

INSPECTION REPORT

DODDINGHURST CE VC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Doddinghurst, Brentwood

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115124

Headteacher: Ms Marilyn Hillier

Lead inspector: Mrs A.J.Pangbourne

Dates of inspection: 1st - 3rd March 2004

Inspection number: 255979

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 7-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 230

School address: Church Lane
Doddinghurst
Brentwood
Essex
Postcode: CM15 0NJ

Telephone number: 01277 821064
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Smith

Date of previous inspection: April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Doddinghurst CE VC Junior School draws most of its pupils from the village itself, but a few live in outlying villages. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are mostly favourable. Pupils' attainments on entry are above average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority heritages and none speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, there were 230 pupils on roll. There were 42 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to autism. No pupils had a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23818	Alison Pangbourne	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History
13481	Douglas Binfield	Lay inspector	
11353	Janet May	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious education Physical education
17757	Judith Willis	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness** is **good** and it gives good value for money. Pupils enter the school with above average standards overall. This year, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for these pupils because they had a lot of catching up to do due to weaknesses in provision identified at the time of the previous inspection. National strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the programmes of study for the National Curriculum were only introduced on the appointment of the headteacher just over two years ago. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are likely to be higher for the other year groups and standards are rising as the impact of these strategies takes effect. All pupils achieve well and the quality of teaching is good. The school is very well led and the good improvement since the previous inspection means that this is no longer an underachieving school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is very good leadership by the headteacher and senior staff and a shared commitment to continual improvement.
- There is still more to be done to raise standards in writing for boys.
- The specific teaching and development of scientific skills needs further improvement to raise standards further.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very good and, as a result, they show very good attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The curriculum is good and effective links are made between different subjects.
- The school has worked hard to develop very good assessment procedures and consequently tasks are well matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Despite the school's best efforts, a minority of pupils is frequently late for school.

Overall, the school's improvement since the last inspection is good. It is more effective now. Standards have risen in English and there has been a steady increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Achievement, which was unsatisfactory, is now good. There is more good and very good teaching, and all the key issues have been successfully addressed. Assessment, which was unsatisfactory, is now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	B	B	D
Mathematics	B	B	A	C
Science	D	C	B	D

*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.*

Achievement is **good** overall. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. However, average attaining boys do not do as well as girls in writing. Standards are average in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE). All pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve well. Standards in mathematics are not as high this year as last year because there are more pupils with special educational needs, particularly in mathematics, in the year group and although more pupils are on course to reach the higher Level 5, there are likely to be more pupils at lower levels and this affects the overall grade. Last year, pupils did not do well in comparison with similar schools because that year group had even more catching up to do.

Pupils' personal qualities are **good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **good** overall. Attendance is good, but punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. Good teaching was seen in all classes. In the best lessons, very clear explanations, high expectations and brisk pace encourage pupils to work hard and to work very well in groups. Teachers manage their pupils very well and use questions very effectively. Good assessment means that tasks are well matched to the needs of all pupils and, as a result, they learn well. The way that pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in 'sets' according to their level of attainment for mathematics and for English in Year 6 contributes to this. The specific teaching of scientific skills is underdeveloped. Pupils have good opportunities to indicate how much they have learned in each lesson.

The curriculum is good and literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed well in other subjects. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils are well challenged. The school provides very well for pupils' pastoral needs and links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good. Management is good.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and this is a key factor leading to the good improvement since the last inspection. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. Very good leadership is also provided by the middle management team who leads and supports the subject leaders, several of whom are new to the school or their subjects. The way in which they are all enabled to monitor standards and teaching contributes to the good quality of teaching seen during the inspection and to the rising standards. The budget is carefully managed to allow for improvements to the building and resources. The work of the governing body is very good. They have a very thorough understanding of strengths and areas for development and have very carefully monitored the school's progress. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are pleased with the work of the school. They particularly like the way that their children are expected to work hard and that they are treated fairly. The inspection team agrees with their positive views. Some parents felt that they could be provided with more information about their children's progress. However, the team judges that the information provided is very good. Pupils like everything about their school. They like getting help when they are stuck, that teachers are fair and listen to their ideas, and that they are trusted to work on their own. The inspection team agrees with them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue with the planned developments to raise standards in writing for boys.
- Further improve the specific teaching and development of scientific skills.
- Take steps to improve punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

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

Achievement is good overall. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection and all pupils are achieving well.
- The effect of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is impacting positively on standards in English and mathematics and standards are rising as pupils move through the school.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in National Curriculum tests is increasing each year.
- Standards in writing for average attaining boys are not as high as those for girls.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Most children enter the school with broadly above average levels of attainment and they achieve well in all subjects because of the good teaching which challenges them to do their best. The oldest pupils have missed parts of the National Curriculum programmes of study and have not benefited from the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy for all their time in the school, because these were only implemented when the headteacher was appointed just over two years ago. As a result, they have had a lot of catching up to do to compensate for what they have missed and this affects standards. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising in all subjects as pupils further down the school benefit from the effect of the strategies, the programmes of study and the good teaching.

The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (28.3)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.4 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.7(29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 76 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The 2003 results were above average for English and science and well above average for mathematics. Standards are similar this year in English and science. They are a little lower in mathematics because this year group includes a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs relating to mathematics. More pupils are now on course to reach the higher Level 5, but it is the number of pupils at the lower levels that affects the overall average points

score. There is a steady improvement in the number of pupils reaching Level 5 in English, mathematics and science each year due to the good quality of the teaching and the way in which the needs of higher attaining pupils are now met.

3. National data indicates that boys do not do as well as girls in writing and this applies to this school. However, the school has rightly identified that raising standards for boys, particularly those of average attainment, would help to raise standards overall and has begun to implement effective initiatives to do this.
4. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. Their work is modified carefully and their needs are swiftly identified and targets drawn up that are known and understood by all. Support assistants provide good quality support, particularly when programmes are tailored carefully to the needs of individuals. Pupils are helped with any specific activities covered during the week that they feel less confident about and this helps them to gain ground in order to learn more effectively with the rest of the class. This contributes positively to their achievement.
5. There are several reasons why achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection. As well as the implementation of the recommended strategies, the school provides a rich curriculum that stimulates the pupils, the quality of teaching is good and good assessment has been introduced to ensure that the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers, those of very high attainment and those with special educational needs, are met. Very thorough monitoring means that areas of weakness are quickly identified and addressed. Good emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects also contributes to rising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is good, but punctuality is unsatisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning in most lessons contribute positively to their good achievement. The school ethos effectively develops pupils' self-esteem and promotes in them a desire to learn.
- Behaviour is very good because the school sets high expectations and effectively develops pupils' understanding of appropriate standards of behaviour.
- Pupils form very good relationships with adults and other pupils and work well both collaboratively and independently.
- The school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and they respond very well, displaying confidence and enthusiasm.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very good because of the strong emphasis placed by the school on these areas of personal development. Spiritual and cultural development is good.
- A minority of pupils are persistently late for school, despite the school's best efforts to improve punctuality.

Commentary

6. Pupils concentrate very well and are eager to respond to teachers' well-focused questions and to contribute ideas and suggestions. Teachers actively promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem through celebrating their achievements and involving them in evaluating their own learning. As a result, pupils are keen to learn, confident in their own abilities and they achieve well.
7. Standards of behaviour are very good in the classrooms and around the school, including at break and at lunchtime. Pupils' very good moral development is effectively promoted by the very high expectations of behaviour set by all staff. Pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of

their actions on others and to understand the difference between right and wrong and why some behaviour is unacceptable. A regular assembly celebrates examples of good behaviour and there are clear procedures to deal with misbehaviour.

8. Pupils develop their own classroom rules with their teacher and have input into the development and implementation of school rules and policy through the School Council. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility for their own actions, which effectively encourages very high standards of behaviour and discourages aggressive behaviour and harassment. There were two exclusions in the previous academic year for pupils who have since left the school, and there have been none to date this year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	65	2	
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	165	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. A strong emphasis is placed on personal development. Pupils form very good relationships and work well together, supporting each other in their learning and celebrating each other's achievements. They are encouraged to respect the feelings of others. For example, during the inspection, assemblies focused on the theme of friendship and pupils considered what they could do to be a good friend and reflected on memories of friendships. *Worry boxes* and *beefs and bouquets* sessions give pupils the opportunity to voice their concerns and to express their appreciation for positive support or friendship.
10. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and carry them out sensibly with confidence and enthusiasm. The School Council has recently been re-established and representatives from all classes attend and report back. Older pupils chair the meeting and take minutes, but all contribute suggestions. Prefects organise the recorded music and the overhead projector in assemblies, deliver registers and help to organise the rota for lunch. Teachers encourage independent working in the classroom and pupils accept increasing responsibility as they move through the school, demonstrating developing maturity.
11. Music, art and design and RE provide good opportunities for pupils to study other cultures and faiths and compare them with their own. For example, pupils have visited a Hindu temple and Year 4 pupils are currently studying the Jewish festival of *Pesach, the Passover*. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon and appreciate art and aesthetics in different forms. For example, Year 5 pupils considered the beauty of the descriptive language in Tennyson's poem, *The Lady of Shalott*, and demonstrated care for the environment and recognised that it is being destroyed by pollution. Assemblies, RE and *Circle Times* effectively encourage pupils to value and respect the beliefs and feelings of others.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

12. Attendance levels were satisfactory last year. In the current school year attendance has exceeded 96 per cent and there has been no unauthorised absence. Attendance is now good. The improvement reflects the very successful monitoring and follow up systems that are in place together with the close co-operation with the education welfare officer. A minority of pupils arrives late each morning and this seriously interrupts learning. Strenuous efforts have been made to ensure that the parents concerned fully understand the importance of good time-keeping so that all classes can make a prompt start each day. Some improvement in punctuality has occurred in recent weeks.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Good teaching enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning. The good curriculum is enriched well by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are cared for very well and links with parents are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects where judgements could be made. Assessment of pupils' work is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very clear explanations, brisk pace and high expectations mean that pupils make good gains in their learning.
- Teachers manage their pupils very well and, as a result, pupils work very well independently and collaboratively.
- The way in which pupils are taught mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6 and English in Year 6 contributes positively to standards.
- Many teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection and the good quality of teaching seen by all teachers in all classes during the inspection contributes strongly to the improved achievement and rising standards.
- Very good assessment procedures have been developed since the previous inspection.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	6 (19%)	22 (69%)	2 (6%)	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.

The excellent lessons, in mathematics and ICT for pupils in Year 5, are described in the subject sections.

13. Strong features of the teaching seen in all classes during the inspection include the way that teachers ensure that pupils have understood before moving on, make sure that no time is wasted and set tasks that challenge all pupils according to their level of attainment. The pupils know that they are expected to work hard and they rise to the challenge, showing an eagerness to learn. For example, in a very good English lesson for higher attaining pupils in Year 6, they were engrossed in their work and showed a good understanding of discursive texts, because the teacher had prepared the lesson very well and made sure that they knew what was expected of them. In a good mathematics lesson, for pupils in Year 3, a well chosen activity, supported by challenging questions, meant that pupils learned that some numbers can be multiples of three and four.

14. To ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of all pupils, they are taught mathematics in sets according to their level of attainment from across the classes in the year groups in Years 4, 5 and 6. This means that high and very high attaining pupils can be well challenged, while those of lower attainment can receive extra support when necessary. This very effective organisation has recently been extended to English for pupils in Year 6 and is contributing positively to rising standards.
15. Numerous examples were seen where pupils worked independently in pairs or small groups. The very good way in which teachers manage their pupils means that pupils can be trusted to work independently while the teacher supports other groups. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils worked together to discuss what should be included in their poster to depict the features of a mountain range, before helping each other to find the necessary information in brochures or on the Internet. In a history lesson for pupils in Year 4, they worked very well in small groups to sort statements about Athens and Sparta, allocating tasks between them.
16. All teachers share the same high expectations and consistent practice, such as the sharing of what pupils are going to learn and the opportunities for pupils to say what they have understood at the end of the lesson. This means that pupils have similar experiences if they change teachers for English or mathematics.
17. The school has recently put in place very good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress throughout the school and to set targets that are both realistic and challenging. Data from end of year tests in English and mathematics is analysed effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning in order to improve achievement. Science and the foundation subjects are assessed at the end of each unit of work against identified outcomes and the assessments are used well to inform future planning. Teachers use ongoing assessment well to identify the next stages in learning for pupils of differing levels of attainment and to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. The school is aware of the need to develop an effective system of individual target setting, marking and feedback, based on individual needs, to make clear to pupils how they can improve their work.

The curriculum

The school ensures all pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities. These are enriched by a good variety of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation and resources provided for pupils are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of stimulating and challenging activities is well matched to pupils' needs and increases their confidence and self-esteem.
- Planning is good with effective links made between different subjects.
- Support staff contribute significantly to the quality of the curriculum.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is challenging, interesting and well balanced. Significant improvement has been made. The requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and all other subjects closely follow national guidance. The headteacher's leadership of the curriculum and the structure of curricular planning ensure that appropriate time is given to all subjects. The management of subjects by many of the subject leaders has also contributed to the good quality links across the curriculum. These links between subjects have provided increased relevance for pupils' learning. In their planning, teachers recognise the different levels of attainment within their classes to provide challenging tasks for all pupils. Curricular links with

the local secondary school are developing well to enhance the pupils' learning, in particular in mathematics, English and ICT. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and, as a result, their needs are well met.

19. All classroom assistants are well trained and take on significant responsibility for supporting and teaching small groups. As a result, the achievement of pupils with whom they work is good. They contribute effectively to planning and make suitable assessments of progress. The quality of mutual respect and co-operative working between class teachers and assistants is high.
20. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, art and design and music. Older pupils have regular opportunities to be engaged in competitive sports and their achievements are celebrated. Exciting visits are carefully planned to support learning in a number of subjects. Visitors share their expertise, for example, in art and design and drama, contributing positively to the standards attained. All these opportunities enrich pupils' experiences and extend their learning. The curriculum is well organised to develop the pupils' skills systematically. It is designed to include all pupils fully regardless of their individual differences or backgrounds.

Care, guidance and support

Very good provision is made for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Effective monitoring arrangements ensure that each pupil is given good advice to support academic achievement and personal development. Very good arrangements are in place for seeking and considering pupils' views and suggestions about the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very strong emphasis is placed on pastoral support and pupils' well being.
- Pupils achieve well because their progress is well monitored.
- Pupils' views are valued and contribute to the decision making process.

Commentary

21. Governors and senior staff place a very strong emphasis on health and safety considerations, including regular inspections and risk assessments. Child protection issues are handled sensitively and are helped by the effective staff training that has recently taken place. Replies to the inspection questionnaires indicate that pupils feel that they are treated fairly and supported well in school. Parents endorse this view.
22. Pupils joining the school are warmly welcomed and settle in quickly, reflecting the close co-operation with the infant school. A positive feature is the way that pupils from the final year in the infant school visit the school with their parents while the school is in session. This prepares them well for when they join the school. Teachers and other staff know the pupils well. Effective assessment ensures that teachers track the progress of all pupils well in order to meet their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and, as a result, they achieve well. Their individual education plans are good and they are reviewed regularly. Parents and pupils are fully involved in this process and contribute to the targets. The targets are clear and are a useful tool to measure progress. Personal development is closely monitored and recorded. In the very small number of instances where difficulties arise, an adult mentor provides special assistance to the pupils concerned.
23. Over the last two years steps have been taken to listen to pupils' views about the school. They are able to raise any concerns during general class discussions; by confiding in a member of staff or through the *Worry Box* system. In recent months, a new School Council has been elected by the pupils in each class. An extremely successful meeting of the Council was held during the inspection. Pupils contributed responsibly to the discussion about suggestions from some classes for possible improvements to school facilities and to after school social and

recreational activities. They showed a good understanding about the need to take into account practical and financial considerations for some of the suggestions put forward.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships arrangements with parents are very good and make an important contribution to the life of the school. Good links with other schools and the community contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental involvement and support is extensive and influential.
- Very good information and advice is provided about standards and progress.
- There is good liaison with the village community and nearby schools.

Commentary

24. The relationships with parents have greatly improved since the last inspection. Parents provide voluntary help in classes, with school trips and educational visits. School concerts, curricular meetings and coffee mornings are well attended. Parents' views about the school are carefully considered, often through the successful Parents' Forum. For example, constructive consultations have taken place about safety outside the main entrance, a sex and relationships policy and about homework arrangements. The keen interest that parents show in their child's learning and the good support for work undertaken at home make an important contribution to the standards attained. The social and fund raising activities organised by the Friends Association are very well supported. Donations from the Association have helped to finance resources such as a new reading scheme and overhead projectors in classrooms.
25. Very good advice is given to parents about their child's progress at the meetings with teachers that are held each term. The annual written reports are of a high quality and give clear guidance about achievements and areas for development. There are ready opportunities for parents to raise any suggestions or concerns by informal discussions with staff. Helpful information about the school and its activities are set out in the prospectus and in regular newsletters. A recent innovation is the publication of a transition booklet advising parents about arrangements for the transfer of pupils from the infant school. The governor's annual report has an attractive format and provides an excellent account of the work of the governing body and the school's achievements.
26. There is very good co-operation between governors and staff of the infant and junior schools including collaboration on curricular issues, site management and induction procedures. The school has developed closer relationships with secondary schools in Brentwood, including good liaison about the transfer of pupils at age eleven. Contacts with several senior schools have included support for the special science week, as well as providing opportunities for Year 6 pupils to extend their knowledge in mathematics, science and ICT.
27. Representatives of the local churches speak at school assemblies and present awards for showing kindness and being caring. Pupils celebrate special festivals in the church with some pupils giving readings during services. The school regularly contributes to the village magazine. Local residents and representatives of village societies visit the school and give talks about their experiences and particular expertise to enrich pupils' learning. The curriculum includes visits and presentations by *The Quantum Theatre Group*, charitable organisations and other specialists, such as fire and road safety officers. All these opportunities contribute positively to the pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher and senior staff provide very effective leadership. The leadership of the subject leaders is good. Management is good and governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed to continual improvement and has led the school forward very successfully since the previous inspection.
- The middle management team work very effectively to enable the subject leaders to fulfil their management roles well.
- The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use their own expertise very effectively.
- Finances are well managed and the school evaluates its spending carefully.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is good and this contributes positively to the rising standards.

Commentary

28. The headteacher provides very strong and caring leadership, supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, and the commitment she shows to raising standards in all aspects of the school's work has contributed to the steady improvement since the previous inspection. Since her appointment just over two years ago, she has worked hard to address the many weaknesses evident then. For example, pupils now follow the National Curriculum programmes of study, national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced, very thorough assessment procedures have been developed, pupils' progress is monitored well, and an effective structure for the management of the school has been introduced. As a result, the school is improving quickly, standards are higher further down the school and older pupils are catching up their backlog of underachievement well. This represents good achievement for all pupils.
29. The middle management team supports the subject leaders very effectively. Several are new to the school or to their subjects due to the high turnover of staff since the previous inspection. The middle management team guides the subject leaders, preparing timetables for monitoring and work sampling. A structured programme to enable them to fulfil their management roles is in place and this means that all leaders, including the teacher with responsibility for gifted and talented pupils, have good opportunities to monitor standards and teaching. The middle management team leader is part of the senior management team and all staff work closely as a team. All staff share a commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of background or level of attainment.
30. The governors are also part of the team. They play a very strong role in the development of the school and closely liaise with the subject leaders as they each have responsibility for a subject. They provide support according to their own areas of expertise. One of the governors, for example, has closely analysed where the school was at the time of the previous inspection, where it is now and what needs to be improved. This meant that the school had already identified the areas for improvement identified by the inspection team. The governors manage the budget carefully to ensure the best quality of provision for the pupils. For example, the proportion of the budget carried forward last year has been appropriately used to provide a computer suite, to improve the entrance to the school and to improve resources.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	605945
Total expenditure	570353
Expenditure per pupil	2177

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26631
Balance carried forward to the next	62223

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening by the end of Year 6.
- Writing skills of average attaining boys are improving more slowly than girls.
- Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, achievement is good throughout the school and standards are rising. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Assessment is good, and work is matched well to the pupils' needs.
- Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects.

Commentary

31. There are several reasons for the good improvement since the previous inspection and the rising standards. Pupils' reading skills are a strength and make a good contribution to the standards attained in English overall. A recent initiative to enable the Year 6 classes to be organised efficiently to allow pupils to be taught in groups of similar levels of attainment from across the classes is having a positive effect on the standards attained. The work set for all pupils, including the small number of pupils of very high attainment and those with special educational needs, is challenging. As a result, all pupils are making good progress with their learning and more pupils are reaching the higher Level 5 each year.
32. The teaching staff work effectively as a team and they know their pupils very well. They provide good role models through their good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm. All teachers plan their work systematically, following the National Literacy Strategy, and take good account of the assessed levels at which pupils should be working. A good feature in all lessons seen was the way teachers shared the learning intention at the start of the lesson. Consequently, the pupils knew what they were expected to learn and settled quickly to work. A key feature in all lessons was the way pupils were encouraged to answer challenging questions and develop understanding. Some very good teaching was observed. In a very good lesson in Year 6, a well-constructed writing guide, setting out arguments for and against zoos, was effectively used to structure their own ideas about zoos and present these convincingly. The exercise was greatly helped by the thought provoking questioning used by the teacher to extend and develop the pupils' own ideas.
33. Assessment has improved since the last inspection. The school is using the information available to them well to set appropriate learning targets and identify areas for improvement. Effective strategies have been put in place to improve the standards of boys' writing and these are beginning to take effect. For example, test papers have been analysed to identify areas of weakness, training has been arranged for staff and samples of writing are assessed regularly. Teaching assistants are well trained and well deployed to support the strategies. They know the pupils well and are confident when working with small groups. However, marking is variable and does not always tell pupils how to improve their work. A more consistent approach to marking could help boys, in particular, to improve their writing.
34. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. Monitoring of teaching has been effective in ensuring that a good curriculum is in place and that the National Literacy Strategy is effectively implemented. Interesting books have been purchased to assist boys' progress. The subject leader has also identified further improvements for future implementation.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

35. Literacy has been well developed through pupils using their writing skills to support work in other subjects. In history, pupils write about historical events such as the rise of Hitler's Germany. In RE, pupils write about Jesus the good shepherd and the sufferings of the Jews in the last world war. In science, pupils record the results of their investigations. Word-processing skills are well developed in ICT. By the end of Year 6, pupils use their literacy skills well to record work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently good and, as a result, achievement is good. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards are rising steadily with more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 by the time they leave the school.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection because the needs of all pupils are well met through the setting arrangements, where pupils of similar levels of attainment from across the classes are taught together.
- The subject is well led and managed and progress is carefully monitored.
- Numeracy skills are developed well in other subjects.

Commentary

36. There are several reasons why achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection and standards are rising. The good quality of teaching contributes to this. Almost all lessons seen were good, with one lesson being excellent. A strong feature of the teaching is the way that teachers clearly explain what pupils are learning and check their understanding. For example, in a lesson for Year 6 pupils on probability, the teacher used their sentences to illustrate terms such as *unlikely*, *certain* and *impossible* to teach them that probability is about future events. They quickly understood the meaning of *equally likely* through the teacher's explanation.

Example of outstanding practice

Teaching in Year 5 was outstanding. It was characterised by the imaginative use of resources and very high expectations of what pupils could achieve.

The teacher's enthusiasm and pace and the well-planned variety of activities about vertical and horizontal reflective symmetry, using grids, captured pupils' interest from the start and they were eager to tackle the challenging tasks. Exceptionally clear explanations and demonstrations, presented in small steps, developed pupils' confidence and all made excellent progress in their understanding. Lower attaining pupils were given very good support by the teaching assistant. Teaching strategies were excellent, including the use of overhead transparencies that could be folded along the line of symmetry to check accuracy. Very well focused questioning ensured that all were fully involved in the class sessions and paired work was well planned to allow pupils to work at levels appropriate to their attainment. They delighted in setting difficult patterns for their partners to reflect on the grid. The climax of the lesson came with the transfer to the computer suite to continue their work using interactive software. After a brief but very clear demonstration, pupils set eagerly to work to produce complex reflective patterns. Higher attaining pupils moved on to use diagonal lines of symmetry. All pupils attained above average standards and achievement, building well on previous learning, was excellent.

37. The school has successfully introduced setting arrangements for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 to improve provision for all pupils, and particularly higher attaining pupils. This contributes

positively to the rising standards, particularly for the increasing number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Tasks are well planned to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met, according to their level of attainment. During the inspection, higher attaining pupils in Year 4 explained their strategies for solving calculations and were challenged to show their understanding of *cubed* numbers. This helped other pupils to understand new concepts. In Year 6, lower attaining pupils were helped to organise data to plot on a graph with very clear explanation ensuring that they understood.

38. The subject leader has worked hard to improve the way in which the subject is planned and to address the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. By closely monitoring the provision, including the monitoring of teaching, the subject leader has identified areas for improvement and taken action. For example, the setting arrangements have been extended to Year 4 recently and planning includes a stronger emphasis on investigative activities. These initiatives are contributing positively to the rising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

39. Numeracy is developed well in other subjects and contributes positively to the standards attained. For example, in science, pupils compile graphs about personal characteristics and record the results of their investigations in block, line and pie charts. Data handling skills are well developed in ICT to present information. In geography, pupils use bar charts to show the lengths of rivers. In design and technology, pupils use their tallying skills to count biscuits.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of scientific knowledge and understanding are good and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average overall.
- The teaching of scientific skills needs to be more focused to ensure that pupils reach the standards expected in this area by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

40. Pupils achieve well in their understanding of scientific ideas because of the good use of questioning, clear explanations and interesting activities planned for them. For example, Year 6 pupils showed good understanding of food relationships in a variety of habitats. They showed care and consideration for living things when they explored the local woodland, and were able to discuss predator/prey relationships and reasons why different animals were found in different habitats. Carefully focused questions and clear explanations helped pupils to make good progress in their understanding of how to represent food chains, beginning with a green plant as a producer. By the end of the lesson, all pupils were able to draw correct representations of food chains and to explain them to the rest of the class. Year 4 pupils made good progress in their understanding of electrical conductors and insulators because of the teacher's challenging questions and high expectations, attaining above average standards for their age.
41. Work in books indicates that pupils achieve well in all areas of scientific knowledge and understanding, and make good progress throughout the school. However, planning for the development of skills of scientific enquiry is not consistent and pupils do not achieve as well in this area. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to carry out investigations, but there is insufficient focus on the specific teaching of the skills needed to carry them out. Fair testing is well taught throughout the school and, in a good lesson seen, Year 5 pupils made good progress in their understanding of how to plan a fair test because of the well-planned activities,

clear explanations and focused questioning of the teacher. The teaching of other skills is less clearly focused, particularly the presentation, consideration and analysis of evidence collected and this impacts negatively on standards. Pupils can state what they found out in an investigation and higher attaining pupils attempt to give simple reasons to explain their data but, by Year 6, most pupils are not able to recognise patterns in data collected and make generalised statements from these. Their explanations of evidence are simple and not clearly related to the evidence or securely based on scientific knowledge and understanding. In some classes, pupils transfer data from a table to a graph or chart, using ICT data handling software, but there is not a clear progression in the teaching and learning of interpretation and presentation skills throughout the school.

42. The school has worked hard to improve the weaknesses in investigative skills identified in the previous inspection. The subject leader is very recently appointed and provides sound leadership and management. He is aware of the need to now develop the teaching and learning of scientific skills and to monitor the impact on pupils' achievement. He has already made a good start in monitoring teaching and learning and this contributes positively to the good quality of teaching seen during the inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of the subject leader is outstanding and sets an excellent role model for other staff.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good and, as a result, provision for the subject is continually improving.
- The subject is used effectively across the curriculum.

Commentary

43. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain average standards. Technical deficiencies and the insecure subject knowledge of staff at the time of the last inspection hindered progress for these pupils in previous years, but these issues have been successfully addressed and pupils' achievement is now good throughout the school and standards are rising. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.
44. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils work hard and try to do their best. Their explanations are very clear and questioning is used well to assess and consolidate learning. Work is very well planned to ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress throughout the school. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils developed their control skills well and made good progress in learning to write a set of instructions using a switch. Year 5 pupils made very good progress in learning to use the drawing toolbar in *Word* to rotate, reflect, re-size and overlap shapes. This related well to their work on reflective symmetry in mathematics.

Example of outstanding practice

The subject leader taught an excellent lesson on graphical modelling for pupils in Year 5.

Her enthusiasm, pace, very clear explanations and extremely effective questioning skills involved all pupils fully in their own learning. Consequently, pupils were eager to learn and explored the different options confidently, supporting each other and independently taking learning further. The structure of the lesson very effectively developed learning by introducing new skills in small but challenging steps and giving pupils the opportunity to explore and progress at their own rate, with excellent ongoing support given where needed. Learning was then consolidated in short whole-class sessions in which pupils were encouraged to celebrate what they could do and to explain how they did it. By the end of the lesson, pupils were enthusiastically attempting to produce a design using graphical images, based on *The Snail* by Henri Matisse. One pair produced an excellent scorpion by rotating, resizing and overlapping different shapes.

45. Improvement in leadership and management since the previous inspection is very good, resulting in improved achievement for all pupils. A good scheme of work and clear assessment procedures ensure that all areas of the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered and that pupils make good progress throughout the school. The subject leader monitors teaching and learning very effectively and supports staff well, so that all teachers have a good understanding of the subject and receive training on new initiatives as they are introduced.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

46. The new computer suite is very well used both to develop ICT skills and to apply them in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 use ICT confidently and effectively to support work in other subjects. For example, they produce good quality information leaflets about bacteria relating to their work in science and their literacy work on information texts and use the Internet well for research in history and word process their accounts of D Day. Year 4 pupils present their scientific data well in graphs and charts and a very good wall display presents the Jewish Zealots stand against the Romans in the form of a newspaper front page.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

47. In the Year 6 **geography** lesson seen, the teacher linked well to a numeracy lesson earlier in the day by asking the pupils to discuss the possible story of a line graph in relation to the weather. Pupils learned that the temperature drops by 0.5° for every 100 metres up a mountain due to the teacher's clear explanation. Pupils responded very well to the task, where they were asked to produce a labelled and annotated picture of a mountain range in a given season, some researching the Internet for information.
48. In the Year 4 **history** lesson seen, pupils worked well in groups to sort statements about life in Athens and Sparta, showing that they understood the differences in life in the two cities. This lesson linked well to a literacy activity, where pupils had edited statements about Ancient Greece. Work on display shows that pupils use timelines to place important historical events and have an appropriate understanding of life in World War 2.

Religious Education

Provision in RE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- RE topics are well integrated with other subjects.
- There is good promotion of self-esteem and care for others.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Commentary

49. Standards are in line with the requirements of the Essex locally agreed syllabus, as was found at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is good. Key themes of the Christian religion are discussed in class and included in displays. Assemblies are used to underline these themes and to relate them to today. For example, pupils explored the theme of friendship and then reflected on friendships with other countries as the vicar described a visit to France. The pupils' very good behaviour, including the care they show for one another, demonstrates the Christian ethos of the school. Visits to places of worship, for example the local church and a Hindu temple, give pupils the opportunity to find out about various faiths in a meaningful way.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with one lesson being very good. In this lesson, for pupils in Year 4, they had the exciting experience of watching a video of the Jewish festival of *Pesach*. They then examined together the symbolic meanings of the foods used in the festival, showing very good recall of what they had seen. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the Bible as a special book to both Jews and Christians. Previous work in Year 6 shows good understanding of *The Ten Commandments* and how they can be interpreted into to-day's society. Their work on *The Siege of Masada* also made very good use of their literacy and word-processing skills. This challenging work is an example of the improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Teachers encourage pupils to make good use of their literacy skills in RE when reading and recording work.
51. The subject leader monitors teaching and development well. She has taken action on the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and has carefully monitored attainment and progress. She fulfils her role well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology was inspected in full and is reported below. Art and design and music were sampled. No report is made on physical education.

52. Displays of work in **art and design** cover a range of applications and materials. Pupils in Year 6 show sound understanding of the design process in a project to design, make and evaluate a hat for the *Mad Hatter's tea party* in *Alice in Wonderland*. The outcomes are imaginative and employ a variety of shapes using mainly card and *Modroc*. Year 4 pupils have studied the work of the Boyle family and have produced bright, bold paintings to represent small portions of the playground in the style of the Boyles' work *Journey to the Surface of the Earth*. They have also produced three-dimensional models of *The Iron Man* related to their work in literacy. Year 3 pupils use a range of different techniques and media in their work on pattern. Displays show examples of sponge printing, stencil and overlay, and they have considered vertical, horizontal and diagonal orientation, and applied rotation and transfer in their designs. Planning and assessment are appropriately based on units from a nationally accredited scheme.
53. A new scheme of work for **music**, introduced in the previous term, has increased staff confidence and the range of musical instruments has been improved and is now satisfactory. Band practice was observed, led by a peripatetic music teacher, and pupils played with great enjoyment, showing a developing understanding of musical notation. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and keep in time well with the recorded music, but their singing lacks volume and confidence.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in design and technology provision since the previous inspection is very good.
- Teaching and learning is good throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed, and an effective scheme of work supports teachers' planning and assessment.

Commentary

54. Standards are average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well because of the consistently good teaching. Teachers plan interesting and challenging activities to develop pupils' understanding of the designing and making processes and to introduce a range of technical skills and techniques. Pupils respond with interest and imagination and work hard, making good progress in their learning. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils took slippers apart to find out how they were constructed and the different materials and joining techniques used to make them. The teacher's good support and the well-planned structure of the lesson ensured that all pupils made good progress in their understanding of the design of the slippers and the suitability of the materials used. Year 5 pupils evaluated a range of biscuits and compared the different characteristics of flavour, texture and appearance. Teachers developed appropriate technical vocabulary well and encouraged good working relationships amongst the pupils, enabling them to support each other in their learning. Year 3 pupils achieved very well in exploring simple pneumatic systems because of the well-organised resources and the good focused teaching that encouraged them to share and explain what they had found out.
55. The subject leader has achieved a great deal in a short space of time to improve provision. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have already had a positive impact on achievement. The recently introduced scheme of work is based on units from a nationally accredited scheme and identifies clear progress in skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Assessment and evaluation are used well, both in short term planning and at the end of each unit, to identify pupils' achievements and where teaching and learning can be improved. Good links with literacy are established. Pupils present their design work imaginatively, evaluate their finished products and write instructions. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to develop the subject in the future and is aware of the need to develop a portfolio of work to demonstrate progress and expected standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled.

56. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in classes and around the school. The teachers' use of *Circle Time* provides good formal opportunities for pupils to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. The sessions seen helped pupils to discuss the important qualities to have in a friend and how to retain friendships. A regular *Circle Time* feature is the awarding of *bouquets* by pupils to one another and the expression of any *beefs* they may have. There is also a class *Worry box*. This is opened by the teacher and the worries are discussed along with possible solutions. Very good opportunities for democracy are provided through involvement in the School Council, as well as the elections of class chairpersons and secretaries.

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	3
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	3
Attendance	3
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	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).