The school does not do enough to develop pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society;
- Too many parents take pupils out of school on family holidays during term time.

Commentary

6. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with national averages, however family holidays account for a significant amount of the absence. The school has begun to do more to discourage this practice.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

7. Pupils take an active interest in lessons. They say that they are fun, but know that they are expected to work hard. Pupils are enterprising and take the initiative very well. For their age, pupils organise themselves and work exceptionally on their own and in groups, for instance sorting themselves into different "categories" in order to draw a pictogram to show how they come to

school. In an excellent art lesson pupils developed their own ideas for improving their drawings. Their initiative contributed well to the high standards of work they produced.

8. The school's vision statement, its aims and the *Golden Rules* set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. The pupils know what is expected of them, and because they are confident and mature, pupils respond well and take on collective responsibility for the school community. For example, pupils say they are disappointed when, occasionally, just a few "*are naughty and let us down*". Pupils have very good social and moral standards because all adults set a very good example. One white British girl was excluded for a fixed period in the last year. A programme of support, including the involvement of external professionals, has been set up to help her. Courtesy and respect form the basis for the high quality of relationships seen throughout the school. Pupils are friendly and make visitors feel very welcome. They are very clear about right and wrong, fairness, justice and honesty and consequently the school is a happy place where pupils thrive. Effective classroom management ensures that pupils develop good social skills generally, and some lessons are planned deliberately with this in mind. For example, Year 2 pupils developed their confidence and skills in listening, speaking and negotiating by discussing in groups how playground equipment could be used in new and interesting ways, and then reporting back to the whole class.

9. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Through lessons and extra-curricular activities, they come to appreciate the value of art, literature and drama. Pupils study important aspects of major world faiths, such as the celebrations of Diwali and Hannukah. They learn about life in other places and times in geography and history, and they learn simple French. However, the pupils are insufficiently well prepared for life in a multicultural society. For example, displays and resources do not automatically reflect multi-culture, unless that is the particular focus.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10. The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good overall although assessment in some subjects is under-developed. The curriculum is good and the support, advice and guidance given to pupils are very good. Partnership with parents is satisfactory, whilst links with the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

11. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are good overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Reception classes is good and children learn very well;
- Teaching is good in Year 2, and satisfactory in Year 1;
- Pupils' developing skills in English and mathematics are rigorously tracked and the information put to good use. This is not the case with most other subjects;
- Support assistants are used very well in the Reception classes to support learning;
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	6 (18%)	15 (44%)	9 (26%)	3 (9%)	0	0

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

12. In the Reception classes, there is a particular emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, and their communication, language and literacy skills. This gives them very good foundations for work in these areas in Years 1 and 2, and contributes very effectively to their well above average standards by the end of Year 2. The staff of the four Reception classes are very well led to form a tight, cohesive and mutually supportive team. The effective organisation of classes and learning groups is the same in each class, and lesson planning is shared between the staff. Support is carefully focused where it is most needed, for instance with children who find learning more difficult, or to extend classroom activities out of doors. Support staff are also used very effectively to observe and track children's skills during particular activities, which makes a very good contribution to the meticulous records of each child's progress in the six areas of learning. These are used to plan activities to meet the needs of each individual. These procedures combine to give all children equal opportunities for learning and achieving. They do very well.

13. Teaching in Year 2 and in the mixed age class is also good, and pupils learn well. Teachers are clear, calm and have high expectations of pupils' success, independence and diligence. Lessons are interesting and pupils are very enthusiastic and try very hard. A good proportion of lessons in these classes were very good, and occasionally excellent. The work produced, for example in English and art, is very good indeed for pupils' age. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Year 1. This tended to be because the lessons were too ambitious and did not match these pupils' age and capabilities, as seen in both a science lesson and PSHE session which were too complicated with too many different things to do. The management of the lessons did not allow for sufficient time and support in the activities, and consequently, pupils became distracted and did not learn as much as they could have done.

14. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Test data is used very well to make predictions of pupils' future performance in both subjects, and to inform planning to help them achieve better. For example, mathematics planning was modified to increase the emphasis on mental calculations in Year 1, since this was identified as a slight weakness. Test data is also used very effectively to set each individual pupil's targets for improving writing, which has contributed well to the high standards achieved. However, such learning targets are not yet set for other aspects of English or mathematics, and pupils' skills have not improved as fast. Assessment procedures for other subjects are satisfactory overall, but variation in the quality and consistency in record keeping limits their effectiveness in promoting achievement. For example, a history/geography comment such as "is keen in all areas" does not say what the pupil knows, understands and can do. Progress in religious education is not always recorded, and the procedures for ICT and science are currently under review to match curricular developments in these subjects. Pupils' work is regularly marked which gives teachers a good understanding of how well pupils are doing in the short term, but the marking does not show pupils often enough what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum

15. The curriculum is good overall and supports pupils' achievement well. The range of extra enrichment activities offered is very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils to develop literacy skills, especially writing, through other subjects is very good;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good and they achieve well;
- Extra sport, music and art activities, and good resources, support and enrich the curriculum very well;
- More links could be made between subjects other than those for English, mathematics and ICT to further this successful approach;

- The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is well grounded in the Foundation Stage curriculum which is very effectively planned and taught in the Reception year.

Commentary

16. The curriculum has continued to be a focus of development since the last inspection. Each subject now has a policy statement and scheme of work, which is a considerable improvement. The Foundation Stage curriculum is meticulously and successfully planned to ensure that all children achieve well. As a consequence of this and good teaching, the great majority start Year 1 with skills that are above expectations for their age. Very good provision for speaking and listening, reading and writing is made in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, focused opportunities for extended writing are identified in each week's planning – maybe a historical account in prose; a bullet pointed list of resources for design and technology or short paragraphs for writing up a science investigation. Similarly, the use of mathematics and ICT is well threaded through other subjects. Pupils are motivated by this cross curricular approach; they can see the purpose of writing in different styles, and how mathematics and ICT are helpful in all that they do. The links between these and other subjects are clear, and this “doubled-up” learning and reinforcement supports their achievement in all subjects involved. While curricular planning is good in other subjects, and teacher's weekly plans are detailed and focus clearly on what is to be learned, there are fewer cross curricular links between them which leads to a less remarkable curriculum than those for English, mathematics and ICT.

17. A wide range of after school clubs in sport, music and art; specialist coaching in football, tennis and rugby; and good use of the community and visitors to school help to widen pupils' horizons and enrich the curriculum. The range and quality of learning resources have improved since the last inspection and these are used well to engage pupils' interests. For example, pupils are benefiting greatly from the new computer suite and computers in the classrooms. Resources are now replaced regularly so that the pupils always have attractive and up to date books and items to engage their interest and support their learning.

18. Pupils with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language achieve well because the school's focus is always on pupils' learning. This is carefully planned through the provision of modified work and good quality extra support. Appropriately, this is not always focused on pupils' literacy skills, but is designed to help them learn in other subjects, for example by taking away the pressure of writing as support staff act as a *scribe*.

Care, guidance and support

19. The school has good arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare and safety of the pupils. Support and guidance given as a result of monitoring pupils' personal development and achievement are very good, and the pupils are well consulted and involved in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's ethos is caring and supportive, and based on very good relationships;
- The school's drive towards creating a safe and healthy environment is supporting pupils' personal development well, although not all risk assessments have been completed;
- The system of *Pupil Profiles* gives a good view of pupils' personal development over their three years in school, but works less well for recording academic progress.
- The system of support for pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is good;
- Some pupils feel intimidated by the junior pupils when they are all in the playground together.

Commentary

20. The school has improved arrangements for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils since the time of the last inspection. Pupils say they are happy and enjoy school. They have trusting relationships with their teachers and other known adults, and say they would turn to them if they had problems. Due to their maturity, pupils also support each other well for their age. For example, pupils who join school other than at the usual time are well supported by other pupils, who are encouraged to look out for each other. After consultation with pupils, special arrangements were set up to help them support one another on the playground, such as the quiet areas and “friendship benches.” Nevertheless, a number of pupils say they still feel intimidated by the “big” juniors who share the playground.

21. Staff give the welfare of pupils a high priority from the moment they start in Reception. The induction procedures for the children and parents new to Reception are good, although they are not so well formalised for older pupils who join during the school year. First aid procedures are very good, particularly at lunchtimes, where pupils queue in the “busy bee” room for little more than comfort, which they are freely given. This helps cement the strong relationships and concern for pupils’ welfare. The school works in good partnership with local health professionals to ensure the welfare of pupils with difficulties and has embraced the *safer journeys to schools* initiative. The pupils who catch the three *walking buses* arrive at school safely and promptly. The school has acted very positively to address concerns over the standard of hot lunches by taking over the catering provision; this is in keeping with the recently gained *Healthy Schools* award. However, a few important risk assessments, such as those inherent in physical education and design and technology lessons have not been carried out.

22. A *Pupil Profile* is set up for each child when they join the school. These record key points about their developing personal skills very effectively, and reflect the level of understanding staff have about the pupils in their care, and how they can best offer support at varying times. However, the *Pupil Profiles* are also used to record progress in some subjects in Years 1 and 2. This is not effective as the entries are very variable in quality and content. They often do not indicate well enough what the pupils know, understand and can do for the information to be used to help teachers plan for and guide pupils in these subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language are identified on entry to the school and additional advice is used from outside specialists when needed. Individual education plans for these pupils, and those with special educational needs, are of good quality and include contributions from parents and the pupils themselves. Extra support is well managed, and the pupils achieve well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

23. Links and relationships with the local community and other schools and nurseries are good. Those with parents are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents generally have very positive views of the school. However, a number are concerned about aspects relating to communication and their involvement with the school;
- Whilst most parents feel well informed about the school’s work and their children’s overall progress, some feel that they do not receive enough information about how well their children are doing;
- Parents are keen for their children to achieve well and do all they can to help them.
- The school is developing strong outside links.

Commentary

24. Parents are confident that the school provides a good standard of education. They are ambitious for their children, so pupils come in very receptive and eager to learn which makes a very good contribution to their achievement and the high standards they reach. Parents agree that there

are many opportunities given to speak to teachers about their children. The availability of teachers at the end of the school day, monthly open evenings and extra open days and afternoons enable most parents to resolve any concerns they may have. In addition, news-letters and curriculum information are sent home regularly, and there are information evenings on the curriculum to explain how parents can help their children at home. They are invited to various activities, such as assemblies and mathematics fun days. Parents receive a detailed annual report at the end of each school year. Despite this, a significant number of parents are concerned that they are not kept fully informed about their children's work and progress because they are unable to come to school due to work commitments. They feel they do not get information about, for example, their children's writing targets, reading, how well they did in spelling tests and how best they can help their children at home.

25. The school takes any complaint it receives seriously, and deals with it promptly. It consults with parents on specific issues. However, this is not formalised enough to ensure their views are always taken into account when planning developments. A number of parents are particularly upset that they were not consulted about new arrangements for the start of the day, even though they understand the rationale behind them. They feel these were "sprung on them." These parents are concerned that as they can no longer bring their children to the playground door of classrooms to settle them in, pass on messages or "have a quick word," an avenue of contact with the school has been cut off.

26. The school tries to be as outward looking as possible. It is working hard to overcome the difficulties posed by admitting children from a large number of nursery schools. Links with the junior school, which shares the site, are good. This particularly helps pupils move smoothly from Year 2 to Year 3. The head teachers of both schools are in regular contact and are on each other's governing bodies, and the Parent Staff Association is a shared body. The school makes good use of the local and wider community to support the curriculum, and to improve and share its practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

27. Overall, this is good. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and that of other staff is good. Governance and management are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher's vision, drive and work are a very positive influence on the ethos and practice of the school;
- Every child matters in Chalkwell Hall Infant school, and this underpins the development of its work;
- The school rigorously monitors pupils' performance in English and mathematics and takes very effective action to improve it;
- The effectiveness of the leaders' and managers' work is variable.

Commentary

28. The leadership and management of the school have improved since the previous inspection. The leadership of the head teacher is the driving force behind the school's recent development. The staff share her clear vision for the school as a place which includes and values all children equally, and provides them with safety, support and high quality education. This ethos is reflected in the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all. The head teacher has revitalised the school's very high aspirations for the achievement of the pupils and the standards they attain. She has achieved this by being a good role model of practice; by leading well-focused development of the curriculum and resources, for example the way that writing is taught and the installation of new computer equipment throughout the school; and by re-introducing the performance management of staff and support for their work, such as lap top computers and non-contact time. As a result of these measures, school morale, pupils' achievement and the standards they attain have improved.

29. Other key staff have unquestioning support for the school as a centre of excellence , but individuals are at different places in the continuum of understanding and execution of their roles. There is insufficient distinction between leadership and management. The majority of the strategic development and innovation in the school rests with the head teacher. Subject leadership is particularly variable as many subject leaders are new to their posts, for example in science and religious education. They have had insufficient time to effect changes and improvement, although suitable plans are laid for most. Leadership of other subjects, such as English and mathematics, is much better developed. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and the provision and children's achievement has developed well as a result.

30. The school's self-evaluation and understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses has led to appropriate priorities for development. However, these are not well embodied in a sufficiently strategic development plan which takes account of the various stakeholders of the school. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection. As a result subject managers and governors do not have a long term view of developments needed, other than those clearly pressing, such as the need for more teaching space or improvements to the playground. The governing body, for example, does everything it should to meet requirements, but does not unpick, understand and address the detail of its responsibilities effectively. Most subject leaders are not yet managing improvement in their subjects by monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in a systematic way. Performance data is very well analysed in English and mathematics to effect improved achievement through various measures, but this does not extend sufficiently well to other subjects. The performance management of teachers and support staff supports school improvement very well, and the managers of provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, and the Foundation Stage, are good and contribute well to the pupils' achievement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	811846	Balance from previous year	125351
Total expenditure	874131	Balance carried forward to the next	63066
Expenditure per pupil	2775		

31. The school has saved a higher than usual amount of money to carry forward into the next financial year to fund its plans for developing loft space above the hall into further teaching areas. This is an appropriate development and a very good use of funds as some of the classrooms are small.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. There are four reception classes, each one providing for up to 30 children. Two classes are housed within the main school, and two in a separate building. All four classes have direct access to a dedicated playground. The children attend full time.

33. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very effective and provision is very good. Equality of opportunity for learning is ensured by a well-structured and documented curriculum, and very effective arrangements for grouping children, teaching, and assessing their progress, that are common to all classes. The staff are well-trained, committed and enthusiastic about providing a high standard of education and care. Assessment of children's skills on entry show that they are average, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy skills. Some children have below average skills on entry, and a number above average. Children with English as an additional language and special educational needs are very quickly identified, and good support put into place to help them achieve well, which they do. Continual tracking of children's developing skills ensures that they are given work that is matched to their individual needs. Support staff are used very well to observe and make notes on children's developing skills as well as to teach small groups. Children are taught in ability groups for some of the time which means that all are challenged at an appropriate level and learn well. All classrooms are very well resourced and provide a very stimulating educational environment. Good use is made of the outside playground as an extra classroom to confirm and reinforce children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development is well-threaded through the every day work;
- Children achieve very well.

Commentary

35. Children come into the reception classes with skills that are generally average or above. Most are given good support at home, and are emotionally ready and well equipped for full-time school. The staff ensure that children's personal development is supported through all activities and areas of learning, and provide a happy, calm, encouraging and supportive environment in which the children quickly make progress. The established routines generally encourage children's confidence, although occasionally the level of structure can take away from children's freedom of choice. Strong relationships between adults and children give them the security to become independent, and give the children good role models. The needs of each individual, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are very well met by the staff, who know each child very well. This helps them achieve well. Staff are always prepared to give support or guidance as needed, whilst at the same time encouraging children not to be dependent on them. By the time of the inspection, just one term in, the majority of children had already achieved several of the goals expected for the end of their reception year. The skills of the majority are on line to be well above average for children's age by the end of the year. For example, many sit for remarkably long periods of time, engrossed in activities of their own or staff's choice; they can identify and express their own feelings and understand perfectly the various class rules associated with snack and play time. Most can see to their own hygiene needs. The children are extremely

calm and well behaved in class, but appropriately noisy and boisterous when out to play. They are confident and make decisions for themselves about resources they need, and who they want to be friends with.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have very high expectations of what the children should be able to do;
- Teaching is very good; children achieve very well and standards attained are well above average;
- The school's success in promoting pupils' literacy skills is firmly grounded in the very good start they make in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

37. Children's skills in speaking, listening and reading are usually average or above when they first start in Reception. Writing skills are around average. They achieve very well in all these strands because skills are systematically and carefully taught, and staff give children the chance to practice them at every available opportunity. Classrooms abound with labels, words, simple sentences and writing aids, and the children quickly learn that they can scan around and often find what they need without asking an adult. At the time of the inspection, the children's skills were generally above average, and some already well above average. By the end of the year, the majority of children's skills are on line to be well above average for their age.

38. Excellent opportunities are given for the children to develop their writing skills, both through staff-directed and free-choice activities. For example, in a structured session including some initial support where the task was rehearsed, many children were able to write a simple sentence on their own about their favourite toy. Their writing was well-formed and included a very good attempt at sentences such as *The toy I like best is the fairy tale castle*. Their confidence is built up by there being no focus on spelling during such sessions; the focus is on writing – spelling is for another time. Children are taught the tools for reading and writing through very well planned work based on the National Literacy Strategy. They are very carefully grouped as a result of day-to-day assessments of their developing skills, so that the work always challenges them to move forward, but at their own pace. Those who are less advanced are given good quality extra help. Most children can read simple sentences – either together when looking at a big book, or alone. Some can work out problems involving words, such as putting the word *no* into a sentence. Two examples children gave were *Mum said no*, followed by *Mum said no sweets today*. Staff give children very good opportunities for practicing the use of speaking and listening throughout the day. For example, in a mathematics session, children had to listen to instructions to know how to complete a task, and then had to explain to the rest of the class what they had done and what they had found out. This was very challenging work, to be expected of children two years older, but with a little help, they were nevertheless successful.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

39. Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well;
- Children's mathematical development is enhanced by their very good communication, language and literacy skills.

Commentary

40. The pupils' mathematical development is average overall when they first start in Reception, and they achieve well. By the time of the inspection, many children had already achieved the goals expected of them by the end of their Reception year and are on line to be above average, with a substantial number well above average, by the end of the year. The curriculum is based on the National Numeracy Strategy which systematically builds up children's mathematical skills. Because the children are relatively mature, and have very good communication, language and literacy skills and understanding, their mathematical development is faster than most children of their age. For example, they find using and understanding mathematical language such as *bigger than*, *heavier than*, and *more* relatively easy. Children use number names without a second thought, and can count up to 40 and beyond. They can order numbers, for example five numbers from the 20s without mistakes. Work is well linked in to other areas of the curriculum and practical activities carried out in the playground. This gives the children good opportunities for extra practice and for applying their developing skills.

40. **It is not possible to make overall judgements about provision, achievement or standards attained in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development or physical development. Limited observations and records of progress indicate that the children's skills are already well developed in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development.**

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

41. Children are curious about their environment, and make comments about their observations, for example when discussing safety when crossing the road. Mathematics, art, and design work shows that the children recognise and create patterns, and select the tools and techniques they need to create structures and work of their own. Some children constructed "houses" for particular animals, selecting the type of bricks to suit the animals in question, which indicates early independent design processes. Children are very motivated by the computer, and adept at using the mouse to manipulate the screen, for example when using a *painting* program. They are gaining insight into world faiths through a structured programme of religious education.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. No specific observations took place, however, children move with confidence around the space available. They negotiate obstacles in the classrooms and play vigorously and safely with the large wheeled toys in their playground. One class ran out of the school to their physical education lesson in the hall. They were strong, confident and capable, running fast and stopping without bumping into one another. Children use a variety of tools and resources in the classroom. They can hold a pencil properly to form letters, cut with scissors and make constructions and art work using small items such as sticky paper shapes and bricks of varying sizes. Many put on and do up their own coats at playtime.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

43. Children's art work shows that they use paint, collage and modelling materials to make creations of their own design, and in response to class themes, such as Christmas. No musical or role play activities were observed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

44. Provision in English is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good;
- Teaching is good and the pupils' achievement is very good;
- The standards pupils attained in the 2003 Year 2 national tests were particularly good;
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects;
- Writing targets for each individual pupil are helping them to make very good progress;
- The support given to pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language in literacy lessons is very good.

Commentary

45. The school believes that competence in English skills is vitally important if pupils are to learn effectively in all subjects of the curriculum. The last inspection identified pupils' writing as weaker than their reading, speaking and listening skills. Consequently, shortly after taking up her appointment two years ago, the head teacher introduced a very strong whole-school focus on helping the pupils learn to write as well as possible. This was supported by the newly implemented performance management system for teachers, and high quality leadership in the subject. The developments have been welcomed by staff, and overall, both provision and pupils' achievement in English have improved well since the last inspection. Teaching is good, and usually very good, particularly for the oldest pupils. Lessons are fast-paced and interesting which means pupils enjoy what they are doing and are motivated to try very hard to do their best. Pupils are very independent for their age, and help each other when they can. Their behaviour is very good. Occasional ineffective teaching stems from unsatisfactory class organisation and management, which means that pupils are not given support when they need it. They consequently get stuck and do not learn as much as they might.

46. A range of highly effective measures to improve writing skills has been implemented throughout all year groups. For example, writing targets are worked out and reviewed with the pupils; a more effective commercial scheme for teaching phonics has been introduced; and opportunities for writing are identified weekly in different subjects of the curriculum, so pupils get plenty of practice and see a real purpose in what they are doing. These measures have improved pupils' writing skills considerably. The school's results in the national tests for seven year olds have risen steeply over the last two years and are well above average. Pupils' reading skills are also well above average and are continuing to improve. The inspection confirmed these high standards, and that pupils' speaking and listening skills are, too, well above average for their age. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored carefully by the subject leader and senior managers of the school. Adjustments are made to the curriculum, resources and teaching methods as a result, in order to further support pupils' achievement. Following success with writing, the school plans to introduce targets for reading shortly, to support higher achievement in this area.

47. Some pupils, for example those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, have specific difficulties which means they do not attain the standards expected for their age. Nevertheless, they too achieve very well because their particular difficulties have been clearly identified, and good strategies implemented to help them. This is usually by means of extra support, which is provided very efficiently and with minimum fuss and disruption by the teaching assistants. When a new topic is being introduced, specific teaching on new vocabulary is sometimes organised to enable pupils at an early stage of learning English to understand more easily. These pupils catch up quickly, unless they have additional difficulties. Teachers are skilled at

pitching questions and work at the right level so that all pupils have equal opportunities for learning successfully.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The development of pupils' language and literacy skills through the wider curriculum is a real strength of the school. In all lessons, staff have high expectations of pupils to listen carefully and explain themselves fully. Other activities such as *Circle Time* (time set aside for discussion) and the concluding parts of lessons, where pupils explain what they have learned, provide them with further opportunities to practice speaking and listening. Classrooms are full of word lists, labels and supports for writing, such as commonly used words, days of the week and subject-specific vocabulary. The pupils scan the walls if they are stuck for a word, and usually find what they need to work independently. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes in different subjects, for example, to record science investigations. They use computers in literacy lessons to complete comprehension and grammar tasks, and word process work for displays in English and other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

50. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection, and now all pupils achieve well;
- Teaching and learning are good overall, especially in Year 2 classes;
- The use of mathematics is well supported by other subjects;
- Teachers maintain good records of pupils' skills and progress, but this information is not used to set individual learning targets.

Commentary

50. Standards are rising in mathematics due to good subject management. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when too few pupils attained the higher standards of which they were capable. Overall, provision in mathematics has improved well. The subject leader has been influential in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy and in developing the staff's mathematics skills to enable them to teach it. These have contributed to pupils' improved achievement and the higher standards attained. Assessment data and test results are carefully analysed to identify where changes to the curriculum and teachers' planning are needed to address weaknesses in learning, and to make predictions of each pupil's future performance. However, this information is not yet used to set learning targets for each individual pupil – a process which has helped pupils achieve better in writing.

51. Teachers expect a lot from pupils, and demand high standards of work and concentration. Pupils rise to the challenge and work hard. As a result, nearly all have a good understanding of addition and subtraction. They know multiplication and division facts and work confidently with money, adding up totals and working out change. Few pupils do not attain the standards expected for seven-year-olds by the end of Year 2, other than a small number with special educational needs, or recent refugees. Many are working at around the average level for nine year olds. Teachers have a secure grasp of mathematics, which helps pupils learn well. Lessons start briskly and explanations, such as how to make a pictograph out of snack packets to show which are the pupils' favourites, are generally good. However, occasionally, these discussions go on too long and pupils have insufficient time to complete the work that follows, or teachers are over-ambitious. On one such occasion, pupils did not fully understand the connection between addition and subtraction, so that many struggled to find missing numbers in subtraction sums by rephrasing them as additions.

52. Teachers prepare materials and run lessons efficiently to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of learning English are supported effectively and

achieve well. They deploy teaching assistants well for this purpose, for example asking them to work with a small group of pupils who need to reinforce counting and adding to 10, while the remaining pupils work independently with larger numbers.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils' mathematical skills are well reinforced and enhanced by their use in other subjects, which helps them understand the practical application of mathematics; these opportunities are clearly identified in lesson plans. For example, in a mathematics/ICT lesson, pupils used computers to store data and to draw graphs of their favourite selections from the lunch menu. Pupils made good progress in their understanding of the interpretation and representation of data. By the end of the lesson many had produced well-labelled graphs and understood how the data was represented by the different heights of the bars. Pupils learn to measure and explore patterns in design and technology, as shown in a project on making houses. Wallpaper designs created in art and design show that pupils have a good understanding of simple repetitive patterns based on symmetry.

SCIENCE

54. Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well;
- Joint planning by all teachers in a year group means that pupils in different classes have equality of opportunity for learning. This can also work against them when planning is faulty;
- Subject leadership is under-developed.

Commentary

55. The previous inspection identified significant under-achievement of the higher attaining pupils. This has been very effectively addressed by the implementation of a well-resourced, challenging scheme of work based on national guidelines, and the development of staff skills and expertise. Pupils' developing skills are carefully tracked, and the information fed into curriculum and lesson planning, and decisions on where to focus support for individuals. The standards attained in the 2003 national tests for seven year olds were above average, and many pupils attained well above average levels. Provision in science had improved well since the last inspection. However, this academic year has seen some changes which have had an adverse affect on standards.

56. In response to a careful and well-considered analysis of national test results, which identified that pupils achieved less well in one strand of science (*materials and their properties*) than in the other three, the curriculum has been streamlined. Since October 2003, some work originally designed for Year 2 is being taught in Year 1, and vice versa. Curricular planning is in draft, as it is being trialled, but in practice some of the work set for the current Year 1 pupils is too complicated. Expectations of what pupils who attain at different levels should know at the end of each unit are not made clear. Whilst joint planning means that pupils in each Year 1 class receive the same curriculum, which is very good for equal opportunities for learning, it also means that what does not work well in one class is unlikely to work well in any of the classes. In working on *forces* and investigating how to move objects without touching them, the investigation had too many steps and too many concepts to explore for the pupils to succeed independently. Furthermore, the lure of an investigation involving dropping items into water and retrieving them by plunging one's hand in was too much for even these well-behaved pupils. The result was that in two classes observed, pupils forgot the purpose of the investigation, became over-excited, and did not learn as much as they could have. Nevertheless, their science knowledge and understanding were, overall, average and above. In contrast, teaching in Year 2 was good, based on clear and appropriate planning to develop the pupils' understanding of food groups and a healthy diet. Their skills, knowledge and understanding in this topic are well above average for their age.

57. The subject leader has only recently taken up post, and has not yet had a chance to influence improvement, although a suitable plan of action is well stated in the subject development plan. Teaching and learning are not yet systematically monitored and the new planning has not been checked to ensure its suitability, which have led to problems for Year 1. Pupils' work is not always well enough marked to show them how to improve. Pupils' developing skills are systematically recorded, but this assessment system has not yet been revised to match the new curriculum, which makes it more difficult for staff to track pupils' progress and adapt their plans accordingly. These underdeveloped aspects of subject leadership and management and the introduction of a new curriculum have contributed to a slight drop in standards of teaching and learning in Year 1.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is generally good;
- Teaching ICT in association with other subjects works well;
- New, high quality resources contribute well to pupils' achievements. Pupils have made good progress since their introduction;
- Assessment and progress tracking are not yet fully effective.

Commentary

59. Upgraded ICT facilities were introduced at the start of the school year. The subject leader has supervised the transition to the new facilities well, and the subject is well led. The curriculum is carefully structured to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered over the two-year plan. Assessment procedures are currently being revised so that pupils' progress can be tracked more effectively as they do not yet sufficiently feed into planning to promote high achievement.

60. All classes have regular lessons in the new, well-appointed computer suite, and pupils have quickly mastered skills such as logging on to the network and selecting software. Pupils are confident, independent computer users with well-developed keyboard skills. Text and graphic-based work are well up to the standard expected in Year 1 and Year 2, and pupils are learning rapidly and are on line to attain higher levels in the near future. Clear demonstrations at the start of the lesson ensure that pupils know what they have to do. Teachers have high expectations, especially of pupils' ability to manage more than one computer program simultaneously, to read and understand what they discover from a website – for example about *Barnaby Bear's* visit to Dublin, and then to rephrase what they have learned as they type it up. Pupils respond very well and work hard. In the short time available in the *Barnaby Bear* lesson, some pupils not only wrote several sentences, but also used a *spellchecker* to correct errors in their spellings. Teaching meets the needs of the pupils very effectively. In one lesson for pupils in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher very successfully adapted the same tasks worked on by the Year 2 pupils for the Year 1 pupils by breaking down the work into smaller steps. Unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson arose from insecure subject knowledge. The teacher was not sufficiently familiar with the programs she was using, and as a result time was lost and pupils were unable to make enough headway with their work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The decision to teach ICT through other subjects was a good one. Several good lessons observed combined ICT, geography and English very well. For example, following one such lesson, a pupil wrote "*The best place to find out about Dublin is to go to the Tourist Information Office*" using a word processing program. The combined lessons enable pupils to learn new ICT skills and apply them at the same time. Pupils produce good quality work such as posters to illustrate healthy and unhealthy food for science; attractively set out poems about *Winter* for English, and wallpaper

designs as part of a design and technology project on making houses. Mathematics is well supported by ICT by the use of spreadsheets to store information and to draw graphs.

HUMANITIES

62. One lesson in ICT and one in English were observed that were both linked to geography. No lessons were observed in, or linked to, history. It is not possible to make judgements about the provision in these subjects, or the standards attained. Two lessons of religious education were seen, one in Year 2 and the other in the mixed age class. In addition, some work was analysed, and a discussion took place with the subject leader for religious education.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

63. The curricula for both history and geography are based on national guidelines and are well planned to appeal to pupils' interests. The subjects are well supported by good resources, and the school's effective approach to combining some subjects of the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

64. The English and ICT lessons were both linked to the Year 2 geography topic of *Barnaby Bear's visit to Dublin*. The lessons included a very good discussion about maps and where Dublin is located, as well as the concepts of differences in environments, climates and cultures. Teaching was very good, and the pupils showed advanced levels of geographical knowledge for their age, and made clear gains during both lessons. History displays around the school show that the pupils have enjoyed learning about the Victorians, for example in work comparing household appliances such as irons, carpet beaters and dolly boards with the modern day equivalents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

65. Provision in Religious Education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned;
- Learning is reinforced well by visits, good quality resources and assemblies;
- The leadership and management of the subject are under-developed.

Commentary

66. The standards pupils attain are in line with expectations for their age, which matches the findings of the last inspection. Religious education contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and assemblies effectively reinforce what is learned in lessons. Last term, for example, Year 2 pupils presented class assemblies about the festivals of Hanukah, Diwali, Ramadan and Eid to the rest of the school. These were effectively followed up by work involving other subjects, such as extended writing for English, ICT and art. The work is attractively displayed in the classrooms reinforcing the importance and value of religious education. Visits to local places of worship, and good quality resources help pupils gain a real understanding of different faiths such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.

67. The teaching observed was satisfactory overall, but one lesson lacked sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils, and there were no additional activities for those who finished before the rest of the class. Good support for the lower attaining pupils, however, enabled them to complete their work effectively. Good discussions, which use and build upon the pupils' subject knowledge and their advanced thinking and speaking skills, enable pupils to grapple with difficult concepts. For example they empathised with the Buddhist idea of the spirit returning to earth in another form, and asked provocative questions such as "Why do we have fly smackers, then?" when discussing the morals of killing.

68. The subject leader is new to the post and limited progress has been made recently in developing the subject and improving the standards attained by the pupils. The quality of teaching, planning and learning is not monitored which means that the promotion of high achievement can not be ensured. A rigorous system for tracking and recording the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding has yet to be developed. This makes it difficult for staff to track pupils' progress and adapt their plans accordingly to promote achievement. These underdeveloped aspects of subject leadership and management have contributed to the current standards of teaching and learning in religious education, which are lower than usual for the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. One Year 2 lesson was observed in music. Additional information was gained from an assembly, discussion with the subject leader and a short interaction with pupils in Year 1. One Year 1 lesson was observed in design and technology, and some past work analysed. Judgements cannot be made on the provision and overall standards in these two subjects. Two lessons in physical education - one in each year group - were observed, but judgements about the standards pupils reach cannot be made.

ART AND DESIGN

70. Provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and pupils achieve well;
- The standards attained by most pupils in Year 2 are above expectations for their age, and some are well above expectations in close observational drawing;
- Very good planning enables pupils' skills to be built up systematically.

Commentary

71. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines. It is adapted to suit the school's and pupils' needs, and supports the systematic development of pupils' skills as they mature. The subject is well led and well embedded in the life of the school, however, the systematic tracking of pupils' skills, and the use made of this information are underdeveloped. A good range of resources complements the activities planned, and pupils are enthusiastic and thoughtful about using them. Pupils' achievement is well supported by an art club for pupils in Year 1. Their work, as seen on display around school, and in the lessons observed, is of an increasingly high standard as they mature. Pupils experiment with pattern and shape, symmetry and modelling material. They use paint to create pictures, for example of winter scenes, and various materials for collage and three-dimensional work. Pupils had made very effective aquariums out of shallow boxes, hung with fish and plants. The close observational drawings of some Year 2 pupils were outstanding. Using a range of media such as oil and chalk pastels, and coloured pencils, pupils mingled and smudged colours together to create their impressions of various fruits. They used their *artists' eye*, which meant that they drew their own interpretations of what they actually saw, and did not produce their concept of the fruit. For example, one boy's drawing of a grapefruit included pinks and greens as shading on the fruit, and blues to indicate shadow and its three dimensional nature. Other pupils drew very detailed and accurate representations – almost biological diagrams of the fruit - rather than an impressionist view. This individual approach to art is strongly encouraged.

72. The skill of the staff in these lessons was in demonstrating specific techniques, such as how to mix and blend colours, and how to really look at something, before starting to represent it on paper. Pupils experimented before using their new skills on a specific piece of work. Teachers encouraged pupils without actually showing or telling them what to do, which would have taken away the creativity and individuality of their work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Past work, teachers' planning and the scheme of work all demonstrate that design and technology is an important and integral part of the curriculum. It complements art and design, and science well. Teaching in the lesson observed was very good, and those pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are above average for their age. The teacher set the challenge of how to raise a load of "roof tiles" to the top of a "house" with excellent dramatic intent which had the pupils spellbound. This was linked to literacy work on the story of the *Three Little Pigs*. The pupils were clearly familiar with this sort of problem, and gave a range solutions. Armed with this verbal support, and a variety of appropriate resources, small groups worked together successfully, with varying degrees of adult help, to create a winding mechanism based on an axle. This lesson was very effective and pupils made good gains in their problem solving skills and understanding of mechanisms.

MUSIC

74. The lesson seen was satisfactory. The teacher successfully followed the lesson plan, taken from a commercial scheme of work, and used the accompanying CD of songs well to support the activities. Pupils learned a new song, which they sang with enthusiasm, following rises and falls in pitch satisfactorily. Standards in singing are in line with national expectations for pupils' age. Pupils follow the teachers' instructions closely and appreciate the difference between shouting and singing loudly. Most pupils accompany singing satisfactorily on percussion instruments. However, in the lesson observed, the teacher did not work on inaccuracies in the rhythm and so pupils' performance was not as good as it could have been.

75. The new co-ordinator has taken early action to support colleagues who lack confidence in teaching music, consulting with them before buying new teacher resources. Indications are that this action is being effective. The after school music club, lunch-time recorder club, playing in the local church at Christmas time, and annual participation in a local music festival, all make good contributions to learning and pupils' personal development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the subject is developing well;
- Physical education is well supported by additional activities, such as clubs;
- Pupils enjoy physical education and show a developing understanding of necessary skills and its importance to their personal development.

Commentary

77. The subject leader is enthusiastic and is developing the subject well. The scheme of work and teacher's planning are well considered and provide a good range of activities for the pupils. In particular, good cross-curricular links are made with pupils' personal development and scientific knowledge, as they come to understand more about the effects of exercise on their bodies as they grow older. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when no reference was made about the positive benefits of regular exercise. The school is involved in various sporting initiatives such as *Top Sport*, which will bring further resources and training into school to help teachers improve their teaching. Systematic tracking of pupils' developing skills and its use to promote achievement, however, are under-developed. The clubs for football, gymnastics and dance are popular and over subscribed, and specialist coaches provide coaching in football, short tennis

and tag rugby at various times in the school year. These give pupils good opportunities for experiencing an extra-wide range of sporting activities to develop their skills further. The paired and team work necessary in games contributes very well to the pupils' personal development.

78. The teaching observed was good overall. All pupils thoroughly enjoy physical education and approach the lessons enthusiastically. They listen well and follow the teacher's directions to improve their skills and are beginning to grasp the idea of tactics when defending an area. They take demonstrations by their peers seriously, and implement good points into their own work

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

79. PSHE is taught as a separate subject and includes the curriculum for citizenship. Planning is based on national guidelines. It is largely taught through *Circle Time* and religious education, and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss topical issues or matters that concern them as well as cover the specific work planned. PSHE is threaded through the everyday work of the school, and is embedded in initiatives such as the work towards the *Healthy Schools* award. The ethos of the school, the pupils' relative maturity and the PSHE programme combine to support pupils' personal development very well. Pupils' developing skills in this area are recorded on the *pupil profiles*, which work better for recording progress in PSHE than for other areas of the curriculum. However, the leadership and management of the subject are under-developed. The sessions observed were satisfactory overall and when linked to religious education, were good, although one session was too complicated for the Year 1 pupils. They became restless, and the reflective spirit of the session was lost.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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