

INSPECTION REPORT

COLLINGWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Woodham Ferrers

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115305

Headteacher: Miss M P Ponton

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 15-18 September 2003

Inspection number: 255862

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	283
School address:	Collingwood Road South Woodham Ferrers Essex
Postcode:	CM3 5YJ
Telephone number:	01245 322258
Fax number:	01245 322449
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jan Green
Date of previous inspection:	5 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This foundation primary school serves a residential area and most pupils come from average socio-economic backgrounds. Children arrive at school with broadly average standards of development in each area of learning but in recent years there has been a marked decline in pupils' communication skills and a significant proportion enter the school without knowing the meaning of many everyday words. Nearly all are from white English speaking families although a small number are from ethnic minority backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their first language. A below average proportion of pupils, around 11 per cent, are entered on the school's record of special educational needs and of these a very small number have statements of special educational need because they need considerable help with their learning. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part way through this stage of their education, around 8 per cent, is below average. The school received a 'Healthy Schools' award in 2002 and a 'School Achievement Award' in recognition of its improved performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, English as an additional language.
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector	
25432	Liz Budden	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education.
30705	Graham Stevens	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, music, physical education, special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where teaching for most pupils is good and where most achieve well, so that by the end of Year 6 they attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. In recent years difficulties in recruiting teachers have had an adverse effect on achievement. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve particularly well in language and literacy.
- The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often very good and in these classes pupils achieve particularly well in all subjects.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent; although teaching for most pupils is good, there are wide inconsistencies in Years 1 to 4 where teaching ranges from very good to, occasionally, unsatisfactory.
- The standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 2 in science are not as high as they should be because teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and learning support assistants make a strong contribution to their sound and often good achievement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed thanks mainly to the common aims and good partnership between teachers, support staff and parents.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good and this helps them to learn effectively.
- The leadership and management of the school are good but improvements in learning and achievement have been frustrated by staffing problems in recent years.

The school's effectiveness has improved since the last inspection - its performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 has improved significantly in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The key issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been tackled successfully. Good planning frameworks have been established to guide teachers' planning and to promote sufficient coverage of all National Curriculum subjects as well as religious education. Revised procedures to monitor teaching and learning have recently been implemented. Governors are now much more closely involved in planning for improvement. The attainment of children on entry to the school is much lower than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	B	B	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage and most are on course to attain the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils' achievement is mostly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and they attain at least average standards in all subjects except science, where achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below average. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good in design and

technology and history and they attain standards that are above average. The quality of singing is above average and the large choir performs enthusiastically.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good overall, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work; they are eager to please and keen to succeed. Pupils grow in confidence and have high levels of self-esteem. They have a keen sense of justice and fair play. Behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching overall is good.

The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is mostly good and this helps pupils to learn effectively. The teaching in reception and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and in these classes a sound foundation is laid for future learning. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement in science in Years 1 and 2 are too low. The teaching of language and reading is often very good and enables pupils to attain high standards by the end of Year 6. Singing is taught well. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits, as well as through clubs that offer sporting and cultural activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and the governing body supports the school effectively. Finances are managed well and are directed towards the most important areas of priority. The curriculum is managed well so that all subjects are taught in sufficient depth. Although most subject leaders are effective in developing their subjects, the subject leaders for a few subjects do not have enough impact on raising standards across the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. They particularly appreciate the fact that teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best and they value the good arrangements that help children settle in when they start school. A small minority of parents expressed concern about how teachers managed to plan successfully for the widely varying learning needs of all pupils in the mixed age classes. The inspection team found that teachers' lesson plans are based on good assessments of pupils' particular learning needs and that they manage the wide age range successfully. Pupils themselves are also pleased with the facilities that the school provides for them although many complain about the small, poorly designed toilet areas.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the consistency of teaching across the school so that all teaching reaches the standard of the best.
- Raise the standards that pupils attain in science by the end of Year 2.
- Develop the effectiveness of subject leaders so that all have a greater impact on improving standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Most pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in reception and in Years 1 and 2, and most attain average standards by the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 5 and 6 is good and often very good because teaching is particularly effective in these classes.
- Pupils read well and enjoy talking about the books they have enjoyed; by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in speaking and reading.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and history.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not achieving as well as they should in science and by the end of Year 2 most are likely to attain standards that are below average.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (15.9)	[*] (15.8)
writing	14.9 (13.7)	[*] (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.2)	[*] (16.5)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (29.6)	[*] (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (29.7)	[*] (26.7)
science	30.5 (30.3)	[*] (28.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

***National averages are not yet available for 2003**

1. The school's performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 is consistently above national averages in English, mathematics and science although in English the results fluctuate from year to year.
2. The school's performance in the tests for pupils in Year 2 was significantly above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics until 2002 when it fell sharply. This was mostly due to interruptions in the continuity of pupils' learning caused by staffing problems in recent years. Another factor that has affected the school's performance is the marked decline in children's attainment on entry to the school. There is clear evidence, based on the school's assessments of children's ability when they enter school, that the group of children who started school in 1997 had developed early learning skills that were far in advance of the group that entered the school in 2001. At the time of the last inspection there was a much higher

proportion of more able pupils and a much lower proportion of less able pupils entering the school. The school's performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 recovered slightly in 2003 but the strong upward trend in test results was not regained.

3. Children in the Foundation Stage, those in the reception year, settle readily into school and their overall achievement is at least satisfactory in each of the six areas of learning. In personal, social and emotional development they achieve well, partly because the arrangements for them to start school are so effective and partly because there is a strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills. The youngest children also achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of the world because this aspect of the curriculum is taught imaginatively and is enriched by well-planned visits and the introduction of a good range of interesting visitors. There is a strong emphasis on providing children with a good grounding in early reading skills by systematically demonstrating how letters make sounds and sounds make words. This systematic programme of teaching phonics helps to counteract the weak language development that many children have on entering school. Most are likely to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year.
4. Teachers plan work methodically to develop reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they attain average standards by the end of Year 2. There is less emphasis on teaching science skills systematically, especially the strand of the subject that deals with pupils developing skills involving investigations and experiments. As a result pupils do not achieve as well as they should and they are likely to attain standards that are below average by the end of Year 2. Design and technology and history are taught well and standards are above average.
5. The good and often very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils achieve well. Most are on course to attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Reading and speaking skills are particularly well developed and pupils often excel in these areas. Particularly good work was seen in history where drama helps pupils to gain a good appreciation of what it must have been like to live in olden times. Thanks to the expertise of the subject leader for music, good work was seen in singing. Similarly the subject leader for design and technology has been successful in improving standards, which were below average at the time of the last inspection and are now above average. Standards have also improved in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology and religious education. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in information and communication technology because they have too few opportunities to use computers in all subjects.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6, a reflection of the overall quality of teaching. Every pupil's particular stage of development and individual learning needs are assessed on entry to school. Their needs are addressed in the Foundation Stage where careful records are assembled to inform plans designed to meet their learning requirements. Pupils are withdrawn for additional support in literacy and mathematics, especially in Years 5 and 6, so that most pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are encouraged to value themselves as well as recognise the strengths that others possess. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy their lessons, like coming to school and are keen to learn new things.
- Pupils are courteous, confident and self-assured.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good and support effective learning.

- The school nurtures every pupil by recognising and responding to individual needs.
- The school is good at developing pupils' sense of the wider community and their understanding of our multi-cultural society.

Commentary

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and this helps them to achieve well and learn effectively. They not only have a pride in what they can do well, but also recognise the ability and achievements of their peers. Attendance and punctuality are very good and pupils behave very well in class and as they go about the school. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' conduct, particularly in Years 5 and 6, so pupils mature confidently and grow in self-esteem as they progress through the school. There is a pleasant atmosphere throughout the school. Children in the reception class settle quickly into school routines and show enjoyment in their learning.
8. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' behaviour in class is a reflection of the well-founded routines learned in reception. Pupils are very eager to respond to questions and to take part in whole class activities. However, they are not as keen to tackle more difficult tasks involving concentrated thought and writing of more than a few sentences. Unless they are closely supervised, their attention drifts and they are slow to start work and to continue it to completion. In Years 3 to 6, however, all pupils show an equal willingness to become involved in their learning. They show originality in their answers to questions, with good use of vocabulary and clear thoughts derived from previous lessons or from their own reading. Increasingly, pupils have confidence to ask questions to clarify their understanding.
9. The good standards of behaviour are not only the result of teachers' high expectations but also stem from the care that pupils have for each other. Older children show a natural responsibility for the younger ones. They share in celebrating success and develop a sympathetic understanding of individual beliefs and values. They enjoy school and are keen to do their best. The acceptance into school of children with severe learning and behavioural difficulties has helped them to develop tolerance and an understanding of how to respond to unusual behaviour. Many of the routines which encourage the pleasant atmosphere are derived from recommendations by the school council. The council has a strong voice. Parents are very satisfied with standards of behaviour in school and the way pupils mix with others in outside activities. There have been no exclusions in recent years. If ever there is a case of antagonistic behaviour or bullying, it is managed effectively and pupils are left in no doubt about the seriousness of such incidents.
10. Most pupils respond well to high levels of challenge. They are eager to put forward suggestions and some, for instance in design work, show exceptionally original ideas. They are reflective and they ask thoughtful questions. Discussions, which are often built into lesson plans at all ages, are spirited and show acceptance of the opinions of others. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are expected to plan their work and to solve their own problems, which they are happy to do. The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to take additional responsibility as they mature.
11. Useful guidance is given to teachers on how spirituality can be included in all subjects. As a result, teachers use resources well to stimulate a sense of spiritual awareness where pupils are not afraid to express their inner thoughts. They openly discuss such subjects as moods and portray their ideas on 'mood boards', some of which are on display. Imagination and insight are developed through music, drama, art, and design. Adults provide good role models for pupils. The variety of extra curricular activities give pupils the chance to meet pupils from other schools in sporting and musical events. A sense of their own and the wider community is well developed through these activities. The traditions that make up the multi-cultural modern society are studied through stories, visiting dramatists, artists and poets. Appropriate displays show pupils of all ages something of the variety of cultures in modern Britain. These aspects of the school's teaching and guidance show an overall improvement since the last report.

12. Attendance has much improved since the last inspection. Parents give their support to the school in maintaining very good levels of attendance and punctuality. The school's expectations are set out in the 'Welcome Pack' so parents have due regard for matters which affect attendance, such as not taking holidays in term-time. The school contacts the pupil's home on the first day of any absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
303
3
1
1
1
2
3
9

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good in most classes and teachers promote a serious, business-like approach to learning. The overall leadership of the school promotes an ethos that is conducive to effective learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall in the school and as a result most pupils learn effectively. Teaching is satisfactory in reception and in Years 1 and 2, and it is good in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is especially good for pupils in Years 5 and 6 where teachers maintain high expectations of performance so that achievement is good.
- The teaching of reading is good and across the school pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent in some parts of the school and unsatisfactory teaching was seen in several lessons in Years 1 to 4 where teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low.
- Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching, especially for pupils with special educational needs, but the special educational needs co-ordinator has too few opportunities to monitor pupils' learning.

- Several teachers lack direction because there are no explicit guidelines that detail precisely how they should develop their classrooms in order to promote teaching and learning of the highest quality.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching is good but within this overall picture there are significant variations. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is often very good and in these classes pupils achieve particularly well. In the mixed Year 1/2 and 3/4 classes teaching is mostly satisfactory but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. In reception most of the teaching is satisfactory and much of it is good. The teaching of English is good overall. The teaching of mathematics is mostly good and is enhanced where pupils are placed in sets according to their particular stages of development. Teaching is generally well matched to pupils' individual needs. This means that pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, those with special educational needs and the more able pupils are, for the most part, catered for equally effectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (17%)	10 (21%)	26 (55%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	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.

14. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly in their year group teams and this helps to maintain consistency between the classes. The quality of teaching is better in Years 5 and 6 than in the other year groups because here there has been greater consistency in the experienced team that teaches the older pupils. The very good practice that several teachers provide is not shared sufficiently across the school. Staff changes have contributed to a lack of continuity in teaching. Although there is a great deal of guidance for teachers, through school policies and well developed planning frameworks, the conditions necessary to sustain high quality teaching are not described explicitly in any agreed teaching and learning policy or staff handbook. As a result new and inexperienced teachers are not given sufficient guidance on how to provide consistently good teaching. Subject leaders do not all monitor teaching and learning closely enough to identify areas of strength as well as weaknesses. There is greater consistency in the teaching of English and design and technology, largely because the subject leaders in these areas of the curriculum have been successful in promoting effective teaching.
15. Pupils are encouraged to take their work seriously and this promotes positive attitudes. Teaching is purposeful and teachers strive to ensure that all pupils achieve well. However, there are occasions when expectations of pupils' performance are not pitched at the right level. On these occasions work is often too hard for the less able pupils or does not stretch the most able sufficiently. Relationships are good and humour is used well to create pleasant learning environments.
16. Imaginative teaching, such as the Victorian School Day enacted by pupils in Years 5 and 6, helps pupils to achieve well and learn effectively. Equally varied activities, such as the excursion made by reception and Year 1 to the local creek, stimulate learning well. In lessons where too long was spent on completing worksheets or sitting listening to the teacher rather than being actively involved in tasks, progress slowed and learning was less effective. In mathematics and science there are too few opportunities for engaging in practical activities in order to consolidate understanding and to apply skills in meaningful situations.
17. The teaching of reading is a strength. Good foundations are laid in Years 1 and 2 and pupils are encouraged to enjoy literature. Opportunities are grasped to engage in silent reading. In Years 5 and 6 for example, there is complete silence during the registration period when pupils are

reading a chapter of the book that the class are studying. Teachers have been highly successful in stimulating a keen interest in children's literature. Pupils explain clearly why they like certain books and who are their favourite authors. The breadth of reading material helps to sustain interest. Several pupils read 'The Times' regularly whilst others prefer football annuals.

18. Classroom assistants provide good support to pupils, especially to those with special educational needs. They are a committed team who have developed good levels of expertise. They hold regular meetings to discuss practice and to share information about, for example, how best to use new teaching equipment to support particular pupils. They make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of pupils' learning. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teaching assistants are well trained and skilled in motivating and supporting these pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator, a full-time class teacher, has few opportunities to observe and work with these pupils in different classes. Instead she has to rely on discussions and examination of assessments to check on the effectiveness of provision. A good range of resources is used well to motivate and interest the pupils with special educational needs but the school has not yet explored how computers could be used more effectively to support their learning.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good with clubs, visits and visitors enriching it well, especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils are prepared well for later stages of education
- The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teaching of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies is effective. Time allocations are appropriate with most subjects being taught in a two-year rolling cycle appropriate to meet the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. Exemplar planning frameworks provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are used as a basis for planning series of lessons in most subjects but teachers seek to provide opportunities to link subjects together to make the curriculum more cohesive and more meaningful for pupils. This was observed in Year 6 when links between geography and the locations in a novel being studied in a literacy lesson were skilfully explored. The leadership of the curriculum is shared between subject leaders who are responsible for developing the quality of teaching and learning and for raising standards. The effectiveness of their impact on improving the quality of provision is largely dependent on their subject knowledge and the clarity of their vision for improvement. Hence the effectiveness of their input varies.
20. Support for more able pupils is generally good and it is very good in Years 5 and 6 where high expectations of their performance result in good achievement. Pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds are supported equally well. Support for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very well organised and effective. They have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator oversees the work of twelve teaching assistants who in turn work very well with classroom teachers in planning for, supporting and monitoring the progress of these pupils. However, the co-ordinator has too few opportunities to observe and monitor the work of the classroom assistants. The provision of resources for this group of pupils is good.
21. Good curricular links have been established with the local secondary school. Teachers from the school visit to teach science and English to pupils in Year 6 and these lessons are followed

up after pupils have transferred. Pupils visit the secondary school twice, once in the autumn term and once in the summer term and pupils with SEN visit more often, gaining extra reassurance as a result. In addition teachers have formed very good curricular links and these in turn impact positively on the way pupils are prepared for transfer.

22. Last year the school adopted a good planning framework to guide work in Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education, (PSHCE). The scheme helps to ensure that statutory requirements for sex and drug education are fulfilled. All pupils take part in 'circle time', a special time when they sit together in a circle to discuss personal and social issues. They take these sessions seriously and good discussions help them to develop a good understanding of social and personal interactions. Good provision makes pupils aware of the dangers of drugs and the 'Essex Schools' Drug Project' involved training for both staff and interested parents.
23. Pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, have access to netball and football clubs and a separate football club has been established for girls. Pupils belong to a local football league, play netball matches against local schools and join in with the local athletics tournament. In addition the curriculum is enriched by a very wide range of visits, both within the locality and further afield, for example to Colchester Castle, the Imperial War Museum in London and the theatre in Southend to see 'Sleeping Beauty.' Visitors to the school, such as Egyptian dancers and drummers, an artist in residence, story tellers, a fashion design graduate and a real baby who was bathed with the support of pupils in the reception/Year 1 class, also add considerably to the richness of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care given to pupils ensures that they feel secure so that they can do their best.
- The school council provides a good forum for pupils to express their views and opinions.

Commentary

24. Teachers know their pupils well and give them sound advice based on that knowledge. Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils who find learning difficult, helping them to become more involved in their lessons. There are effective procedures for the protection of pupils and the school provides a healthy and safe environment in which they can thrive.
25. The headteacher ensures that all staff are well aware of their responsibilities for the protection of pupils. These procedures follow recommended practice. Accidents and injuries are treated promptly, records are kept and parents informed. Staff and governors carry out routine checks on the premises and equipment and defects are dealt with swiftly.
26. Pupils report that they have very good relationships with their class teachers and with the mid-day supervisors. Most find it easy to discuss difficulties they are experiencing in their learning. Work is marked well and pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The achievements of all pupils are celebrated. Through the regular support and guidance from their teachers, pupils receive good advice on how to improve their work and to overcome their weaknesses. Pupils contribute to their own cumulative 'Records of Achievement' that contain clear commentaries on their personal, social, sporting, cultural and academic achievements. These help to develop pupils' self-awareness of their successes and of the progress they are making. They contribute to pupils' high levels of self-esteem and confidence.
27. Close ties are maintained with the secondary school to which almost all pupils transfer. There are also close links with the pre-school playgroup who prepare children well for life in the reception classes. There are exceptionally well prepared procedures for pupils starting school.

Pre-school children, who are due to start in the reception class in January, visit the school for two afternoons each week throughout the autumn term. In their very first session, observed during the inspection week, they settled remarkably well and spent a very productive afternoon with their new teacher.

28. From their early years, pupils are involved in the life of the school, its routines and activities. They are keen to offer their services and willingly carry out tasks for the benefit of the community. The older pupils take responsibility for showing visitors round the school, for manning the reception desk at lunchtime and helping with assemblies. The school council is well developed and its findings are respected. Ideas come forward from classes and the outcomes are reported back. Little can be done at present with some proposals such as the inadequacy of changing rooms and toilets, due to limited funds. However, the council's research into school meals and playtime routines has resulted in improvements. They publish their own newsletter, which encourages all members of the school community to value pupils' views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

A strong partnership has been forged between parents and the school. Links with other schools and the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents offer the school good support and are pleased with the education provided for their children.
- Pupils are prepared well to commence the next phase of their education.

Commentary

29. The school's partnership with parents is effective in helping to form a common approach towards working together to promote pupils' achievement. Parents support the school strongly and appreciate the dedication of the teaching staff and the way all staff encourage their children to become mature and independent. There are very healthy links with the community and the other schools, including the secondary school, which form part of the community.
30. Parents are well informed of events and school achievements by newsletters and the governors' annual report. The school prospectus is informative and there are helpful letters on the curriculum and other specific topics. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress state clearly what pupils know and can do. The reports indicate pupils' strengths and any particular weakness with suggestions about how these can be overcome. In addition, there are regular meetings arranged for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers. The school encourages parents to come into school if they have a concern about their children's welfare or academic progress. The large majority find it easy to approach the school if they have a problem or complaint. The strong bond between parents and the school promotes pupils' positive attitudes to learning.
31. Parents' responses to questionnaires are carefully analysed and appropriate action is taken. The profile of parents has changed over the last few years. Fewer are able to devote time to supporting the school. Not all parents make even a limited contribution to their children's learning; some do not hear their children read. The school is addressing this. Special meetings are arranged for parents of young children who have had difficulty with reading at home. These meetings are well attended.
32. The school is a valued part of a very flourishing community. Sporting and cultural events are organised for adults and children and all local schools are encouraged to take part. The school has benefited from professional football coaching for both boys and girls and they have had successes in local tournaments. Pupils' education in the arts is enhanced as they take part in

local competitions and productions. Again this enhances self-esteem and promotes in pupils a pride in their school and the part they play in its success.

33. Pupils are well prepared for their move to the secondary school, with which there are strong ties. Pupils return to the school to help organise events and to gain work experience. Links are also maintained with the local college of further education. This promotes continuity in pupils' education as they move from one phase to another.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership but the leadership of several key staff is less well developed. The school monitors achievement closely and pinpoints pupils who need extra support. The school is organised efficiently and the curriculum is managed well. The governors are closely associated with the school and provide good governance. In recent years developments have been hindered by problems in recruiting teaching staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is ably led by the Chair and governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
 - The headteacher provides good leadership and has established recently revised monitoring procedures designed to improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards.
 - The new Senior Management Team is strongly committed to raising standards.
 - The subject leaders are not all having enough impact on raising standards.
 - The school development plan does not always focus explicitly on how initiatives are expected to raise standards.
 - There is no teaching and learning policy to guide teachers and support staff by defining clearly what they should do to provide teaching of high quality.
34. The school is emerging from a difficult period caused by a series of staffing problems. Recently many senior staff left for promotion or due to illness or retirement. Recruitment of experienced senior staff proved difficult and temporary posts caused by maternity leave were especially hard to fill. As a result much energy went into maintaining continuity and equilibrium rather than developing the curriculum. Alongside the staffing difficulties the school was managing the installation of a new computer suite and the re-siting of the school library. The school is committed to making every effort to admit all pupils despite, in several cases, evidence of severe learning difficulties. Children have been admitted whose behaviour caused a great deal of disruption. This experience tended to undermine the confidence of staff in their ability to manage children effectively. The headteacher, with the support of the governors, managed this difficult period extremely well and the school is now entering a more settled period. Nevertheless these difficulties did have a serious impact on the quality of teaching and the standards attained by pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2. The headteacher has introduced revised procedures to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are supported well and teaching is monitored through lesson observations and evaluated according to clear criteria. However, there is no clear teaching and learning policy that spells out to teachers exactly what they must do to provide teaching of high quality.
 35. The governing body is well led by a Chair who is enthusiastic and fully committed to improving the facilities provided to support teaching and learning. Committees are very well organised; they meet regularly and governors are frequent visitors to the school. They are kept well informed of developments by both the headteacher and key staff who regularly report on their curriculum areas. They are very involved, with the headteacher and key staff, in drawing up the long-term strategic plan from which annual objectives for school improvement are prioritised. This is monitored at all committee meetings and questions are raised with regard to the progress of projects and initiatives undertaken. However the plan does not always describe explicitly how the impact of initiatives will be evaluated in terms of their impact on standards. As

a result there is a lack of clarity and precision about how effective initiatives have been. Governors are ambitious for the school and each has links with specific subject areas. They visit regularly to observe lessons, talk to the pupils and to their link subject co-ordinators. They have established clear systems to ensure that funds are spent wisely and that the school gains good value for money.

36. The headteacher is responding positively to a period of change that has necessitated a review of management systems within the school. A new Senior Management Team (SMT) has been created and, although its roles and responsibilities are yet to be closely defined, it is committed to raising standards. Subject leaders, such as those responsible for developing mathematics and science, do not always have sufficient influence on raising standards across the school. Their prime role is to be accountable for standards in their subjects but there are too few opportunities for them to influence teaching practice and to enhance pupils' learning. The need to raise standards further in reading, writing and science in Years 1 and 2 has been identified and the action taken to improve standards has met with a degree of success. This has been demonstrated in the school's improved performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has just taken on responsibility for leading and managing both the Foundation Stage and for co-ordinating the work of teachers in Years 1 and 2. She complements the work of the headteacher and other key staff but has not been in post for long enough to have had a major influence on raising standards.
37. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are treated impartially and that all have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. Nearly all parents agree that the school succeeds in treating all pupils fairly. The school responds well to pupils' particular needs, and both those who have special educational needs due to learning difficulties and those who are faster learners receive good support.
38. Budgets are set in accordance with statutory requirements. Governors are supplied with detailed information and all are fully involved in the budget setting process. The cost per pupil at the school is in line with the average cost for a school of this size. When all factors are taken into account the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	722,535
Total expenditure	721,849
Expenditure per pupil	2,292

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	88,378
Balance carried forward to the next	30,395

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are nine children in the Foundation Stage who started school just a few days before the inspection. There are also six Year 1 pupils in the class. Most children enter school with a broadly average range of attainment but a number have limited vocabulary and find it difficult to express themselves clearly. A skilled classroom assistant copes well with a small number of children who enter the school with severe learning difficulties. The management of provision is satisfactory. Careful records are kept of children's development and planning takes account of the children's widely varying learning needs. Work is about to begin on creating a new outside activity area to supplement learning experiences in the classroom. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits outside the classroom as well as by inviting visitors into school. The inspection took place close to the beginning of a new school year and children had only just started school. The class had just moved into a new room. As a result the learning environment had not been fully developed to promote effective learning in all areas of the curriculum. Children's attainments on entry to the school are now average whereas at the time of the last inspection they were above average. Consequently the standards that children attain at the end of the reception year are not as high as they were when the school was last inspected.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures to introduce new children into school and these support their social and emotional development well.
- Children are encouraged to take responsibility for managing the tidiness of their classroom and are trained to work co-operatively.

Commentary

39. Most children attend the pre-school playgroup that shares the school's site. There are strong links with the playgroup and before starting school children are familiar with the reception class and know their way around the school. Transition to the infant class is exceptionally smooth and as a result children settle quickly and confidently. Relationships are very good. Teaching is good so that children achieve well and learn effectively. Most are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception.
40. The class teacher works closely with the classroom assistant to establish set routines for the children to follow. During discussion sessions the teacher encourages the children to express their feelings about, for example, their first day at school. Puppets are used well to model responses to questions and this helps to overcome shyness. Expectations of children's ability to develop independence are high and this helps children to develop self-assurance. They are expected to take out and put away the apparatus they need for various activities. They understand that they all share responsibility for managing their classroom. Warm relationships have been established and foster a comfortable environment that helps the children to work together happily. All are treated fairly and they are all treated with respect by adults.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good phonic reading programme has just been introduced in order to give children the skills they need to begin reading effectively.
- Teaching strategies to ensure high levels of achievement have not been fully developed.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are sound and most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception. Children enjoy learning and their achievement is satisfactory.
42. The school has adopted a new system for teaching the early stages of reading. This involves short sharp sessions throughout the day designed to develop children's understanding and knowledge of the basic building blocks of reading. The teacher explains that words are made from letters and that different letters make different sounds. The children enjoy the important sounding technical language, such as 'segment' and 'synthesis'. They quickly slip into the routine of following the teacher's lead as they learn letter sounds by rote. With this system early reading skills are developing rapidly. The system is new and staff are not yet confident in its use. Also the classroom has not yet been established as a vibrant, colourful and stimulating learning environment with clearly defined learning areas and clear labels to prompt and encourage language development.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are examples of imaginative teaching that extend children's understanding of number well.
- There are occasions when children are not challenged sufficiently.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and most children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception. Good links are made with the theme that the children are following, currently 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'. In one session, for example, one group prepared sandwiches for the seven dwarfs. This involved a great deal of mathematics. Calculating how many slices of bread were required for the sandwiches proved very challenging. One child used her knowledge of doubling to calculate that eight slices of bread would be needed to make four sandwiches. The teacher asked questions such as, 'If we have made four sandwiches, how many more will we need to make?' These tasks were thought provoking and extended children's learning well.
44. Achievement is generally sound but there are occasions when pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge. When, for example, the teacher was engaged with the Year 1 group, the younger children were not really focused on the activities that had been provided. They played with the Lego bricks, for example, but there had been no specific learning objective for the activity or particular assignment, such as, 'Can you build a solid tower that is taller than your table?' or 'Can you make a car with four sets of wheels?' As a result time is not always used productively.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is particularly effective when the class goes out of school for long walks to explore the local environment.
- Regular visitors to the classroom help the children to make sense of their world.

Commentary

45. The highlight of the week was a long walk to the nearby creek. This provided a rich series of learning experiences. The children learned first hand that the creek was very muddy when the tide went out. They noted that the moored boats changed their positions and pointed different ways as the tide ebbed and flowed. They studied a map of the creek and used this for a model back in class. They made astute deductions, such as why grass grew in the middle of the lane and at the edges but not in two parallel swathes along its length. The teacher took photographs of all the interesting things observed and used them well to consolidate learning back in the classroom. Children were encouraged to air their views on the aspects of the locality that they like and those that are unappealing. This encouraged them to form opinions. The teacher reports that with many of the children it is hard to stimulate curiosity and a desire to find out why and how things work.
46. Many visitors, such as policemen, firemen and ambulance personnel are invited into the classroom to explain how they do their jobs. Also as part of a project on growing up, a mummy brought her new-born baby into the classroom to show the children how he was fed and bathed. Such experiences provide stimulating and memorable learning experiences. Children are interested and achieve well. Teaching is good and promotes effective learning so that children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are shown how to use tools through clear demonstrations.
- There is limited provision for developing skills outdoors.

Commentary

47. Staff are careful to ensure that children hold pencils properly, use tools such as scissors efficiently and are able to paint effectively. Good attention is paid to staying healthy and hygiene is emphasised when making sandwiches for example.
48. The school has good plans to develop an outside learning area and work is due to commence in the near future. Children visit the school hall for music, movement and PE lessons. They also use the playgroup garden but the lack of their own outdoor learning area restricts learning opportunities. At present, then, provision is unsatisfactory and constrains achievement, which is also unsatisfactory. Teaching is sound but the limited facilities suggest that not all children are likely to attain all the early learning goals by the end of reception.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to create pictures using different materials.
- The role-play area is not well developed for promoting pretend scenarios.

Commentary

49. Teaching is satisfactory and children are likely to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception. Children thoroughly enjoyed doing thick, muddy paintings inspired by their walk to the local creek. They also created well-designed collages by sticking the twigs, stones and leaves they had collected onto card. Through discussion they were encouraged to recognise the beauty of nature in the multi-coloured leaves. These aspects of creative development are developed well and children's learning is sound. Although children's achievement is satisfactory, it is constrained by the lack of a more stimulating learning environment. The role-play area in the classroom, for example, is not particularly inspirational and is not structured effectively to fire children's imaginations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In all year groups a strong emphasis is put on providing pupils with the skills they need to read effectively.
- Most pupils gain great enjoyment in their reading and, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the breadth of their reading experience to help them to write imaginatively and effectively.
- In many other subjects, the strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills strengthens pupils' thinking.
- More able pupils in Years 1 to 4 are not always challenged sufficiently and therefore their writing skills are not developed as fully as they could be.

Commentary

50. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are well above average in speaking and reading and above average in writing. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 1 and 2 is satisfactory; it is good in Years 3 and 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. The subject leader manages the subject well and has a very good understanding of standards across the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
51. Pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2 are highly motivated to read and show qualities of great perseverance. They can recognise rhyming words and predict the next parts of stories, but some common words that should be known on sight are not always recognised. Video resources used in class help pupils, especially the less able, by giving them a helpful structure for their reading which they draw on when asked to write about the story. In one lesson seen during the inspection, ICT resources were used as a good stimulus for pupils' reading that was linked with a writing task. Pupils in Year 2 discuss favourite authors and enjoy reading a wide range of books. The new programme that the school has started for teaching pupils phonics is already having a positive impact on developing their abilities to distinguish between different sounds. The regular teaching sessions go at a brisk pace and pupils in Years 1 and 2 can switch quickly from recognising initial sounds to blending two or three sounds and to breaking

words into sections. This means that pupils are steadily building up the bank of strategies they need for tackling unfamiliar words.

52. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and know that their own teachers are keen readers of children's literature. They are fluent, persistent and self motivated. They value the wide range and choice of interesting books in the school and the way that their teachers bring the stories alive. They are articulate, have a good understanding of language and a good comprehension of material read. They make an astute assessment of the school's reading ethos –
'When you walk into quiet reading time, all heads are in books and it is very quiet'.
'Teachers like reading – they share their books, they read our books in the holidays and they do voices and help us read with expression'.
Pupils are encouraged to read newspapers and give a summary of an article to the class. In group reading, teachers extend pupils' thinking skills very well by using skilful questioning strategies.
53. There is a very high level of challenge for pupils in Years 5 and 6 that provides a great deal of motivation and helps them to develop as skilful writers. They appreciate hearing complete stories and the way that the teachers try to help them 'make our writing perfect' as they work on different sections of the writing or try to work out the way inferences are woven into the text. Pupils have a strong sense of making an impact on the reader, using openings such as 'All I could hear was the echo of the dog's bark for a while, then deadly whispers like you hear in a horror film. That's the last thing I remember.' They very consciously work to understand and use in their own writing words that they have heard in stories read to them. They have a good sense of paragraphing and of the overall structures of story writing and they make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of types of writing. They are very evaluative of both their own work and that of published authors. The presentation of work is good, handwriting satisfactory and spellings informed by the keen interest in the meaning of words.
54. Pupils are often reluctant to speak at length when they first enter school. Many show that they have a very limited vocabulary and lack understanding of everyday words. Pupils' speaking develops well in Years 1 and 2 and is promoted well in lessons such as numeracy where they are encouraged to explain their thinking and how they arrived at their answers. A pupil in Year 2 spoke confidently and with interesting detail about his fishing trip and pupils listened with respect, copying the model of attentiveness given by their teacher. Across the school, pupils learn to reformulate questions and to challenge what they hear. In mathematics lessons they demonstrate confidence in asking questions to develop their own learning. In Years 5 and 6, pupils also listen respectfully and they look for opportunities to praise each other. The teacher engages pupils in question and answer sessions which encourage thoughtful reflection about their reading and writing. In several lessons teachers asked pupils to discuss possible answers to questions or explanations for theories in pairs. This gave them confidence to present the draft ideas to a wider group.
55. Writing lessons for pupils in Years 1 to 4 are clearly planned and make good use of teacher assistant support and resources such as video tapes and computer software. Stimulated by the video they had watched, pupils in Years 1 and 2 identified adjectives from a text and gave a range of alternative words for 'scared'. In this lesson pupils in Year 2 were not given tasks beyond providing single adjectives, and opportunities for stretching the more able writers were lost. Most pupils attain average standards in handwriting and spelling. The use of computers in one Year 1 and 2 lesson promoted independence and good pace as pupils read their task from the computerised whiteboard and strove to complete their tasks and print work before the end of the lesson. However in many books studied during the inspection, there was too narrow a range of structured creative writing opportunities and an over emphasis on re-telling well known stories. This meant that more able pupils were limited in the range of skills they could demonstrate or develop.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. The school promotes language and literacy across the curriculum very well. Good sets of vocabulary relevant to the particular subject were evident in many lessons. Pupils in reception and Year 1 learned words relating to roadside and river features on their trip to the River Crouch estuary. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a thesaurus skilfully to extend their vocabulary about invaders and settlers. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used diagrams to present their geography work and fill in missing words in texts to reinforce their learning. Drama is used well to develop language skills, as in the Victorian drama day and in religious education where pupils acted the story of the good Samaritan. The school is beginning to develop its use of ICT in language and literacy and there were some good examples seen on inspection of the stimulus this gave to pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is good and in Years 5 and 6 it is very good so that the older pupils achieve particularly well.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are above average and well above average in the strand of the subject that deals with number and algebra.
- Teachers structure lessons carefully so that there is a quick fire mental arithmetic session followed by teaching of new skills with a short session to review learning towards the end of the lesson.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy their work.
- The work set for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not always appropriate and there is too much reliance on completing worksheets rather than practical activities.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in realistic situations.
- Computers are not yet used enough to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

57. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2 most attain average standards. Although this seems to indicate that standards are not now as high as the above average standards reported at the time of the last inspection, the results of national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 showed that in fact there has been a significant improvement in the school's overall performance. Whilst nearly all pupils attained the national target of Level 2, this year a much higher proportion of pupils than in 1998 attained the higher Level 3 standard. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully.
58. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the mixed Year 1/2 classes and pupils develop a sound understanding of basic skills such as a counting, addition and subtraction. However, tasks are not always closely matched to pupils' widely varying stages of development. In the lessons sampled activities lacked variety and teaching was often unimaginative. Much of the work produced is recorded on worksheets that fail to stimulate pupils' interest and result in lessons that often cover routine number work rather than the more exhilarating aspects of the subject. Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work that can be produced, especially by the more able pupils, are too low so that progress, whilst broadly satisfactory, is not as rapid as it could be.
59. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and as a result pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average. This mirrors the judgement made at the time of the last inspection although the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 is much better than in 1998. A much greater proportion attain the national target of Level 4 and this year

nearly twice as many pupils attained the higher Level 5 standard than did so at the time of the last inspection. Overall improvement has been good.

60. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are placed into ability sets and this helps teachers to match work closely to pupils' varying stages of development. Particularly able pupils in Year 5 work alongside more able Year 6 pupils, for example, and are thus sufficiently stimulated and extended. One good teaching strategy seen in several classes was to encourage pupils to assume the role of teacher and identify precisely where mistakes in problem solving might have been made. This helps pupils to refine their thinking skills and consider the different routes that might be taken to solve problems. In discussions with older pupils it was evident that they are used to thinking through possible solutions to unfamiliar concepts by using their prior knowledge creatively. One suggested, for example, how it might be possible to calculate the surface area of a football by wrapping it in paper marked out in square centimetres. Although pupils have a good understanding of how to weigh and measure solids and liquids, opportunities for them to use such skills to solve meaningful problems are infrequent. Teachers' lesson planning is thorough and teachers collaborate well in year groups to maintain consistency between classes. In Years 5 and 6 in particular, teachers insist on high standards of presentation and pay great attention to detail. This enhances the quality of work that the pupils produce.
61. Teachers encourage pupils to take their work seriously. Most have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the subject. Pupils are involved in assessing how well they are doing. At the beginning of each lesson they copy out the learning objective for the lesson. At the end of the lesson they underline the objective either in green to indicate that they have understood all elements of the lesson, in orange to indicate that they are nearing full understanding or in red to signify that their understanding has been limited. This system works well as it helps teachers to evaluate how successful the teaching and learning has been. Pupils also have targets to achieve, such as 'Double check all answers'. Such targets help to improve accuracy but they are not sufficiently precise to indicate to pupils what ground they have to cover to move, for example, from Level 3 to Level 4. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and there are examples of excellent marking in Year 5 and 6 that help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Teachers maintain careful records of pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are tested regularly to pinpoint any gaps in learning and to identify both those who are achieving better than expected as well as those who are not making the progress they should. This information is used well to adjust lesson plans to meet pupils' particular learning needs.
62. The subject leader manages the subject satisfactorily by monitoring the standards that pupils attain and analysing test data to identify areas for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored but there are few in-depth analyses of the work that pupils' produce across the school. As a result the impact of the co-ordinators' role in improving standards is limited.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. There is little evidence of planned opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to practise numeracy skills across the curriculum and this is unsatisfactory. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 use basic numeracy skills well when recording data resulting from experiments in science and when measuring dimensions during model making sessions in design and technology. They use coordinates during mapwork in geography and study time lines in history that help them to calculate, for example, how many years ago the Aztec civilisation flourished. Opportunities are missed to link the use of computers with mathematics to handle data resulting from work in science or surveys in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have high expectations of pupils' performance and ensure that all achieve well.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and there are examples of exemplary marking in Years 5 and 6 that support pupils' learning well.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' performance in Years 1 and 2 are too low and this leads to underachievement.
- Throughout the school, there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and to apply the skills they have learned.
- There is little evidence of the use of computers to support learning.

Commentary

64. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory, so that standards are below average and pupils are underachieving. Work is recorded in a general workbook alongside other curriculum subjects and this makes it difficult for both teachers and pupils to track progress and evaluate achievement. Standards of presentation are unsatisfactory and much work is incomplete. There is little evidence to suggest that work has been planned to meet the varying learning needs of the pupils, consequently more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and less able pupils sometimes find the work difficult to complete. Examination of samples of pupils' work indicates teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to investigate materials and processes first hand. This was confirmed in a lesson for pupils in a Year 1/2 class on natural and man-made materials that relied too much on the teacher's explanations rather than pupils' investigations.
65. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good and pupils, both boys and girls, achieve well and attain above average standards. Work samples from Years 5 and 6 show some very good explanations of the outcomes of experiments and work is presented neatly with due regard to the importance of accuracy and method. Teachers' marking is clearly focused on raising standards further. For example in one book the teacher wrote, 'In the apparatus section, you actually need to list exactly what we used.' Lesson observations indicate that teachers in Years 3 to 6 have a secure subject knowledge and this is reflected in the way that the subject is presented. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils throughout the school have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in meaningful situations. Most experiments recorded share a similar method and, although data may vary, work, especially for older, more able pupils, lacks the originality that reflects their scientific thinking. There is little evidence to show that computers have been used to support the learning, especially to help with the handling of data.
66. The subject leader organises many aspects of the subject well - ordering resources, supporting colleagues and attending relevant training. However, there is no explicit focus on taking determined action to raise standards across the school. She is aware that standards in Year 2 need to improve and is now making plans to identify what action needs to be taken to address the problem.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The brand new, air-conditioned, computer suite places the school in a very strong position to develop the use of ICT further.
- The ICT co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has a clear vision for improvement and the knowledge and understanding to support her colleagues well.

- Although teachers have been trained, several teachers lack confidence in the use of computers.
 - Computers are not used enough to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
67. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be average by the end of Year 2 and below average by end of Year 6. Standards by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6 are now average. As national expectations are now higher than at the time of the last inspection this represents a significant improvement. Nevertheless the computers were, until very recently, unreliable and prevented pupils from gaining full access to the curriculum. Consequently achievement has been unsatisfactory. With the installation of the new suite technical problems have now been resolved and therefore a barrier to raising achievement has been removed.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers are getting used to teaching in the new computer room and have succeeded in establishing consistent routines for managing the use of the suite. In a very good lesson, the teacher's confidence and enthusiasm were infectious and the pupils exclaimed in wonder as she demonstrated her skills and scanned pictures from their shared text onto the computerised whiteboard. She had high expectations of pupils' performance, maintained a brisk pace and challenged one Year 2 group, all listed on the school's gifted and talented register, to type out sentences with interesting adjectives related to events in the story. In other lessons observed the pace was slower and teachers were less confident but nevertheless most did succeed in using computers satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects, particularly English and history. All used the computerised whiteboard to support the lessons but they have not yet explored the full potential of this equipment. The use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is an aspect of the subject that the school recognises needs to develop further. The lessons observed indicate that a good start has been made to improving this aspect of the subject.
69. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. She is intent on improving the use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum, has prioritised needs and drawn up a plan to implement them. She has started to monitor teaching and learning both through the scrutiny of teachers' planning and assessments of pupils' work. However, plans indicate that there are insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to observe, work alongside and support teachers as they adjust to the new routines that will be used in the new computer suite.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Computers are used satisfactorily for research purposes but there are too few planned opportunities to use computers systematically to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. The new computer suite is used well but it has not been established for long enough to have had a major impact on pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

71. Four history lessons, one geography lesson and two lessons in religious education were observed. A great deal of pupils' work over the past school year was analysed in all three subjects. Teachers' plans were studied and discussions with subject leaders confirmed that good planning frameworks are now in place and that standards since the time of the last inspection have improved in each of the subjects.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very keen on the subject and ask questions to develop their own learning.
- The school brings teaching alive with drama such as the Victorian day and through well-planned visits that enrich the curriculum.
- A unit of work written by staff in the school enhances the historical learning of pupils in Years 5 and 6 who learn about the development of another culture, the Aztecs, and begin to relate this to historical development in their own society.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6 attain standards that are above average. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 organised a time line with some teacher support and offered reasons why the Vikings wanted to invade. They asked questions to develop their knowledge about the Viking warrior and gave reasons for Vikings doing various jobs. They do not yet use the Internet in school to research the topic but are motivated to do this at home. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gather their own information and begin to offer their own interpretations for events. In a discussion with pupils from Years 3 to 6, all the pupils liked the way that history was taught – teachers make it fun, use artefacts and good resources and explain events and periods in ways that pupils can understand.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Drama is used well to stimulate interest and make the subject come alive. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spent a day dressed as Victorian scholars and the teachers taught in the manner of strict Victorian teachers. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed good background knowledge of the period, which enabled them to play convincingly in character. Teachers assumed their roles expertly as they taught one large class in ranks of single desks. There was a strict regime as they learned their tables, practised copperplate writing, studied a map of the British Empire, took part in an object lesson on 'The Potato' and answered questions on their knowledge of the Bible. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 appreciated their history day at Colchester Castle and were able to recount many details about things they had learned including what was worn, how knights fought and how beheadings were done.
74. The school has planned a good unit of work on the Aztecs that is greatly appreciated by the Year 5 and 6 pupils who achieve a good standard in their recorded work on the topic. Pupils could recount their learning from the day with the visiting group of South Americans, during which they cooked, traded goods, played instruments and learned games to play in the Aztec way. They make links with their own society as they look at social structures in each of the cultures.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has audited plans and resources and given staff guidance on the progression of skills in the subject. She has begun to monitor teaching and learning but this has not yet extended to all year groups.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn geographical vocabulary very well and can explain meanings.
- The school makes good use of environmental resources to make the subject relevant and meaningful to pupils.
- The subject co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to give staff guidance on the progressions of skills in the subject but she has begun to monitor teaching.

Commentary

76. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils attain standards that are broadly average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 know the properties of clay and chalk and can explain the erosion of the land as a result of sea tides. They can give examples of deposition and transportation. Very good teacher questioning develops the pupils' thinking about the effect of the wind on water power. Higher ability pupils begin to investigate and understand hydraulic action, attrition and corrosion, and can explain these to the rest of the class using pupils to demonstrate the movements. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use appropriate vocabulary including compass points and pupils in reception and Year 1 learn the words and meanings of land features on the way to and at the local river estuary.
77. Teaching and learning are sound. Teaching combines elements of history and geography for pupils in Years 1 and 2 as they consider the local Top Barn Lane and other parts of their town in the present and the past. They can offer reasons for the grass up the middle of the Lane and why its use has changed and can suggest how people travelled around the area. Year 3 and 4 pupils use their own homes and the school to develop their mapping skills. Year 5 and 6 pupils use the same location in order to draw bird's eye view plans and log land and water features. It was not possible to talk to Year 6 pupils about their residential visit to Preston Montford, but a good range of the previous Year 6 pupils' work from the visit was seen including geography work about the effects of water flow on the material in the stream and history work at Blists' Hill. Year 5 pupils have already developed their knowledge about the area through listening to Year 6 presentations about the visit. Some higher ability Year 3 to 6 pupils have not had the opportunity, and would appreciate being able, to use the Internet to research areas linked to their own travel and interests. Opportunities for pupils of all ages to use a digital camera so that they can record and consider features and routes are infrequent.
78. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management. She has audited plans and resources and given staff guidance on the progression of skills in the subject. She has begun to monitor teaching and learning but this has not yet extended to all year groups.

Religious Education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to consider how their learning relates to their own beliefs.

Commentary

79. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6 most attain standards that are broadly average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about many aspects of religion. They write about Noah and think about why the rainbow was sent and why people laughed at Noah. They describe special meals and use their artwork to depict the elements of the Shabbat meal. With some adult support, they created a very beautiful textile coat of many colours for Joseph, adding a spiritual dimension to their studies. They retell the story of Adam and Eve and describe the days of Creation. In discussion with pupils from Years 3 to 6 and looking at samples of their work, pupils demonstrate that by the end of Year 6 they know that the Jews were treated badly by the Nazis because of their religion and they can describe Jewish ceremonies. Some pupils in Year 6 described the central beliefs of Judaism and some have thought about the promise and trust that a Covenant stands for. They recounted some key stories from Christianity and they considered what different people believe about the stories. They considered some aspects

of their learning in relation to their own feelings, for example when they consider persecution and ways that pupils can experience bullying.

80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as are leadership and management of the subject leader. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 believe that the two key purposes of religion are to make them interested in and to help them respect other religions. As the school's policy has as its core aim to 'develop the children's ability to consider sensitively and respect the beliefs and customs of others', this aspect of the work is very successful. However, pupils are much less sure about analysing their beliefs or their actions in the light of what they learn from other religions. Planning in the subject shows a lack of emphasis on this aspect.
81. Pupils listened spellbound to the assembly story told by the subject leader about King Solomon. They learned the story and they thought about and discussed the right to respect, to work and to be safe and were led to see the connections with the school rules. Another assembly developed work from class lessons when pupils considered what they could do to counteract bitter actions and feelings. This gives pupils a positive way to put one of the key aims of the school into practice.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. Two lessons in design and technology and one in art and design were observed. A great deal of artwork and work pupils have produced in design and technology was studied along with photographic evidence. Discussions with subject leaders confirmed that the subjects are well established in the school's curriculum and standards are now much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection when the full national Curriculum programs of study were not taught in sufficient depth and standards were below average. In physical Education, two games lessons were observed and the provision and attainment for swimming discussed. Both the provision for games and the standards attained are satisfactory but there was insufficient evidence available to make judgements about the other strands of the subject, such as gymnastics and dance. The teaching observed was satisfactory.

Art and design

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are introduced to a wide range of skills.
 - Teachers' expectations of the quality of work that pupils are capable of achieving are not always high enough so standards are not as high as they could be.
 - Computers are not used systematically to support teaching and learning.
83. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain average standards. They enjoy art and design activities. The standard of work they produce is mostly average although there are examples of work that are of a high standard. They have a sound knowledge of the work of different artists and craftspeople. Watercolours produced by pupils in Years 5 and 6 that were inspired by the work of J S Lowry were of a high standard. These showed that pupils have a good understanding of how to draw lines that converge on a vanishing point to provide perspective and depth to their paintings.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. An analysis of pupils' work, including their sketchbooks, indicates that skills are not always taught sequentially in order to develop expertise cumulatively. The sketchbooks often include work of poor quality, which indicates that teachers' expectations are not always high enough. There is very little evidence of computers being used systematically so that pupils build up a well-developed skill base so that work of quality can be produced.

85. Across the school pupils paint bold self-portraits and many are good at knowing which colours to mix in order to achieve a particular effect. Last year an artist in residence gave a great impetus to the development of the subject. As a result a good range of three-dimensional work was created in each year group. Pupils with particular talents were identified and they were provided with extra tuition in order to satisfy their learning needs. An art club extends learning opportunities well. A visiting Japanese artist added to pupils' experiences but there is little evidence of the planned introduction of art and design from different cultures. The subject leader provides sound leadership and has good plans for further improvements.

Design and technology

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain standards that are above average because skills are taught in a step-by-step sequence and teachers pay great attention to detail.
 - The sequence of design, make, evaluate and improve is well established.
86. Across the school standards are above average. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 have produced a good amount of work that has been produced with great attention to detail such that the quality is above average. The processes that lead to a finished article are meticulously described in displays of pupils work that include headings such as, 'Brief', 'Specification', 'Research', 'Initial ideas', 'Working drawing', 'Design Sheet', 'Materials and equipment', 'Step-by-step plans', 'Evaluation'. This process has been followed to make bedroom slippers as well as wall clocks that all show an exceptionally high quality of finish.
87. Teaching and learning are good so that pupils achieve well. The subject leader provides good leadership and promotes high standards. A very good initiative involves pupils in Year 6 in preparing a meal for themselves in groups of six to which they have to invite a guest. Here they have to work to a set budget, plan the meal, visit the local supermarket to purchase ingredients, prepare a menu, invite the guest and prepare and present the meal. This exercise involves practical work in numeracy, the use of computers to prepare menus and invitations, social skills as well as cooking skills. This represents work of high quality. Food technology is well established in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have made bread to their own designs. The evaluations, that consolidate writing skills well, are often telling, ' My bread did not fit the specification. It was dry and didn't have lots of chocolate. If my bread were made again, I wouldn't put cocoa powder in it – I think it would taste better with chocolate chips'.
88. Good foundations are laid in Years 1 and 2 and pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Techniques are taught systematically and so pupils develop a good range of skills. The scrutiny of work revealed that the good teaching in this subject results from great attention to detail and helps pupils to produce work of high quality.

Music

Provision is **satisfactory** overall and for singing it is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiasm, skill and expertise of the subject leader places the school in a good position to develop this subject further.
 - The school choir sings well in unison and pupils enjoy performing in school productions.
 - There are good opportunities to learn to play a range of instruments.
89. Teaching overall is satisfactory and the work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are broadly average. However, one of the strengths of the school, as confirmed by

parents, is the musical productions that are organised, such as the recent production of 'Annie' in which every pupil in the school participated. The subject leader leads well both by example in her teaching and in her leadership of the subject. In the very recent past she has written and adapted a scheme of work and she organises and leads the large school choir. This consists of approximately eighty boys and girls. They sing very well and regularly take part in both school productions and in events in the local community. She has ensured that a good range of resources is available to support staff including instruments from other cultures such as 'rain sticks' and bongo drums. She has identified the need to extend the range of keyboards for pupils to use. Visiting teachers teach pupils the guitar, woodwind and brass instruments and they also have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder.

90. One lesson encouraged pupils to focus and listen well as they changed rhythm patterns whilst maintaining a steady beat. Good links with other subjects are made as, for example, in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills when pupils in Year 6 listened well and described with clarity their interpretation of the lyrics. One very successful aspect of the lesson was the opportunity given to a gifted pupil to both accompany the pupils when they were singing and to play a solo before the end of the lesson, giving audience to his talents.

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	2
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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