

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DOGGETTS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Rochford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114940

Headteacher: Miss R Plunkett

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 4-6 May 2004

Inspection number: 255980

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	117.5
School address:	The Boulevard Rochford Essex
Postcode:	SS4 1QF
Telephone number:	01702 546237
Fax number:	01702 530693
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Irene Tyson
Date of previous inspection:	June 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 108 full-time pupils on roll and a further 19 children who attend the nursery class on a part-time basis for the morning session. There are more boys than girls. The school is smaller than most other primary schools. It is situated on the edge of an estate of mostly rented accommodation on the outskirts of the town. Pupils are predominantly from white English speaking families. A small proportion of pupils, around 5 per cent, are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number speak English as an additional language but nearly all are fluent English speakers. There is a small number of children from travelling families. Over 40 per cent of pupils are entered on the school's record of pupils with special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Many of these pupils have speech or communication difficulties and several have social, emotional and behavioural problems. A small number have medical or physical needs. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. The pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are relatively disadvantaged. Most pupils come from the immediate area but a few come from further afield. This is because the school has spare capacity to accept pupils from different areas. The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school part way through this phase of their education is high. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2002 in recognition of improved performance. There are significant difficulties with regard to recruiting teachers.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, physical education, English as an additional language.
8991	Pamela Goldsack	Lay inspector	
32954	Wendy Hawkins	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Mathematics, science, religious education, geography, history, music, special educational needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Although the school has significant strengths and is improving, it is not effective enough as it has serious weaknesses in the provision for children in the reception year.** Although teaching is good in most lessons, it is unsatisfactory in nearly an eighth of lessons and so overall is unsatisfactory. The inspection team acknowledges that the school faces exceptionally challenging circumstances. It is difficult to recruit teachers and a high number of pupils enter and leave the school partway through this phase of their schooling. The headteacher's good leadership has led to significant recent improvements. However, the weaknesses in reception and associated weaknesses in teaching are still having too detrimental an effect on pupils' learning and are restricting possibilities for further improvement. The school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Teaching and learning for children in the reception year are unsatisfactory.
- Classroom assistants and nursery nurses make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and pupils develop good levels of expertise.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy their work.
- Assessments of the stages that pupils have reached in their learning are under-developed.
- Although there has been an improving trend in the school's performance in national tests, standards in English and mathematics remain as yet too low.
- Many parents do not support their children's learning effectively and do not share the school's high expectations regarding the home/school partnership.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their own cultural traditions or the diversity of other cultures.

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years, but the provision for children in the Foundation Stage has declined and there is now a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, so overall the degree of improvement is unsatisfactory. The headteacher provides determined leadership and this has been strengthened further by the appointment of a deputy headteacher. The headteacher has worked hard to raise standards but it has been an uphill struggle due to staffing problems that have interfered with the continuity of provision that the school is able to offer. Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly and they now have much better attitudes to their work. The standards that pupils attain in ICT are better than they were two years ago. The school has tried hard to tackle the key issues in the last inspection report and has achieved a measure of success but the issues regarding the strengthening of teaching and assessment have not been fully resolved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E*	E	C
mathematics	E	E*	E*	D
science	E	E	E	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. The \* symbol indicates that results are very low and are among the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally.*

**Overall pupils' achievement is just satisfactory** although children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Very few children are likely to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6 but the achievement of girls is better than that of boys. Although most pupils make sound progress in Years 1-6 their starting points are low and their learning has been interrupted by many changes of teacher and, for many, by changing schools. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are likely to attain standards that are well below national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, the school's overall performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 was average in reading and writing when compared with similar schools. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are likely to attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are well below national averages. Whilst the school's performance in the Year 6 tests in 2003 was average in English and well above average in science when compared with similar schools, standards should be higher in English and mathematics given children's overall capability. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory overall.** Moral and social development is now strong. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and most are willing to please. Behaviour is generally good and pupils work and play happily together. However, pupils have too limited an appreciation for their own cultural traditions and those of multi-cultural Britain. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is satisfactory.** There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, which ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching leads to the judgement that **teaching is unsatisfactory overall.** Teaching in the nursery is good but teaching for the reception children is unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall but it is much better for pupils in Year 2 than for those in Year 1. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good and there are examples of very good teaching. There are substantial gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and so the good teaching does not always lead to effective learning. Also assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to enable teachers to know exactly what stages of development all groups have reached in their learning. Consequently, the work provided is not always pitched at the right level for all groups.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The efforts of the headteacher and the governing body to raise standards have been frustrated by exceptionally high staff turnover, difficulties in recruiting new teachers and a lack of wholehearted support from parents. Nevertheless the school has pressed on with efforts to make improvements and the headteacher has established a sense of purpose and a clear sense of direction. The work of the governors is satisfactory. Finances are managed prudently and statutory requirements are fully met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Many parents are pleased with the provision made for their children but a significant number are disapproving and do not support the school's efforts to raise standards. The main areas of concern expressed were about the misbehaviour of a minority of pupils, the anti-social behaviour of a minority of parents and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Inspection findings show that behaviour is generally good and so is provision for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils like their school although they are concerned about a small number of naughty children and the unfair reputation that the school has developed.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Eliminate the unsatisfactory teaching.
- Raise standards generally in English and mathematics and in particular improve boys' achievement.
- Improve assessments of pupils' attainment so that teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Improve links with parents and encourage parents to take a more active role in supporting the school and their children's learning.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop a greater understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity of other cultures.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Girls achieve better than boys. Children enter the school with standards that are generally well below average. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of children in the reception year is unsatisfactory.
- There is an improving trend in pupils' reading and writing skills in Year 2.
- There has been a decline in the school's performance in mathematics in the national tests for pupils in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and most achieve at the same rate as their peers.
- Standards in English and mathematics should be higher.
- Pupils' achievement in ICT is good.

#### Commentary

1. Although the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2003, when compared with schools that have pupils from similar social backgrounds the school did relatively well. When compared with similar schools the school's performance was average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This shows a marked improvement since the previous year. This is mainly because reading and writing are now taught more systematically than they were and there has been a strong emphasis on improving skills in these areas. There was not such a marked improvement in mathematics mainly because there was, until recently, no subject leader and mathematics was not the subject of such focused attention. In recent years the trend in the school's performance in tests for pupils in Year 2 has been above the improving trend nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.7 (12.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.0 (11.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.4 (13.7)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. This table shows that the school's performance improved in 2003, compared with its performance when the last inspection took place in 2002, in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessments indicate that this improvement is unlikely to be sustained in 2004, partly because the characteristics of the group taking the tests this year are different and there is a greater proportion of lower attaining pupils in the group. Also the relatively small numbers taking the tests and the high pupil mobility mean that comparisons between one year and the next are unsound.

- In the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6 the school's performance in English improved significantly when compared with the poor results in 2002. There are several reasons for this. The group that took the tests in 2002 included an exceptionally high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a large number of boys with behavioural problems. When compared with similar schools, that is schools where pupils had performed at similar levels in Year 2, the school's performance was average in English and well above average in science but below average in mathematics. Since 2001 there has been a declining trend in standards in mathematics. This is because there has been no subject leader to guide developments and there has been a lack of consistency in teaching caused partly by the high staff turnover. Overall, the trend in recent years in the school's performance has been below the improving trend nationally. The school failed to meet its statutory targets for English and mathematics in 2003 and its targets for 2004 are unrealistically ambitious. There has been little overall improvement since the last inspection two years ago.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.8 (21.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.4 (23.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (26.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- This table shows that the school's performance improved in 2003, compared with its performance when the last inspection took place in 2002, in English and science but not in mathematics. The school's assessments indicate that this improvement is unlikely to be sustained in 2004 in English and science for reasons that are similar to those experienced by pupils in Year 2. However, the school is confident that the systematic teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics and the appointment of a subject leader for mathematics will lead to improved results this year.
- Generally girls tend to do better than boys. They make better progress, have better attitudes to work and their achievement is better. Across the school it is clear that boys tend to attain standards that are lower than those attained by girls in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There are several reasons for this. There are many more boys than girls on the school's record of pupils with special educational needs. Those pupils who present challenging behaviour are boys. Boys appear to have more negative attitudes to reading and writing for pleasure than the girls. The girls are better at reading and therefore tend to do better in all other subjects than the boys. The school is well aware of this issue and teachers have received training in how to redress the imbalance.
- Most pupils with special educational needs respond well to the extra support provided. As a result their achievement is usually at least satisfactory. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language was absent during the period of the inspection so it was not possible to determine how well they were achieving.
- Many children enter the school with poorly developed speech and communication skills and standards on entry are generally well below average. Standards remain well below average by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. Although pupils' achievement is now broadly satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, the standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school are as yet not as high as they should be. There are many reasons for this. Foundations for further learning are not securely laid in the reception class. Staff turnover has been exceptionally high and this has interfered with the consistency of pupils' learning. Pupils enter and leave the school as their families move and regroup. This disrupts the continuity of their learning. A significant proportion of parents do not support their children's learning effectively.

8. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good. Most teachers have good levels of expertise and the subject is taught effectively. There are high expectations of pupils' performance. In Year 2, for example, pupils created a multi-media presentation to illustrate their work on the conditions needed for the successful growth of plants. The computer suite is used effectively and the technician supports teaching and learning well. Pupils, both boys and girls, have an enthusiasm for the subject and sustain high levels of concentration in lessons. Computers are used well to extend learning in other subjects.
9. Very few children are on course to attain the early learning goals in any of the six areas of learning by the end of reception. Children do not achieve as well as they should in the reception year. This is because teaching is not always effective. Consequently, children are not sufficiently well prepared for further learning and the teachers in subsequent years are obliged to strive hard to fill gaps in pupils' early learning.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Pupils' overall personal development is satisfactory; their spiritual development is satisfactory and their social and moral development is good but their cultural development is unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's good efforts to improve attendance are working successfully.
- Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they work hard in lessons and other activities.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are good and contribute well to pupils' social development.
- Pupils are generally well behaved and most respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and clear moral code that are evident in most classes.
- There are too few opportunities other than assemblies for pupils to develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness.
- Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their own cultural traditions or the diversity of other cultures.

**Commentary**

10. Pupils' attendance has improved since the beginning of this year and is better than the figures noted in the last reporting year. Currently attendance is slightly above the national figure. The school takes a two-pronged approach to improving attendance by reminding parents about their responsibilities and rewarding pupils' prompt regular attendance. The school day begins on time but there are a few pupils who tend to arrive late on a regular basis. The education welfare officer works closely with families to help improve attendance and punctuality. Unauthorised absence results from parents not sending in notes to explain absences or allowing their children to miss school for inappropriate reasons, such as birthdays or shopping.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	8.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

11. All pupils of whatever ability, race or gender are fully included in all aspects of the school. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and respond well to all that the school has to offer. There is a small number of boys, several of whom have recently arrived at the school, who are not used to learning and have difficulty in concentrating. The link between good

teaching and pupils' good attitudes was evident throughout the inspection. The best examples of pupils working hard were seen among pupils in Years 3 to 6. Here they responded well to the good teaching and this enhanced their learning. After-school clubs are popular and well supported by pupils. Pupils respond well when teachers' expectations are high and this contributes effectively to their achievement. The responses to pupils' and parents' questionnaires confirm that pupils like school.

12. Pupils' good relationships contribute to their learning because they listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Pupils ask and answer questions eagerly and are sure that their classmates will listen attentively. There are planned opportunities for pupils to work in social contexts, usually as paired or group work in lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making introductory booklets to welcome younger pupils to their new classes. The findings of the inspection do not confirm the parents' negative views about the school encouraging their children to be mature and independent.
13. In general, pupils behave well both during lessons and at other times. This is well supported by their good moral development and each class negotiates its own rules at the start of the school year. Pupils work hard to receive awards at weekly assemblies and enjoy 'golden time', when they are rewarded for working well by being able to choose the activities they participate in on Friday afternoons. They treat the school environment with care and are well supervised throughout the day. Most teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and the recent stability within the staffing arrangements is resulting in more settled behaviour among pupils. Misbehaviour tends to occur among boys, but any lapses are addressed quickly according to the behaviour policy.
14. Both parents and pupils expressed concerns about misbehaviour and bullying. Bullying occurs occasionally and is dealt with according to the school's anti-bullying guidance. The school is an orderly community and there was no disruptive or unkind behaviour observed during the inspection. There have been ten fixed period exclusions for misbehaviour over the last reporting 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	91	10	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

15. Assemblies and lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHCE) provide pupils with some opportunities to reflect on aspects of their lives such as how they can improve. However, there is not enough provision for pupils to examine the impact of feelings and emotions in their subjects or learn how to empathise with others of different backgrounds and beliefs.
16. Pupils learn about some religious customs in their studies in religious education. Recognising and nurturing an appreciation for their own cultural traditions is under-developed. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to consider and come to terms with the differences in

people's religions, cultural heritage and way of life in a multi-cultural Britain. School displays include very few examples of ethnic and religious diversity or images of celebrated artists, scientists, inventors and composers.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory overall as provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. There is a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly for children in the reception year, and so teaching overall is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is taught systematically and according to legal requirements. The quality of care for pupils is good but the quality of links with parents in supporting their children's education is unsatisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The teaching in Year 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall and promotes generally sound learning that leads to satisfactory achievement. Although teaching in Years 1 and 2 is predominantly satisfactory, the quality is inconsistent; it ranges from good to unsatisfactory. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and there are examples of very good teaching. The teaching of ICT is mostly good and in religious education it is satisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching for pupils in the reception year is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in the nursery and in Years 3 to 6 is good and sometimes it is very good.
- Teaching is generally good in English and ICT.
- Support staff make a good contribution to the continuity of pupils' learning.
- Assessments of pupils' progress are not sufficiently well developed to help teachers to know what skills pupils have mastered and what they know and understand.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	19 (58%)	8 (24%)	4 (12%)	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.*

17. Overall there is now twice as much good teaching across the school as at the time of the last inspection. Whilst this is an improvement there is also a much greater proportion of unsatisfactory teaching; there was none reported in 2002. Teaching and learning in the reception class are unsatisfactory. Overall teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in very nearly an eighth of lessons seen. Consequently teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. This represents a decline in provision since the last inspection. The reason that achievement is judged satisfactory overall in the school whilst teaching is satisfactory is because slightly different weight is given to the different year groups in the two judgements. Achievement is judged satisfactory because progress and learning improve by the time pupils leave, and it takes the difficulties pupils face into account. In the teaching judgement the relative proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is more important.
18. The school has experienced major difficulties in recruiting teachers and has often been obliged to rely on the services of teachers from overseas. These teachers bring varied and valuable talents to the teaching force but are unqualified in England and often need additional support in understanding of the English National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage curriculum or the

National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. The school currently employs one teacher from overseas who teaches children in the nursery during the morning sessions and takes children from the reception class together with several Year 1 pupils in the afternoons. The teacher for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is very new, having taken up post a few weeks prior to the inspection.

19. The teaching in the nursery class is good. Relationships are good and interesting activities are provided that stimulate children's imagination. The well-qualified and experienced nursery nurses make a good contribution to children's learning. Opportunities are seized to extend children's experiences. In one session, for example, the children were encouraged to ask the man who had come to cut the grass about how his grass trimmer worked. They examined the petrol tank, the nylon cutting cord and the man's safety helmet. Sessions are busy and purposeful. Behaviour is managed well. This contrasts markedly with the teaching for pupils in the reception year. Here behaviour is not managed well and noise levels are excessive. The activities provided have no clear link to the Foundation Stage curriculum and planning does not identify which parts of the steps towards the early learning goals are being tackled. Lessons often do not capture and sustain children's interest. The teacher is not fully aware of what pupils are doing and incidents sometimes pass unnoticed. Instructions lack clarity and therefore children are not always clear about what is expected of them.
20. Teaching is generally good in English and ICT. It is satisfactory in mathematics. In science it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is particularly effective in English and ICT because teachers have good knowledge of these subjects, all groups are generally supported well and an enthusiasm for learning new skills is supported by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Over 90 per cent of the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6 were good and one lesson in ICT was very good.
21. There are many strengths in the teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Relationships are good and pupils' behaviour is managed well. When she took over the headship of the school, just prior to the previous inspection, the headteacher recognised the need to establish reasonable patterns of behaviour before effective learning could be sustained. This was the school's top priority and the improved behaviour is beginning to have a major impact on improving learning. Teachers promote a calm, purposeful learning environment and high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour are maintained. Explanations are clear and tasks are often modified well to match the learning needs of different groups. This was exemplified in a very good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6. All the pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected of them. All were enabled to achieve success because activities were carefully adjusted to match each individual's particular stage of development. Two lower attaining pupils were delighted to have achieved success in creating a set of instructions to move a screen turtle from home to finish more quickly than any of the others in the class. The pace was brisk as the teacher encouraged efficient use of time, *'I'm going to give you 20 seconds to get yourself organised on the computers'*. Pupils were so engrossed in the tasks they had been set that behaviour was simply not an issue. Teachers use a good range of effective strategies, such as encouraging pupils to discuss issues and problems with their 'response partners' before deciding on the best way to tackle tasks. This helped to generate a serious approach to learning.
22. Classroom assistants, nursery nurses and the computer technician make a major contribution to pupils' learning and help to maintain a degree of continuity. Whilst teachers come and go many of the support staff maintain a good knowledge and understanding of pupils and of their individual learning needs. They are well trained and often highly skilled. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the teacher and the classroom assistant because they often take a strong lead in teaching large groups and in managing the learning environment. They are particularly good at supporting pupils with special educational needs and the teaching for these pupils is often good.
23. Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to enable teachers to know precisely what stages pupils have reached in their learning. Therefore teachers do not always know what skills pupils have already mastered and what the next steps in learning should be. The school

has access to a good computerised assessment system but the constant turnover of teaching staff has not yet allowed time for adequate training in its use.

## **The curriculum**

There is a satisfactory curriculum in the school. The curriculum for the younger children in the Foundation Stage complies with statutory requirements but is not well developed. In order to fill vacant posts the school has often been obliged to appoint teaching staff whose qualifications do not necessarily match the requirements of the curriculum. The school offers a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for the youngest children is underdeveloped.
- The curriculum is relevant and places a strong emphasis on developing English and skills in ICT which match pupils' most important learning needs.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum is well structured but plans are not always adapted to meet the needs of all groups.

## **Commentary**

24. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage lacks definition and rigor. The school has a long outstanding vacancy on its staff for teachers to teach this specialist curriculum. Interim arrangements have resulted in a curriculum that suffers through a lack of expertise and a dilution of its specialist characteristics by being taught unsatisfactorily in a cross phase class.
25. The management of the school has identified the need to improve literacy skills as a matter of the highest priority. There is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils to read as this helps them to gain access to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils have a daily literacy lesson and a further session of group reading. For some pupils in Years 2 and 5 there are supplementary sessions that take place outside the classroom for the systematic teaching of phonic and word recognition skills. There is also a strong emphasis on ICT and pupils learn how to use the Internet for research and to extend their learning in other subjects. They use computers well to support their learning.
26. A complex framework of long, medium and short-term plans promotes the systematic teaching of the curriculum. These plans are based on nationally recommended planning frameworks. The plans provide very good guidance for teachers and help to ensure that the National Curriculum is fully covered and that skills, knowledge and understanding are taught in a methodical sequence. However, the plans are not always adjusted sufficiently to take into account the widely varying learning needs of all groups of pupils in each class. This has an impact on the opportunities that different groups have to learn effectively. This is particularly noticeable in classes that have pupils from more than one key stage.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is planned effectively. These pupils are mostly taught in class and are supported well by the teaching assistants. There is also a very well thought-through pattern of withdrawing individual pupils for more specialist teaching, either on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. This often involves the use of specific support from outside agencies. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are well prepared with clear and measurable targets. They include details of activities and resources that enable these pupils to achieve their best. A good focus on all individuals' needs ensures their achievement is at least satisfactory and that they are fully included in all aspects of school life. Prior to the inspection parents expressed concern about the provision for pupils with special educational needs but inspection findings indicate consistently good practice in the school.

28. The school offers a good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning opportunities. The early morning breakfast club is well organised and helps to promote a positive start to each school day. The swimming pool is used well when the weather is warm enough and most pupils learn to swim. There is a good range of after-school clubs such as an after-school swimming club, a choir, a 'street dance club', safer cycling, tag rugby and gardening, and members of the local football team run an early morning fitness club. Out-of-hours learning support sessions are also organised. Visitors include theatre groups that dramatise important social issues such as conservation. There is also an 'Accelerators Club' for more able pupils. The school regularly presents musical and dramatic productions in which all pupils are involved. These enhance learning opportunities in many ways and help to develop pupils' social and communication skills. These are well attended and greatly appreciated by parents. The range of activities represents good provision and helps to sustain a positive school ethos.
29. The accommodation is good and includes a swimming pool, which is used well when the weather is warm enough. It makes a good contribution to pupils' physical development and most learn to swim before they transfer to secondary school. Resources are adequate but there is a shortage of good quality reading books for those who have just begun to read. This tends to impede the impetus that is produced when pupils experience success in mastering the initial stages of reading. The well-equipped computer suite is a major factor in supporting pupils' good achievement in ICT.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good procedures are followed consistently to help ensure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Good relationships between pupils and adults provide a trusting and supportive atmosphere.

### **Commentary**

30. The headteacher plays a leading role in carrying out regular risk assessments of the site. All members of staff are trained in first aid and pupils who become ill at school are treated sympathetically. There are detailed records for pupils who have particular allergies or ailments. The arrangements to provide for child protection are good. The headteacher is the named teacher responsible for child protection. All members of staff are regularly informed about procedures and responsibilities in this area. There is careful monitoring of looked-after pupils to ensure their well-being. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and explore balanced diets and healthy lifestyle during lessons in personal, social and health education.
31. Class teachers monitor personal development appropriately and report progress to parents at consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Teachers provide advice and support for learning in lessons but pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how to improve their work through independent efforts.
32. The trusting relationships between pupils and teachers and learning support assistants mean that pupils have at least one adult that they can talk to if they have a concern. The school responds well to the needs of pupils. The headteacher established the breakfast club to assist working families and encourage prompt attendance. This is popular and effective.
33. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is satisfactory. At the time of the inspection the student council had been inactive for some months. Many pupils who expressed their views in the questionnaire felt that their teachers did not listen to their ideas. Pupils contribute their opinions to discussions within 'circle time', a special time set aside for discussing personal or

social issues, and their accomplishments are celebrated in assemblies. However, pupils' concerns appear to be linked to their justified complaints about the poor state of repair in the lavatories. This has been an ongoing problem for some time and these shabby facilities are scheduled to be renovated at the start of the next academic year.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are unsatisfactory. Links with the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A significant number of parents and carers have negative views about the school.
- Well planned transition arrangements support pupils when they move on from Year 6.

### **Commentary**

34. The partnership between home and school is unsatisfactory because a significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the work of the school. Although there is a small core of parents who support the school and their children's learning wholeheartedly, they are overshadowed by the larger group of disapproving parents and carers. These parents are not adequately involved in the life of the school, despite the school's best efforts to engage them.
35. Parents are provided with all the required information about school life and their children's progress. Consultation meetings are held twice each year but less than half the parents and carers attend. The school acts upon the parents' views and in response to the needs of working parents scheduled these meetings during afternoons and evenings. There was very little response from parents when asked to express their ideas about procedures at the end of the school day. The school values the support provided by the few parents who volunteer to help in lessons. Parents appreciate the extra effort made by teachers who run extra-curricular clubs. School productions are well attended by parents and carers but few accept the school's invitation to attend assemblies each term. On the whole, parents' contribution to learning at school and at home is unsatisfactory. Too few parents ensure that homework is completed and books that are lent to pupils often get lost. The unsatisfactory partnership between home and school has a negative effect on pupils' progress.
36. The findings of the inspection team do not support the negative views expressed by parents in the questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting for parents and carers. Pupils' behaviour is good; bullying occurs occasionally but is dealt with well; parents receive appropriate information; leadership and management are satisfactory; the school seeks parents' views; homework is set appropriately.
37. Parents are justified in their concerns about staff turnover but the situation in this school reflects the shortage of qualified applicants for vacant teaching positions in some areas.
38. The school makes appropriate use of the community with a regular programme of visits and visitors. For example, harvest festival is held at a nearby home for the elderly, pupils sing at the local music festival and Year 6 pupils take part in a residential trip to East Mersea. There is community use of the swimming pool during the summer.
39. Pupils transfer to the local secondary school. The school maintains a good ongoing link so that Year 6 pupils share in activities and begin to visit the school during Year 5. Senior members of staff at their new school get to know pupils before they transfer and portfolios of work that has been started in Year 6 are forwarded for completion in Year 7.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is good and she has initiated many improvements since her appointment; parents have recognised an improving trend. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory, as is management. The work of the governing body is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The main barrier to improvement has been difficulties in recruiting teachers.
- The headteacher provides firm leadership and has established a clear vision for improvement.
- There have been some significant improvements since the last inspection.
- The leadership and management of provision for children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.
- Staff morale has been maintained at high levels.

### **Commentary**

40. The school faces many challenging circumstances. One of the overarching problems has been the recruitment of teaching staff. On occasions, posts have been advertised many times and no applicants have been forthcoming. Even senior posts, such as that of headteacher and deputy headteacher, have proved very difficult to fill. This is partly because the area in which the school is situated is isolated and the school developed an undeserved reputation for being a difficult one in which to teach. The situation is now easing and for the first time in several years the school has the prospect of establishing a full staffing complement. It has for the first time been able to establish a senior management team and already this is having a good impact on the school's efforts to improve provision. Throughout this difficult period the school has been supported adequately by the governing body. However, in recent months governors have not maintained a high profile in the school. Governors rarely make visits to the school during the working day and are not known by pupils or staff.
41. The headteacher has established clear and appropriate priorities for improvement. One of her main tasks was to resolve behavioural issues and establish a productive learning environment. A clear behaviour policy was introduced and is followed consistently by staff. This has proved highly successful and pupils' behaviour has improved significantly. Governors report that serious behaviour issues used to be an almost daily occurrence. Now a calm, business-like, orderly atmosphere pervades the school. The deputy headteacher has supported this initiative well and manages the challenging behaviour of several potentially difficult boys exceptionally well. The improvements in behaviour have gone hand in hand with improvements to pupils' moral and social development, and the school recognises the need to improve provision for spiritual and cultural development.
42. The high staff turnover has had many implications. Training new teachers, often employed temporarily and from overseas with no qualifications in this country, has been time consuming. Moreover when new staff replace those who have left, the process has to start all over again. This has slowed the improvement that the school has been able to make, despite the best efforts of the headteacher. Nevertheless, she has been able to ensure that teaching has significantly improved in several sections of the school. The headteacher has accurately identified the year groups in which unsatisfactory teaching occurs. She has offered appropriate support, but it has not been successful. She is well aware of the need to take further action to improve teaching.
43. The high staff turnover is accompanied by very high levels of pupil mobility. Many of the pupils who move into the school have had difficulties in their previous schools and this school is obliged to admit them as, unlike other schools in the area, it has plenty of spare capacity. This in part accounts for the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher has been highly successful in maintaining staff morale at high levels despite the potentially demoralising and daunting challenges that staff face. Throughout the school's difficulties in recent years the support staff played a significant part in maintaining continuity.

44. The management of the curriculum is good for pupils in Years 1 to 6 but unsatisfactory for children in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher has been successful in ensuring that the school's clear set of planning documents is used effectively to teach the National Curriculum systematically. The school is well aware that the next step, systematically assessing pupils' progress through the stages of the National Curriculum, has to be tackled. Staffing problems have delayed the introduction of a computerised system to assist in this major initiative. One key weakness in the management of the curriculum is the lack of effective leadership of provision for children in the Foundation Stage. No member of the teaching staff has any expertise in this area. In recognition of this the school has used the services of an Advanced Skills Teacher to advise and support. This support has been effective in the nursery but has not had sufficient impact on provision for children in the reception year. There is no clear understanding of how to plan activities that are geared towards achieving the early learning goals systematically. Assessment is intermittent and does not inform planning.
45. The school bursar gives exceptionally good support. She and the administrative officer help to ensure that the day-to-day running of the school proceeds smoothly. All accounts are kept meticulously and the recent auditor's report was complimentary about how efficiently systems are managed.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	505 293	Balance from previous year	59 102
Total expenditure	518 104	Balance carried forward to the next	46 291
Expenditure per pupil	3 781.78		

46. The school has accrued a substantial budgetary surplus which has been earmarked for refurbishing and decorating classrooms and lavatories during the summer holidays. The amount of money the school receives is above the national average, mainly because it receives an extra grant to support the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This grant is used well, mainly to employ the effective team of classroom assistants who support these pupils. Whilst the school is not currently able to provide satisfactory value for money, it does have the capacity to improve. The headteacher and her deputy provide strong and determined leadership. The governing body has the necessary talents to help the school to move forward. During the week of the inspection the school received an encouraging number of applicants for the vacant teaching post in the Foundation Stage.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

47. Provision is unsatisfactory for children in the Foundation Stage and children's achievement could and should be better. Children are admitted to the nursery class in the term after their third birthday and they attend part time for a morning session. The nursery currently has spare places and many of the children who have secured places do not attend regularly. A significant proportion of pupils attending the nursery do not transfer to the reception class. Children transfer to the reception class in the term after their fourth birthday when they attend full time. Children in their reception year spend the morning in a mixed age class alongside pupils in Year 1 and the afternoons in the nursery setting, but are taught as a separate year group. Children starting in the nursery have poorly developed early learning skills, particularly in communication, language and literacy as well as social development. Most of those who transfer to the reception class have levels of attainment that are well below average and few reach the early learning goals by the time they have completed the Foundation Stage.
48. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Teachers in the school have neither qualifications nor expertise in teaching the Foundation Stage curriculum. The school has experienced difficulty in filling the current vacancy. Teaching and learning for children in the nursery setting are consistently good; the enthusiastic but unqualified teacher is well supported by two able nursery nurses. The ratio of adults to children is high and children thrive in the well-structured and interesting setting. The adults provide effective role models for the children. They actively seek to build and maintain good relationships with defined boundaries and routines. As a result, children make sound progress. Provision for children in their reception year lacks consistency. Their morning curriculum is not well matched to their developmental needs or the Foundation Stage areas of learning. In the afternoons the children are taught by the nursery teacher. There is a marked difference between the teaching and learning styles that the different teachers adopt and the children find this confusing. As a result their personal, social and emotional development, in particular, is impaired. Overall, teaching for reception children is unsatisfactory. Planning and assessment for children in the Foundation Stage lack rigour. The official assessment profiles for last year's reception children are not regarded as valid by the school due to the then teacher's lack of experience in assessment. Current record keeping is at a developmental stage and is not sufficiently systematic to enable teachers to track progress and to ensure a better match of pupils' needs to the curriculum provided. Accommodation and resources for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Children have access to a large secure area for outside play and a good range of equipment. There are no displays of information for parents in the entrance area or examples of material that celebrate children's achievements. As parents are not frequent visitors to the classrooms this represents a missed opportunity to help build productive links. Induction procedures are adequate but there is further scope to build a partnership with parents. No home visits are made by nursery staff to build relationships and ease transition from home to school. It is not possible to make comparisons with the previous inspection as no judgements were recorded.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Progress in the reception class is too slow as teaching for reception children is inadequate and inconsistent.
- Staff in the nursery class provide good role models for children.

- Planning and assessment lack clarity and result in a curriculum that does not match the developmental needs of pupils in their reception year.

### Commentary

49. Children's achievement is unsatisfactory and the standards they attain are well below average. Children in the reception year are confused by the differences in styles and expectations of the teachers. In their morning class they have a formal curriculum that is not well matched to their developmental needs and in the afternoons they have access to a contrasting curriculum that enables them more autonomy in their learning and encourages dialogue. Although the children seem more secure in the afternoons they are not making satisfactory progress as there is a lack of consistency in what is expected of them.
50. Children in the nursery class enter the classroom happily and are content to leave their main carer with ease. They settle quickly to the activities provided. Staff encourage good manners and reward children with copious praise to raise self-esteem and promote a sense of achievement. There is a very good level of support for children in the nursery and the teacher directs the nursery nurses well to encourage children to persevere with tasks and to feel confident with routines. Children with special educational needs are well integrated into the nursery class and receive good support, especially with modifying their behaviour.
51. Teachers' planning does not reflect a secure understanding of the personal, social and emotional aspects of the curriculum and formal references to the 'stepping stones' described in the Foundation Stage curriculum are few. In the reception year, activities are better matched to the developmental needs of the older Year 1 pupils in the morning class rather than to the younger groups. Children are expected to sit for long periods of time and opportunities to be actively involved in their learning are few. Insufficient scope to make choices and show initiative results in frustration. For children with poor self-control there is a rapid deterioration of behaviour. This in turn leads to general disruption of routine.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress for pupils in the reception year is too slow.
- Links with parents are not effective and do not foster children's interest in reading.
- Children in the nursery have good opportunities to develop skills in speaking and listening.

### Commentary

52. Children's achievement is unsatisfactory and the standards they attain are well below average. Teaching and learning in the reception year are unsatisfactory. As a result, most children do not acquire the skills in literacy that enable them to embark confidently on the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers have inadequate subject knowledge. Activities planned for children are unexciting and fail to capture their interest. Expectations do not match the knowledge and understanding of the children. In one lesson children were expected to write a letter 'p' without support or a clear visual cue. The children did not have the skills to do this. They became restless and lost concentration; as a result, they made little progress. In the follow-up lesson there was a better focus on children's ability and the activities selected by the teacher were a better match to the children's developmental level. Some were using large paintbrushes and water to create patterns from the letter 'p' outside on the walls, windows and concrete squares and a child with good skills was encouraged to copy words in a joined cursive style. Progress was better, but overall too slow.

53. Children are reluctant to read; some children in the reception year refuse. Children who are regularly supported at home make better progress with reading than those who do not. Although the school sends books home, many are not returned. The partnership with parents to promote children's interest in reading is poorly developed. Children in the reception year attain standards that are well below expectations for their age; most are not at all secure in naming the letters of the alphabet or the sounds that the letters make and few can identify individual words or characters in a book.
54. In the nursery class the teacher engages children in conversation well. She has a lively turn of phrase and asks questions designed to gain a response from children. Role play is used extensively to foster activities that lead to meaningful use of vocabulary. The children were observed in role in a hospital and a post office. Within the security of role play children are more confident to speak and listen to each other. Staff intervene and join in drama in order to develop children's skills effectively.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in reception year are not making satisfactory progress as the teaching is not well directed to match their widely varying stages of development.
- Practical activities are carefully selected to develop mathematical language in the nursery.

### **Commentary**

55. Children's achievement is unsatisfactory and the standards they attain are well below average. Children in the reception year are taught alongside children in Year 1 and lessons follow the format of the National Numeracy Strategy. For most in the current cohort of reception children this is unsuitable. It does not adequately match their level of understanding. Few have secure understanding of number to 5, yet in the lesson observed the focus was on subtraction to 10. The teacher's planning for reception was underdeveloped and very little direction given to the children and adult helpers about expectations during the lesson. Lesson planning and assessment lack rigour and as a consequence the curriculum does not match children's learning needs. Teaching for the reception children is unsatisfactory and children do not achieve as well as they could.
56. Activities in the nursery are carefully planned and promote sound achievement in mathematical development. The adults encourage mathematical language imaginatively; for instance the parking bays for the wheeled toys and the vehicles themselves are correspondingly numbered. Children are encouraged to sort by colour and shape when they thread beads and the teacher has a good range of songs and rhymes to consolidate counting and positional language. The children are keen and enthusiastic to join in with songs.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have access to a good range of ICT equipment but their learning is restricted by poor behaviour.
- Children make good progress with developing investigative skills.

## Commentary

57. Children's achievement is satisfactory although the standards they attain are well below average. Children use computers in the computer suite and in their classroom. Children in the nursery, for example, select their favourite programs, control the mouse skilfully and pick up and move objects. Children in reception were observed using computers confidently in the ICT suite but their learning was restricted by delays while the teacher sorted technical problems with the interactive whiteboard caused partly by a pupil's deliberate misbehaviour.
58. Effective opportunities are planned for science. Children in the nursery observe the effects of bar magnets and are encouraged to use simple vocabulary like push and pull to describe what they experience. In the reception class, children compare materials and sort according to observed characteristics. The teacher in the nursery also makes good use of spontaneous events; she encouraged the children to ask questions to the groundsman trimming the grass nearby, about the technology of the grass trimmer.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

59. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or standards in this area of learning. Good opportunities are provided in the nursery for developing this area of learning. Children manoeuvre wheeled toys, jump and leap in their outside play area. However they do not have well-developed manipulative skills and require practice when gripping pens and tools to assume a correct grip.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

60. It was not possible to make a judgement on provision or standards in this area of learning. Children use their imaginations in structured role play with props and a range of dressing up clothes. They cannot develop a storyline without adult intervention to stimulate their ideas.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has introduced a good system to teach early reading and writing skills.
- Standards are not as high as they could be.
- Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- The higher attaining pupils in Year 2 achieve particularly well.
- Although reading standards are below average overall, many pupils have developed an enthusiasm for reading.
- Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good and helps them to learn effectively.
- The subject is well managed and the subject leader has introduced good initiatives designed to raise standards.

## Commentary

61. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 and again at the end of Year 6. Many pupils enter the school with poor language skills and a narrow vocabulary. Many pupils are not confident in using speech and many have difficulties in expressing their thoughts and opinions. The school has worked hard to raise standards. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to a good system designed to teach them about the sounds that letters represent and to recognise key words on sight. This system is taught methodically and is helping pupils to develop sound

skills to help them with their reading and writing. Classroom assistants are specially trained to take groups of pupils in Year 2 who have been identified as in need of extra support. During these sessions pupils make good progress in developing literacy skills.

62. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but despite the school's efforts standards are not as high as they could be. There are many reasons for this. The high turnover of staff limits the school's ability to maintain consistency in pupils' learning. Parents do not always support pupils' learning effectively. The school experiences difficulties with sending reading books home as many are not returned. There are many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially in the case of pupils who have joined the school part way through this phase of their education. Assessment systems are not sufficiently well developed to identify with precision exactly what stage pupils have reached in their learning. As a result, some pupils are taught material that they have already mastered whilst work is pitched at too high a level for others. The quality of teaching is good overall but there are inconsistencies and foundations for learning are not securely laid in the reception year or in Year 1.
63. Standards in writing are well below average and they are below average in reading. Pupils are reluctant to write and many, especially boys, see little value in creative writing. However, there are many enthusiastic readers in the school. By the time they reach Year 6 many pupils have a good knowledge of children's literature and the higher attaining pupils demonstrate that they read widely. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and refer to the works of authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, R.L. Stein, Lemony Snicket, Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling. One of the younger pupils was particularly keen on the work of Enid Blyton and expressed admiration for her story writing skills. Reading sessions are organised over and above the work completed in the literacy hour and most pupils learn to read adequately by the time they leave the school.
64. Teaching overall is good. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and in these year groups there are significant strengths as well as some important weaknesses in pupils' learning. In Year 1 pupils do not always learn as well as they should. This is because the teacher does not always explain the meanings of words clearly enough and too readily assumes that the pupils have a complete understanding of the vocabulary used in lessons. Also pupils' behaviour is not always managed successfully and too much noise is produced. This causes relationships between the teacher and pupils to deteriorate. The teaching in Year 2 is good and pupils learn effectively. The higher attaining pupils in particular make very good progress in Year 2. In one good lesson for pupils in Year 2 the pace of the opening session was remarkable and learning for all groups was rapid because tasks were matched well to pupils' widely varying stages of development. Here pupils were given good opportunities to practise and develop their speaking skills as they used puppets to retell and dramatise a story. However, it was clear that this task was very challenging and only a few of the higher attaining pupils were able to perform confidently. Speech patterns are underdeveloped and inaccurate grammatical structures such as 'She flied in the sky' are common. Classroom assistants are good at supporting the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs so that their learning is productive but gaps in their knowledge and understanding impede their achievement.
65. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and the small minority of older boys who present very challenging behaviour are managed exceptionally well. The pace of lessons is brisk but teachers also take time to dwell on the meaning of words and to explain technical terms clearly. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher noted that pupils did not understand the notion of 'retractable wheels' and so explained the meaning clearly, citing good examples to consolidate understanding. In this class the teacher is acutely aware of the need to extend pupils' language and provides many good opportunities to explore and examine the derivation of words, word patterns and technical terms. Pupils rise to the challenges set. In the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the more able pupils are given challenging spellings to learn. They were proud to be able to spell 'pneumonia' and 'psychiatrist' accurately. This demonstrated clearly that pupils are capable of achieving high standards when teachers maintain high expectations

of their performance, manage behaviour well and stimulate a keenness to learn. Unfortunately the gaps in pupils' learning confirm that such good teaching for these pupils has not been fully established in previous years. Consequently many cannot spell accurately, do not present their work neatly and experience difficulty with handwriting and punctuation.

66. The subject is led and managed well. The subject co-ordinator has good levels of expertise and a wide knowledge of children's literature. She is good at encouraging pupils to enjoy reading and her enthusiasm for books is infectious. The effectiveness of her good leadership and management of the subject is undermined by the exceptionally high staff turnover and she finds herself in the position of constantly having to support new teachers, many of whom have little prior knowledge of the National Curriculum or the National Literacy Strategy. Resources are adequate but there is a shortage of good quality fiction for the emergent readers to help sustain their interest. The co-ordinator has introduced and is exploring many initiatives designed to raise standards. She is developing a programme to improve speaking and listening, following recently published national guidelines. The school is associated with the Primary Leadership Programme and has chosen to follow a course designed to improve conversation strategies. Writers visit the school during the school's annual book week and theatre companies visit regularly. An 'Accelerators Club' has been organised to support the more able pupils, and strategies such as moving children from their normal year group to a higher one for reading sessions are explored to meet the needs of advanced learners. There is scope for extending monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching across the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

67. Opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their language and literacy skills in other subjects are satisfactory. The computer suite is used well and one potent incentive to read is the need to decipher instructions in computer programs and to explore web sites used for research in geography and history. Discussions in personal, social, health education and citizenship help to develop pupils' speaking and thinking skills. Good opportunities for writing are provided in religious education lessons, as, for example, when pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote prayers about how they thought that the world could be improved.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and are making particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6.
- Computers are used well to extend and consolidate learning.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' widely varying stages of development and pupils do not always achieve as they should.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that result in uneven achievement between the classes.
- Leadership and management are bringing about effective improvements to planning and assessment.

### **Commentary**

68. Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Many pupils find great difficulty with problems that involve language. Also many have poorly developed speaking and listening skills and a narrow vocabulary. These factors contribute to pupils' difficulty in retaining and remembering information. Also teaching in Year 1 does not always match tasks with sufficient precision to enable all pupils to succeed and to achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. These pupils have experienced considerable disruption and frequent changes of teachers in the past few years. As a result,

their progress has been impaired. Pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 are now making good progress with new permanent class teachers and are making up lost ground. However the standards attained are still well below average.

69. Teaching and learning are sound overall. Teaching in most of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory but it was inconsistent. Six lessons were observed and half of the teaching was good or better. One lesson in Year 1 was unsatisfactory. Teaching is particularly stimulating in Years 3 and 4, where good use was made of computers to practise skills by using and applying mathematics to real life situations. Teaching for the pupils in Year 1 is less secure and their achievement falters. There are several reasons for this. Teaching does not always address the needs of all pupils and the lower attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve as well as they should. There are occasions when the teacher too readily assumes that pupils understand what is expected of them. For example, pupils did not understand the activity of using dice to devise subtractions from 10 and completed patterns of number equations instead. It was not explained clearly and the pupils were not supported with the task. There has been a long history of staffing difficulties and problems over the recruitment of appropriately qualified and experienced replacement teachers. This has resulted in interruptions to pupils' learning.
70. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school analyses its results carefully and accurately identifies areas of weakness in pupils' performance. A concerted effort has been made to raise standards and this has been particularly successful for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Although the current Year 6 are not expected to show a dramatic improvement in tests this summer, there are indications that they will do better than last year and the current Year 5 better still in 2005. Resources have been improved and pupils have individual 'maths' bags containing their own equipment for use in the warm-up activities for each numeracy lesson. Staff have been given extra training, consultants have made recommendations and the current co-ordinator was a leading mathematics teacher for the county. One particularly effective initiative has been the use of computer programs that support pupils as they go through units of work and a range of Internet sites that enables them to extend and consolidate their learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed during the inspection making highly effective use of a web site to simulate shopping and calculations involving quantities, approximations and staying within a budget. This initiative has proved popular and has helped to develop an enthusiasm for the subject. The subject co-ordinator has devised a planning sheet for use across the school to help teachers plan for the different groups of pupils in their classes. There is a regular audit of pupils' work with a drive to introduce a uniform assessment and marking system throughout the school. Both of the initiatives are at the developmental stage but demonstrate effective leadership as they are the result of a correct diagnosis of actions that were needed to improve the consistency of teaching and learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

71. Pupils have a satisfactory range of opportunities to use their numeracy skills in different subjects. During Maths Week the younger pupils used their bodies to form digits 1-10 and the older pupils wrote stories that used number as an intrinsic part of the plot. In Year 2, pupils have produced good graphs as part of their scientific study of forces that illustrate the distance travelled by a range of toy cars.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on teaching scientific vocabulary in Years 5 and 6 but weaknesses in pupils' language and thinking skills contribute to a lack of ability to retain information and this has an adverse impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good but there is some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2, where pupils do not always make sufficient progress.
- Coverage of the science curriculum for pupils in Years 2 and 3 is patchy.

## Commentary

72. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. Whilst nearly all pupils in Year 6 attain the expected Level 4 standard, very few reach the higher Level 5 standard. Pupils' acquisition of scientific knowledge is impaired by poor levels of literacy as well as by inadequate numeracy and thinking skills. Whilst most pupils have a good understanding of life and living processes and forces, their ability to conduct enquiries, to investigate and to solve problems are their weakest areas. Pupils' work is generally well presented with good diagrams and clear illustrations, as the teacher in Years 5 and 6 works hard to ensure that pupils have suitable tasks that support pupils' scientific knowledge. Given pupils' prior attainment, achievement is satisfactory overall.
73. The statutory teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 show that the proportion of pupils that attain the national target of Level 2 is below the national average and few pupils attain the higher Level 3 standard and this reduces the school's overall performance. This has been a trend over recent years. Pupils in the current Year 2 are being taught alongside pupils in Year 3 and planning for science lacks clear definition of the learning outcomes for pupils in these distinct year groups that span two key stages. It is insufficiently focused to enable pupils to make enough progress. For instance, in a lesson on changes in materials, pupils' interest was stimulated by observing chocolate and ice melt. They were not supported effectively with explanations and vocabulary that enabled them to understand or record their observations for future reference. The teaching was not sufficiently well targeted to either group of pupils and was an interesting event rather than a well thought out lesson. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good. There are few examples, however, where pupils have autonomy with constructing and recording an investigation. Pupils do not retain the information that they have been taught in lessons very well. Many pupils do not have a sufficiently wide scientific vocabulary to enable them to understand test questions or communicate answers at an appropriate level.
74. Teaching is satisfactory overall but within this overall picture there are wide variations. There is an element of unsatisfactory teaching for pupils in Year 2, who do not always learn enough. A sample of pupils' past work revealed very few examples of recorded work completed by pupils in Year 2. Coverage of the National Curriculum was patchy with very little content that showed the development of pupils' investigative skills. Teachers' marking was directed mostly on the attitude of the pupils and gave very little feedback on how well the pupils had achieved the scientific objectives. In Year 1 the coverage of the National Curriculum was more comprehensive but inaccurate work was uncorrected in pupils' workbooks.
75. Leadership and management are adequate, but there is considerable room for further development. The headteacher monitors medium-term planning and the subject coordinator the weekly plans. This is not efficient enough to ensure adequate coverage for pupils in the cross phase class. The subject co-ordinator has not yet had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. A science week was successful and helped raise the profile of the subject within the school. The grounds are being developed to improve resources. A living willow sculpture is a fascinating addition, which the children enjoy, and there are plans to develop a series of wildlife ponds.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well and most attain standards that are at least average.
- The computer suite is used well to teach skills and to use computers to support learning in other subjects.
- Support staff make a major contribution to pupils' learning.
- Equipment is most unreliable; breakdowns cause great frustration and interrupt pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

76. Pupils' achievement is good and they do well to attain average standards by the end of Year 2 and again by the end of Year 6. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when pupils demonstrated many gaps in their learning. In many schools pupils have computers at home but very few pupils in this school are so fortunate. Pupils are enthusiastic about this subject and they have good opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding when they visit the computer suite. Teachers' planning is good and skills are taught systematically. The computerised whiteboard is used well by teachers to demonstrate how to use programs. Pupils are also encouraged to use it. They have developed good levels of proficiency and in one lesson were keen to show the teacher how to use it properly. The pupils' good achievement in Years 3 to 6 is the consequence of good teaching but most pupils do not attain higher than average standards because the good teaching has not been in place for long enough to have had a full impact on standards. Also the high levels of pupil mobility mean that new pupils have often little prior knowledge and their skills are under-developed. They have to catch up with those who have been taught skills systematically over a longer period.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Most teachers have good levels of expertise and use computers well to support learning. In one very good lesson that involved making purchases and managing a small budget, the teacher's explanations were very clear and the classroom assistant used the interactive whiteboard well with a group of slower learners. Great enthusiasm was generated, all pupils were challenged appropriately and worked hard. There were cries of dismay when it was time to finish.
78. Support staff make an exceptionally good contribution to teaching and learning. One of the administrative staff is also the computer technician. She helps to set up computers in preparation for lessons, sorts out technical problems and provides teachers with advice. Her input is greatly appreciated by teachers. Despite her best efforts the school's systems are not entirely reliable. Technical problems occur too often and this interferes with pupils' learning.
79. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject and has not yet had time to have a major impact on raising standards. The school has endeavoured to involve parents by offering them computer training sessions but the take up was poor. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning and are for the most part used well, but the computers in the classrooms are not always used enough.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

80. Computers are used well to extend learning across the curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when computers were not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning in other subjects. One very good lesson in mathematics was conducted in the computer suite and in this lesson computers were used well to create a purposeful shopping activity. Computers are used well to support pupils' understanding of maps, and good

links are made with work in literacy. In one lesson, pupils in Year 1 were constructing a map of where bears might live as part of their work on a favourite story book, 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen. In another, computers were used to consolidate spelling skills. Older pupils used a good program that helped them to create an advertisement as part of their work on persuasive writing. In this good lesson the classroom assistant made a particularly effective contribution as she used the computerised whiteboard with lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

## **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Geography and history were not inspected.*

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 and effective links are made with other areas of the curriculum to expand pupils' understanding.
- Pupils' learning is not assessed systematically.
- There are too few links with or visits to local churches or other places of worship.

### **Commentary**

81. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching is satisfactory but within this overall picture there are significant strengths. Pupils take their work seriously in Years 5 and 6. The teaching is lively and encourages pupils to express their ideas in words, illustrations and written accounts. In the lessons observed pupils felt secure enough to express their aspirations for their futures to each other. They showed mutual respect for all members of their class. The teacher was skilful in supporting the more reluctant pupils and successfully maintained an inclusive atmosphere where all pupils had the opportunity to do their best by devising shields that had representative symbolism of aspects of their envisaged future life. The work sample revealed that pupils have studied the life of Christ and other stories from the Bible, as well as explored the meaning of friendship. There was sound coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. A set of pastel drawings, inspired by Year 6 pupils' reflection on the crucifixion story, are moving and show insight into different aspects of the sequence of events leading to the crucifixion.
82. In Years 1 and 2, pupils follow a commercial scheme of work covering six themes, including the study of Judaism. The sample of pupils' work revealed that pupils cover the different aspects of the syllabus adequately and that much of the work is linked to other areas of learning, such as personal, social and health education. At times the identity of the subject is lost among other aspects of the curriculum. The school does not have a scheme to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and consequently cannot be sure how effectively pupils are learning.
83. The headteacher leads and manages the subject adequately. She monitors the pupils' work but does not monitor teaching or learning in classes. Resources are well matched to the requirements of the syllabus but are ageing. Links with the local church are being developed and it is envisaged that next year's carol concert will take place in church. However the school has very few links to other community organisations and none with other faiths to enrich the curriculum for pupils.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were not inspected.*

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### ***This area of the curriculum was sampled.***

84. The school has a satisfactory programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship. The deputy headteacher assumed responsibility for this subject at the beginning of the current term. He has moved quickly to encourage all teachers to schedule PSHCE each week and follow the same guidance. The school recognises the importance of its contribution to personal development. Pupils like 'circle time' and appreciate the chances to discuss issues that affect them personally. Pupils are learning more about healthy lifestyles and discuss the dangers of smoking and the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. The school nurse visits classes to provide further information for pupils on drugs awareness, hygiene and sex education. Their speaking and listening skills are promoted well during these sessions.
85. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are becoming more informed citizens and are establishing a re-cycling scheme within the school. Year 6 pupils are preparing for the move to secondary school. Their awareness of transition and change is supported by visits to their new school. They are given the chance to share their feelings by creating helpful booklets for younger pupils moving from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.
86. Pupils have supported charities, such as fund raising for Children in Need, and this fosters a sense of responsibility. However, this area is under-developed and not all pupils have much awareness of the needs of others. The school council does not meet regularly enough to provide effective support for citizenship.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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