

INSPECTION REPORT

FELMORE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 133573

Headteacher: Mrs J Guertin

Lead inspector: John Bald

Dates of inspection: 14 to 16 June 2004

Inspection number: 256113

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	485
School address:	Davenants Pitsea Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS13 1QX
Telephone number:	01268 729885
Fax number:	01268 724104
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Cackett
Date of previous inspection:	This is the school's first inspection.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Felmore primary school is a very large school for pupils from the reception class to Year 6. The school was formed by amalgamating infant and junior schools on the same site just under two years before the inspection. Well over nine-tenths of pupils are White, with small numbers from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, and a significant number of Traveller pupils. Only one pupil was learning English as an additional language at the time of the inspection. Many pupils join or leave the school part-way through their primary education, and most join the school with well below average standards for their age. They have particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, and in social, emotional and behavioural development. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is significantly above average; the largest group has social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, but there are significant numbers with literacy problems, and some with physical disabilities. The social and economic circumstances of the pupils are below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17932	John Bald	Lead inspector	English Special educational needs Religious education English as an additional language.
9614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector	
32327	Sue Alton	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History Physical education Music
10270	Sandra Teacher	Team inspector	Foundation stage Information and communication technology (ICT)
27698	Gordon Phillips	Team inspector	Science Mathematics Art and design
32442	Richard Blackmore	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections

6 East Point
High Street
Seal
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN15 OEG

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8-11
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11-15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15-16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17-28
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides good education. Most pupils begin with well below average standards for their age, and achieve broadly average standards by Year 6. Teaching is good, and very good provision for pupils' personal development leads to very good behaviour. The school is led and managed very well, and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in Year 6 is good overall, and very good in mathematics and science.
- Teaching is good, with very good and sometimes excellent teaching in a third of lessons.
- The headteacher and governors lead, manage and direct the school's work very well.
- There is very good provision for special educational needs, particularly those related to behaviour.
- Standards in other subjects are not as high as in mathematics and science.
- Writing skills and work with computers are not co-ordinated effectively across subjects.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to learning.

This is the school's first inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	n/a	n/a	B	A
mathematics	n/a	n/a	A	A
science	n/a	n/a	B	B

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

Achievement is good. The school's first year of results showed above-average overall standards, and very good achievement in comparison with similar schools. Because of the high proportion of Year 6 pupils with special educational needs at the time of the inspection, standards were lower, though they remained above average in mathematics and science. Achievement in English is good, but better in reading, speaking and listening than in writing. Standards and achievement in other subjects are satisfactory overall, and overall achievement in Year 6 is good.

Standards in Year 2 are below average, but represent good achievement from pupils' starting points, which have particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy. Achievement is best in mathematics and science, and is good in speaking and listening and reading. It is satisfactory in writing; the school is taking steps to improve writing, but is finding progress slow. Pupils achieve well in their other subjects. Standards in the reception class are well below average, but pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is very good, with excellent features, in social and moral development. Many pupils begin with very weak social skills. Over time, they develop very positive attitudes, and behaviour is very good. Pupils learn to understand and respect their own and each other's cultures, though opportunities for spiritual development are limited. Attendance is below average, chiefly because a few pupils' attendance is very poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching is very good in a third of lessons, and is at times excellent in Year 1. Teaching is consistently very good in mathematics and science. In English, teaching is good, but stronger in reading, speaking and listening than in writing and spelling. Teachers manage classes very well, and involve all pupils. There is, however, a lack of challenge in some lessons outside English, mathematics and science, particularly in written work. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory, but work is not always matched to the full range of children's learning needs. Teaching assistants carry out their work to an exceptionally high standard.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to learning, and there are good opportunities for learning outside lessons. The co-ordination of writing and of the use of computers, however, needs improvement. The school takes good care of pupils' health and well-being, and provides very good guidance, with excellent guidance for those with behavioural problems. The school has a very good partnership with parents, and works well with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's strong and clear-sighted leadership and management have been key factors in the good start made by the new school. Other staff with management responsibilities fulfil them well. The governing body is fully involved in the direction of the school and has a very effective working partnership with the headteacher and senior staff. No breaches of statutory requirements were seen during the inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

A high proportion of parents is very satisfied with the school, and responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive. Pupils are satisfied with the school on the whole, and like the support and guidance they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. A minority of parents, and some pupils, were concerned about behaviour. The school accepts that it has a minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties, and that this can cause disturbance. However, behaviour is managed excellently, and was very good in and out of lessons during the inspection.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Bring standards in other subjects up to those reached in mathematics and science.
- Improve the match of work to the full range of learning needs in each class.
- Improve the co-ordination of writing, spelling and computing skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils join the school with well below average standards, and very low standards in communication, language and literacy. Standards remain well below average in the reception class and Year 2, but are broadly average by Year 6. Achievement is good overall; it is satisfactory in the reception class, and good in Years 2 and 6. Boys do less well than girls in reading and writing in Year 2. By Year 6, there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, but achievement is better in mathematics and science than in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average and achievement is very good in mathematics and science.
- Achievement is good in speaking and listening and in reading; it is satisfactory in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Across subjects, pupils use and develop their number skills very well, but writing standards are too low.
- Pupils reach above-average standards and achieve well in physical education.
- Children in the reception class achieve well in personal, social and emotional development.
- There is good achievement in extra-curricular music.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (n/a)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.5 (n/a)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (n/a)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 73 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Results in 2003 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. This showed very good achievement from these pupils' performance in national tests when they were in Year 2. Year 6 during the inspection included an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and teachers' assessments and work seen during the inspection showed lower standards. Standards remain above average in mathematics and science, but are below average in English. Standards in English are close to average in speaking and listening and broadly average in reading. They are below average in writing, particularly among average and lower-attaining pupils, who have weaknesses in organisation, sentence structure and spelling. The range of work seen in other subjects during the inspection was limited by timetabling. The standard of work seen was above average in physical education, and broadly average in other subjects. There were good features in information and communication technology (ICT) and geography, but some weaknesses in the design element of design and technology. Pupils do very well in their use of number across the curriculum, but their use of ICT in other subjects is not consistent. Their use of reading in other subjects is satisfactory, but they are not expected to write to the same standard they achieve in English, and this limits achievement. Nevertheless, the overall standard of work in Year 6 represents good achievement for the pupils in the year group, with very good achievement in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.7 (n/a)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.6 (n/a)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (n/a)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 83 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Results in 2003 were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, they were above average in mathematics, average in reading, but well below average in writing. Teachers' assessments indicated below-average standards in science. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average in mathematics, reading and science. It remained well below average in writing. In view of pupils' very limited starting points in language and literacy, this represents good overall achievement. Nevertheless, the school has yet to make an impact on standards in writing in Year 2, despite an extensive range of initiatives to improve it. Because of changes to the timetable to allow additional creative work in exploring the school grounds, evidence on standards in other subjects was limited, but pupils are reaching average standards in their use of ICT. Most pupils in the reception class are not on track to reach the nationally expected standards in any of the areas of learning. Their achievement is satisfactory from their starting points, and they achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The school exceeded its targets for 2003 national tests in Year 6, but teachers' assessments indicated that it was unlikely to do so in 2004, where targets had been set at a higher level, despite the increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their learning difficulties, though, in line with other pupils in their classes, they do better in reading and in speaking and listening than in writing. The school's very effective additional support for pupils who need it ensures consistent learning and achievement from all groups of pupils. While the school accepts that further action is needed to improve standards in writing, pupils' overall achievement is good, and very good in mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and their social and moral development very good. Attendance is well below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems to develop and support good behaviour are excellent across the school.
- Relationships are very good, and all groups of pupils are fully involved in the school's work.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties settle in to the school community and improve their behaviour.
- Pupils are polite, considerate and work hard. They sustain concentration well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development.
- A small minority of pupils have very poor attendance.

Commentary

- The school's very good provision for social and moral development is a key strength. Pupils join the reception class with well below average standards in their personal, social and emotional development, and significant numbers of older pupils have special educational needs related to difficulties in this area. The school addresses these issues very effectively from the outset, with extensive and well thought-out provision for behavioural management that

emphasises the need for pupils to learn to distinguish right from wrong, and to make decisions about behaviour in a way that develops their understanding and use of self-discipline. This results in behaviour that is very good overall across the school, and minimises the impact on learning from pupils with significant difficulties in this area.

5. Pupils are very proud of their school. The welcoming, vibrant and happy environment encourages their interest in learning and makes them want to do their best. Pupils show consideration for each other and for their teachers and sustained concentration well during the inspection, even towards the end of some very hot afternoons. Pupils' relationships with each other are good. They have a strong sense of natural justice. They value the school's system of rewards for good work and behaviour, and know that they are treated fairly. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. Year 6 pupils act as the headteacher's helpers and are good role models for younger pupils. Members of class councils are proud to have been elected, and feel that the school listens to them. Residential visits, beginning in Year 4, boost self-esteem and confidence and pupils know that unless the school feels they are responsible they will not be permitted to go on trips. These trips involve a significant personal commitment from staff. Through personal, social and health education lessons, assemblies and visiting speakers, pupils learn of and how best to cope with dangers and difficulties outside their school environment.
6. Pupils have good opportunities for reflection in assemblies, particularly when they are taken by the headteacher. There are some opportunities for spiritual development in other lessons, including some thoughtful prayers written by Year 2 pupils in religious education. However, these are not developed systematically, and overall provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of key values in their own and in each other's cultures, and have good opportunities to take part in dramatic and musical performances. They learn from an early age to respect each other's viewpoints. Overall provision for cultural development is good.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
400	51	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0

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

7. The school keeps exclusion to a minimum, but is prepared to use it in order to protect other pupils. There has only been one permanent exclusion since the school opened, and fixed-period exclusions are used to minimise the effect on the learning of other pupils from the behavioural difficulties of a very small number of pupils who are provided with extensive additional personal support.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.3
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.

8. Most pupils attend regularly and on time. The low attendance figures are caused by term-time holidays and by the lengthy absence of a small number of pupils, sometimes extending up to two terms.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils over their time in the school and has good enrichment activities. The school takes good care of pupils and provides very good personal guidance.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are of good overall quality. They are very good in mathematics and science, and in individual lessons in other subjects. Teaching and learning in the reception class are satisfactory. The school has good assessment procedures and uses information from assessment well in planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics and science.
- Speaking, listening and reading are taught well, but there are some weaknesses in the teaching of writing and spelling.
- Teachers manage classes very well and form constructive relationships with all pupils.
- Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to teaching and learning across the school.
- Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory, but does not take account of the full range of children's learning needs.
- Long-term assessment is good, but some day-to-day marking does not pick up basic errors.
- Teachers make good use of ICT in some subjects, but this is not consistent across the curriculum.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	13 (30%)	12 (28%)	15 (35%)	1 (2%)	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.

9. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that all pupils have interesting and relevant work. They manage their classes very well, sustaining a good pace of work and establishing friendly and purposeful relationships with all groups of pupils, so that those with behavioural difficulties rarely disturb the learning of others. The working partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is exceptionally good. Assistants are highly trained and experienced and work with groups and individual pupils to the standard expected of a qualified teacher. Training and deployment of assistants have been important management priorities in

view of pupils' weaknesses in communication, language and literacy and the effectiveness of these policies is reflected in the consistency of teaching and learning across the school.

10. Teaching in a third of lessons is very good, and it is occasionally excellent. The very good teaching is based on detailed knowledge and understanding of the subject and of patterns of learning among the pupils in the class or group, including very effective use of information from assessment. Teachers in these lessons plan activities that are accessible to pupils, but also highly challenging, so that they have to think and work hard in order to complete them. Teaching and learning in mathematics and science benefits from grouping pupils according to their learning needs, with further planning to match work to the range of needs and abilities within each group. This is an important factor in the very good teaching and learning in these subjects. Teaching in English has very good features, particularly in speaking and listening and in reading. However, while one outstanding lesson was seen in writing, the design of writing tasks for pupils is not planned clearly to promote consistent progress, and most marking does not give them clear guidance on aspects of their work that need to be improved.
11. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers plan a suitable range of activities to enable all groups of pupils to make progress, but do not match work closely enough to the range of learning needs in the class. Teaching and learning in the reception class are satisfactory overall for this reason. In Years 3 to 6, teaching in satisfactory lessons is well presented and classes are well managed, but teachers do not always ensure that written work makes a consistent contribution to literacy skills as well as to the needs of the subject, and too much work is copied. Marking and assessment are also less well developed in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, and this limits the consistency of challenge to higher-attaining pupils. Teaching and learning in some lessons, notably geography in Year 6, benefit from well considered use of ICT for research and presentation, but this is not consistent across the curriculum. The school monitors teaching closely as part of its performance management procedures, and provides additional support where it is needed, as well as taking action where teaching is unsatisfactory. This system keeps the headteacher fully aware of strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and keeps unsatisfactory teaching at the very low level seen during the inspection. The school is in a very good position to improve its teaching further.
12. The school has an extensive system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science. It makes good use of the information generated from all sources, including teachers' assessments and analysis of pupils' responses to national tests, to plan work and set priorities for future development of teaching. This includes a good system of personal targets for pupils. There is effective assessment of the needs of the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is carried out to a very good standard, and teaching across the school takes good account of these pupils' targets.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good, and there are good opportunities for enrichment outside lessons. Accommodation, resources and staffing are satisfactory, and have good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for English is good and for mathematics and science very good.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with appropriate links between subjects.
- The curriculum in the reception class is satisfactory, but is not closely matched to individual needs.
- There is a good range of educational visits, productions and clubs.
- Provision for writing, spelling and ICT is not effectively co-ordinated across subjects.
- Accommodation is satisfactory but some shared areas can be difficult to work in.
- The school often has to rely on unqualified and temporary teachers.

- The school is very well provided with teaching assistants and other support staff.

Commentary

13. The curriculum offers a broad and relevant range of activities and experiences that enable pupils to learn successfully. Its main strength is the quality of provision for the core subjects of mathematics and science, and for reading and speaking and listening in English. This has enabled pupils to achieve well in national tests. However, the teaching of writing and spelling lacks consistency across the school, and the use of ICT across the whole curriculum is not fully established. The system of setting in science and mathematics is very effective in helping pupils of all abilities to achieve very well, but teachers' planning does not ensure consistency in challenge to pupils of all abilities in other subjects. In the reception class, the curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and emotional development, and is satisfactory overall. Activities are not, however, matched closely enough to the full range of children's learning needs to promote good learning across all areas of learning.
14. There is good use of cross-curricular work throughout the school, with logical links made between subjects. A good example during the inspection was the School Grounds Day for children in the reception class and Years 1 and 2, which included science, mathematics, art, and physical education. Children's opportunities to discuss matters with a wide range of adults made an important contribution to their speaking and listening and social skills.
15. Pupils benefit from a large range of enriching opportunities. These include special events and weeks, frequent visitors and an extensive range of visits. Clubs include many sporting activities, art, music, ICT and science. The whole staff dedicates much time to these, and their work is appreciated by pupils and parents. Dramatic and musical productions, involving all pupils, are of high quality and regularly sell out.
16. Accommodation is adequate overall and has good features. The school field is well used, and has areas for environmental study, two ponds and good play and sporting areas. Classrooms are generally well equipped, and there is a very good range of specialist areas, including two ICT suites, two libraries and halls. The layout of some classrooms, however, makes concentration difficult if pupils have to listen to the teacher while activities that legitimately involve some working noise take place next door. Outside arrangements for pupils in the reception class are limited, and the school is unable to ensure that pupils have constant access to them. The school has sufficient resources for learning, but strains are sometimes placed on them when too many classes work on one topic at the same time.
17. Careful attention to recruitment and to quality teaching by the headteacher and governors has ensured that the school is adequately staffed. While some teachers trained overseas do not have qualified teacher status, they are often highly skilled, and were responsible for some of the school's best teaching during the inspection. The school has, on the other hand, found it difficult to recruit teachers with qualifications and experience for the reception class, and this is a factor in overall provision that is satisfactory, but lacks the close focus on pupils' needs. The school is aware of this situation and is working to improve it. Provision of teaching assistants and other support staff is very good. These staff often assume important management and teaching responsibilities, which they carry out to a consistently high standard.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety are good, and they receive very good personal support and guidance. There are good arrangements to consult pupils and take account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, assistants and volunteers provide high levels of support to all pupils.

- Support and guidance for pupils with particular needs are very good, with excellent features.
- The school promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- There is very good guidance for children joining the reception class.

Commentary

18. Health and welfare are high priorities. Risk assessments and security reviews are effective, and there is good training in first aid. Child protection is satisfactory, and arrangements are being updated in line with very recent legislation. Some girls, however, wear unsuitable shoes and earrings that could cause them injury.
19. The school's policy of maximising contact between pupils and skilled and caring adults builds pupils' confidence. They know that any problems will 'be dealt with sensitively and effectively, and build trusting relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. Additional support for pupils who need it is well organised and highly effective. It includes breakfast and lunchtime clubs that are open to all, but have a particular focus on support for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Traveller pupils and their families receive very good support from the school and from external services. Additional guidance to pupils with special educational needs is very effective, both within lessons and through specially designed activities such as the morning gym trail for pupils with physical difficulties.
20. Staff know pupils very well, and record significant changes in their personal development. Pupils know the targets they have been set in their groups and understand how to improve their work. Targets are reviewed regularly, and pupils find them useful. They value the comments teachers make in class and write in their books, though the quality of marking is not consistent across subjects. The school keeps in close touch with pupils through the school council and informally, and takes account of pupils' views when making purchases and deciding policy. Pupils' support for those with behavioural difficulties is greatly appreciated by the headteacher and staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, and good links with the community and local schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' support for the school is very strong.
- The school provides a very good range of support and education for parents and families.
- The school manages its relationship with Traveller parents very well.
- There are close and effective links with the pre-school playgroup on the school site.
- Curricular links with secondary schools are satisfactory, but could be developed further.

Commentary

21. The school has established a very good relationship with all groups of parents, and they expressed high levels of approval of its work in the pre-inspection questionnaire. It has very effective systems for consulting parents, for example, through questionnaires, and takes action on their views, including introducing healthy break time snacks. Workshops are held to help parents improve their own education, and those participating in the current ICT course appreciate this.
22. Parents are very pleased with the school, and demonstrate their strong support through their very good attendance at meetings, and school productions. They value the breakfast club. Many help their children practise handwriting in the reception class, and others, with additional support from grandparents and local volunteers, hear children read and help in classes. Members of staff, with parent helpers, run exciting and successful fund-raising events.

23. The overall quality of information for parents is very good. The prospectus, governors' annual report and newsletters are informative and accessible. Reading records and homework diaries are well used. Parents like their children's annual reports, which give good clear information on progress and achievement in English, mathematics, science and ICT. However, comments on other subjects focus on telling parents what has been covered rather than how well their children have achieved. Traveller parents and the parents of children with special educational needs are very well informed about their children's progress and achievements. They are involved in setting targets for them and invited to the regular review meetings, which also take good account of pupils' own views. The headteacher and teaching staff are always available to see parents, and friendly office staff are ready to help with form-filling, additional information or explanations.
24. Good links with other local schools include close liaison with the pre-school on site, the sports coordinator programme and shared design and technology unit with one secondary school. This has, however, been focused on direct work with groups of pupils, and has had a limited impact on the teaching of design and technology in other classes. The school has a good relationship with the local community, and many neighbours give practical voluntary support.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's leadership and management are very good, and other staff with management responsibilities carry them out to a good standard. The work of the governors is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has established very good priorities for the school, backed by effective management systems.
- Governors are closely involved in the direction of the school and have very good understanding of its work.
- The new school has a clear identity based on equal opportunities for all and a strong sense of teamwork.
- The management of science and special educational needs is very good.
- The management of mathematics, of behaviour and of the work of teaching assistants is excellent.
- Management of English is good overall, but provision for developing writing needs to be clarified.
- Management of the foundation stage is satisfactory, but needs further development.

Commentary

25. The headteacher and governors have worked very effectively to set up the new school. Their priorities of ensuring good standards in core subjects, equal opportunities for all groups of pupils, with extra support where it is needed, and a strong sense of teamwork among the staff are the foundation of the strengths set out in this report. Having identified weaknesses in language development and in behaviour as significant barriers to learning, the headteacher has established excellent support systems for these areas, and has made maximum use of the skills of all available adults to give pupils experience of speaking and listening, and to teach them how to exercise self-control. Numbers of teaching assistants have been built up to the maximum the school can afford, and they are supported by very effective training. This enables them to assume significant responsibility within the school, as well as ensuring that the school has trained staff to take over their responsibilities when they are promoted. The school also derives maximum benefit from its involvement in initial teacher training to bring in new teaching approaches and to maximise pupils' contacts with interested and highly skilled adults. Teamwork is very strong, and teachers and support staff collaborate readily with one another, based on a shared vision for the school.

26. Well-planned performance management of staff ensures that each element in a person's responsibilities is included, and that reviews of performance contribute to development planning. The school improvement plan is a dynamic working document that involves all staff and governors. The overall quality of leadership and management by other members of staff is good. The management of science, mathematics, special educational needs and behavioural difficulties is particularly clearly organised and effective across the school. The management of English is good, particularly in reading and speaking and listening, but the management of writing is held back by the use of too many schemes and initiatives, so that the school does not have a clear pattern of development, particularly in the use of writing in subjects other than English. Effective management in the foundation stage is made difficult by the lack of permanent, qualified staff with experience of this age group. It is satisfactory, and the school recognises the need for further development. There is strong evidence of the success of management in the low level of exclusion from the school, very good relationships with all groups of parents including Travellers, and good long-term achievement, particularly in mathematics and science.
27. The governors have a very clear strategic vision for the school, backed by a well-organised practical approach that keeps them fully in touch with all developments. The link Governor, who is a teaching assistant in the school, works closely with the headteacher to ensure all governors are informed and fully involved. Governors visit regularly and provide reports of their visits to inform other governors. They monitor all aspects of the school's work closely and accurately, and meet all statutory requirements. They ensure that funds are allocated appropriately to meet the school's aims by applying the principles of best value. They do this by keeping standards and policies under review; establishing clear priorities, based on the needs of pupils; working with the headteacher and staff to challenge themselves to improve provision and raise standards; consulting widely on major spending decisions and looking for competitive prices. The substantial budget surpluses are the result of provision for extensive building work required to complete the establishment of the new school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,457,783
Total expenditure	1,383,208
Expenditure per pupil	2,962

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	173,134
Balance carried forward to the next	242,709

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the foundation stage is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is good in personal, social and emotional development and is satisfactory overall. Children make satisfactory progress. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and good in personal, social and emotional development. Children join the school with well below average knowledge, skills and understanding for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

Commentary

28. There are 75 children in the reception classes, who start school in the term of their fifth birthday. There is good early identification of children with special needs, who make good progress and achieve well. It is likely that a good proportion of children, except for the brighter ones, will not achieve the expected standards in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year.
29. The foundation stage co-ordinator is very new to the role and is well-supported by the headteacher and external advisers. She is developing an appropriate curriculum for the under-fives, with clear planning, assessment practices and recording procedures. At present, the curriculum is satisfactory, but does not match work closely enough to the full range of learning needs and abilities in each class, particularly for higher-attaining children. Indoor accommodation is good, and there are clear plans to develop the outdoor area. The staff work well together, planning, assessing and recording as a team, ensuring all children receive a safe, happy and appropriate start to their school life. Day-to-day relationships with parents are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to listen well and concentrate in lessons.
- Children work well as part of a group, and are beginning to form trusting relationships with others.
- Children learn to behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning.

Commentary

30. Children make good progress and all, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Most, however, will not completely meet the expected standard by the time they join Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Children show a thorough, developing confidence in trying new activities. All children concentrate on their lessons and activities well and sit quietly and listen to their teachers when required. This is especially noticeable when they are listening to a story and during the planning time. Children also take their turn before talking or answering a question and most listen very attentively to their classmates without interruption.
31. All children are beginning to form good, trusting relationships with adults and each other. They work as part of a group or a whole class, taking turns, sharing fairly and beginning to understand the need for a code of good behaviour to enable them to work harmoniously. They understand the classroom rules and behave well. Children are given plenty of good opportunities to work and play together in small groups, and are beginning to develop

independence by managing their own personal hygiene. Children are also provided with some opportunities to initiate their own activities. Nearly all put on their coats and deal with their own clothing needs for physical education sessions. They recognise their names when participating in 'free-choice' activities. All staff expect high standards of behaviour, and this results in a quiet working atmosphere in all activity areas. The staff are good role models for the children's social development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy books and handle them with care.
- Children are beginning to form clear, cursive script in their handwriting.
- There are insufficient opportunities to develop literacy across the curriculum.

Commentary

32. Achievement is satisfactory, but children's starting points are very low, and it is likely that most will not fully meet the expected standards by the time they start Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and has good features. Where it is good, staff encourage children to speak by asking questions, responding positively and giving encouragement to their answers. All children listen attentively to stories. They listen well and can express their ideas confidently. Children practise writing their names on their work at the beginning of sessions. Most children can identify some letter sounds, and these are constantly reinforced through a range of differing activities. For example, when writing about chickens, children can find the initial sound of a word before recording words such as eggs, hatch and shell. Spoken language is developing but there could be more opportunities to encourage 'talk', particularly for those children with special educational needs. Role-play sessions are not used sufficiently to help develop children's speaking and imaginative skills. In reading, some children have begun to read simple books whilst others still explore print. Higher-attaining children are reading their own books. The quality of record keeping by staff and parents assists this process. During the 'free-choice' time, children often choose to look at books in a quiet area.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and achieve well in learning about number.
- There are insufficient incidental opportunities to reinforce mathematical ideas across the curriculum.

Commentary

33. Just over half of the children, including those with special educational needs, are on course to reach the expected standard when they join Year 1. However, they have not yet learned about calculations and problem solving. This hinders the brighter children from fully achieving their potential. Most children count with confidence to ten and can recognise and use these numbers. Some recognise larger numbers from registration periods and from their everyday life. Children's participation in pattern making helps them to count small numbers, and this is actively encouraged. Most children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes such as squares, rectangles, triangles and circles. They can count their favourite animals and form a

pictograph. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory and have good features, but achievement is hindered by a lack of opportunity to practise 'hands on' what children have learnt in whole-class lessons.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to learn about the natural world.
- Provision for ICT is good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to talk about their observations.

Commentary

34. Children's achievements are satisfactory, but most are not on track to achieve the recommended targets by the time they join Year 1. All children are developing their scientific skills well, for example, when growing cress and sunflower seeds. Children learn about other faiths and cultures, when they think about things that are personally special or precious. ICT is used well to enrich learning, as the children have access to the computer suite. For example, children practise their mouse control skills by drawing insects. During the inspection, good links were made between knowledge and understanding, art and design, and ICT as children produced work based on 'School Grounds Day'.
35. The sand and water trays are used and enjoyed by all children to look closely at differences and change. They identify the different features of objects when used with sand and water, for example in their work on floating and sinking. Floating their boats helps children to be aware of these concepts through play. However, staff do not always encourage the children to use a range of vocabulary related to position, to record their findings and to gain information by asking why things happen. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and learning is enriched by regular cooking sessions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop their spatial awareness.
- There is limited continuous access to the outside area.
- There is limited large scale climbing equipment, and too few wheeled vehicles.

Commentary

36. By the time they join Year 1, most children, including those with special educational needs, are not on track to meet the recommended standards. When changing for their physical development lessons, most show good independence in undressing and dressing and need little assistance. Children show a good awareness of space and a good ability to control their own bodies in hall sessions, though not all can co-ordinate sufficiently well to skip. Curriculum planning does not allow children enough opportunities to practise their skills. Staffing allows some access to the outside area, where children have a range of opportunities including clambering and riding trikes and bikes, but there is no large-scale climbing equipment. There are good plans for improvement, but at present this limited access restricts learning in gross motor skills. Children are learning to handle tools, objects and construction materials safely in

aspects of their school day. Their manual dexterity in using pencils, crayons, paint brushes and other colouring implements is well developed. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but full use is not always made of the available resources and materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work in cooking helps to develop the senses.
- There are too few opportunities for role play.

Commentary

37. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their creative skills but are unlikely to achieve the expected standards by the time they leave the reception classes. This is mainly because there are insufficient opportunities for role play. All children enjoy learning and singing new songs. A range of instruments is available, and some children were practising weather sounds with these during school grounds day. Children have made their own instruments and these hang on the outside 'musical washing line'. However, opportunities for painting, drawing, cutting and sticking, and exploring different fabrics for modelling are not always available. There are good examples of the children using painting to express their own ideas in the colourful displays of work in the classrooms and activity areas. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good across the school in speaking and listening and in reading.
- Teaching engages pupils' interest and effectively extends their use of language.
- There are pockets of unsatisfactory progress in writing, particularly in Year 2.
- Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to teaching and learning.
- Literacy skills are not systematically developed in subjects other than English.

Commentary

38. The school has been open for too short a time for any clear trend to emerge in standards in Year 6. In 2003, national test results were above average, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The standard of work seen in Year 6 was, however, affected by an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group, and was below average. Standards in reading and in speaking and listening were broadly average, but standards in writing were below average, particularly among average and lower-attaining pupils, who had weaknesses in writing in spelling. The results of 2003 national tests in Year 2 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. Standards during the inspection were well below average overall. Pupils were reaching average standards in reading, but many had significant weaknesses in their writing.
39. Girls did better than boys in Year 2 national tests in 2003, but there is no clear evidence of significant differences in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good overall

progress, though they achieve significantly more in reading and speaking and listening than in writing. In view of the very low standards reached by most pupils when they start the National Curriculum, the current pattern of achievement is good.

40. The overall quality of teaching is good. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was very good, and the best was excellent. Teaching is at its strongest in speaking and listening and in reading, and this is the key to pupils' good long-term achievement from their very limited starting points. Teachers manage classes very well, and provide high levels of encouragement to pupils. Lessons are well planned to interest all groups of pupils, and to extend their vocabulary, reading fluency and command of technical language. There is good explanation of grammatical structures and of the features of different types of text. These strengths are present in the best writing lessons, but analysis of pupils' work over the year shows inconsistencies in the design of tasks and the quality of work expected of pupils. The school has taken a range of initiatives to improve standards in writing, but has not yet developed an approach that leads to consistent progress, and pupils often do not apply what they have learned in literacy lessons to their independent writing. There are good procedures to assess and track progress, but marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance on ways of improving their work, and is occasionally inaccurate. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to English lessons by providing further explanations to pupils and ensuring that all are fully engaged. There is, however, very limited use of ICT in teaching and learning.

Example of outstanding practice

Teaching that was very closely matched to individual needs enabled all pupils in a Year 1 class to make excellent progress in writing, with an outstanding contribution by teaching assistants.

Pupils were writing about the previous day's trip to a country park. In a dynamic introductory session, the teacher used skilful questioning and discussion techniques to involve all pupils, helping them to recall the elements they had enjoyed, and introducing words indicating a sequence of time, such as *first*, and *afterwards*. Almost all pupils were in the early stages of learning to write, and several had behavioural difficulties. Three teaching assistants and a graduate trainee helped them compose their own accounts when working in groups, leaving a higher-attaining group to work independently. The assistants provided highly skilled support, helping pupils to apply their knowledge of sounds and letters in spelling, and prompting them to recall features to include in their writing, emphasising the specific words the teacher had introduced. Expert individual support enabled a pupil with hearing impairment to take part in discussion and to use phonic knowledge in his writing. By the final session, all pupils had extended their use of words related to time, and had gained sufficient confidence to present what they had written to the class. Higher-attaining pupils were using advanced vocabulary, such as *geographical features*, with pride, confidence and understanding. The behaviour and working atmosphere in a potentially very difficult class were exemplary.

41. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The co-ordinator provides effective direction for the subject, based on clear understanding of the range of learning needs among the pupils, and contributes to the strategic direction of the school in its work to extend pupils' use of language. The management of reading and speaking and listening are very effective, and resources for learning are well chosen and well organised. Additional time for private reading is well organised and used well, and there are good opportunities for pupils to take part in dramatic productions. The school has, however, taken part in a very wide range of initiatives to improve writing, and this has led to a lack of clarity and consistency that is reflected in lower achievement in this than in other aspects of English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. There are some good examples of writing in subjects other than English, but these are not consistent, and there are several subjects in which the use of writing is not making a significant contribution to literacy. The school has rightly identified the co-ordination of literacy work, and particularly of writing, across subjects as an area that needs to be improved.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are broadly average in Year 2, and above average in Year 6.
- Teaching and learning benefit from grouping pupils according to their abilities and learning needs.
- Very effective teaching enables all groups of pupils to build confidence and achieve very well.
- The leadership and management of the subject are excellent.
- Mathematics is developed very well in a range of curriculum areas.

Commentary

43. Pupils begin with below-average standards, and reach average standards in Year 2. They make further very good progress to reach above-average standards in Year 6. National test results in 2003 were well above average, both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. The standards in Year 6 seen during the inspection nevertheless reflected very good achievement in view of pupils' special educational needs. Careful tracking by the school of the progress of pupils, and evidence from all the lessons seen during the inspection, show that pupils of all ability levels achieve very well. The system of grouping pupils according to their abilities and learning needs contributes to self-esteem and self-confidence among all pupils, and gifted and talented pupils do particularly well in Years 5 and 6. Overall, achievement in mathematics is very good across the school.

44. Teaching is very good. Its strengths include:

- A brisk and stimulating pace of work.
- Work that is closely matched to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Excellent relationships created by care, knowledge of individual needs and good humour.
- Consistent working patterns within and between classes.
- Good subject knowledge and understanding, high expectations and skilled questioning.
- Very good links between subjects so that numeracy skills are constantly placed in real contexts.

All teachers help pupils develop creative ways of thinking in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own strategies for solving problems, and consistently deepen their knowledge. For example, in a lower set in Year 5, the teacher insisted that pupils looked for the less obvious factors of different numbers. This resulted in pupils producing results such as, 'factors of 36 are 24 and 1.5'.

Example of outstanding practice

High expectations of concentration and creative thinking in a Year 1 class enabled pupils to apply their developing skills creatively and to see relationships between numbers.

From the very beginning of the lesson the teacher showed pupils alternative ways of calculating and applying their knowledge of number. She showed alternative ways of using coins to make amounts for shopping, using pupils' strategies and getting them to come out and 'be the teacher' if their method was particularly creative. She was acutely aware of the different ways that individual pupils learn, encouraging some to use fingers, number lines, grids or different mental processes. In the main body of the lesson, pupils made rapid progress in their ability to add more than two numbers, with higher-attaining pupils challenged to find as many ways as possible to find a correct answer. Pupils worked with energy, enthusiasm and a real fascination for number; one group was extremely pleased with themselves on finding that $6+9+3$ is the same as double 9, which they knew to be 18. The development of creative thinking in mathematics seen in this excellent lesson is part of a systematic approach that builds the foundations for teachers further up the school, contributing significantly to the impressive achievement of older pupils.

45. Leadership and management are excellent. The two subject leaders work closely with teachers, monitoring teaching and planning and involving all in reviewing progress and pupils' needs. They analyse work and test results to focus on weaknesses and refocus the curriculum. They monitor colleagues, and teach lessons where they are observed, both within and beyond the school. The consistent approach and very good teaching that result lead to the impressive level of achievement by Year 6.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Provision is very good. Mathematical skills and knowledge are developed effectively in several curriculum areas. For example, graphs are used to display findings in science, history and geography. The understanding of different types of shape is developed in art and the findings of a range of mathematical investigations are presented using ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach average standards by Year 2, and above average standards by Year 6.
- A good proportion of pupils reach higher levels in national tests in Year 6.
- Grouping pupils according to their learning needs promotes achievement in Year 6.
- Imaginative and challenging teaching leads to very good achievement among all pupils.
- Provision is very well led and managed.

Commentary

47. Pupils join the school with below-average standards. As a result of stimulating and conscientious teaching, standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with those seen in most schools, and improve further to above-average levels by Year 6. Above-average proportions of pupils reach higher levels in teachers' assessment in Year 2 and in National tests in Year 6, where 2003 results were well above those of similar schools. Pupils achieve very well and they show real enthusiasm for experimental and investigative work. Their basic subject knowledge is good and they also use scientific language well.
48. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Teaching is very well organised, with a major focus on investigation and fair testing. An impressive feature of the teaching of younger pupils was the great enthusiasm for investigation created by imaginative and engaging tasks. In a very good Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils concentrated extremely hard while taking part in exercises which tested their five senses. They closed their eyes to try to differentiate between

sounds, and thought long and hard over whether they had eaten a piece of white or brown bread. Although the teaching excites pupils, teachers maintain an orderly atmosphere. They consistently model scientific language and provide frequent opportunities for discussion.

49. As they move through the school, pupils are given tasks well matched to their abilities and, in Year 6, work in sets according to their learning needs. This close focus has contributed to the good numbers of pupils attaining higher levels in tests. In a Year 6 lesson for the upper set, the teacher had very high expectations both of the amount of work pupils should complete in a lesson and of the degree of understanding that she expected. Her extremely good and repeated use of technical terms was mirrored by pupils' responses. At the same time the lower set was engaged in covering the same topic, about the workings of the heart, but at a more measured pace and with the use of visual and other stimuli to reinforce concepts at the appropriate level for their understanding. Teaching assistants provide knowledgeable and enthusiastic support for learning.
50. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has done very well to increase the amount of investigative work, which has raised standards, and to increase the use of ICT in the subject; in fact websites were investigated in virtually all of the science lessons seen. Improvement is further assured by the careful scrutiny of the results of tests, which results in provision being refocused. The curriculum is comprehensive, with that in Year 6 particularly building upon previous knowledge very well. Each unit has a built in assessment element so that staff and pupils can gauge success. A further important aspect of the work is the enjoyment and appreciation of nature through very good use of the school field.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist provision is well organised, and teaching has good features.
- ICT is not used consistently enough to support learning in other subjects.
- ICT is used well to improve access to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment procedures have yet to be fully developed.

Commentary

51. The school has recently reorganised provision for the subject, and has two well-used computer suites, with radio networks that allow Internet access in classrooms. Pupils now reach average standards, and their achievement is satisfactory. Examples of pupils' work show they are learning to use ICT for word processing, graphics, the Internet and data handling as well as control, monitoring and modelling. Teachers' planning and conversations with pupils, however, show that classroom computers are not regularly used, so that pupils have too few opportunities to practise what they have learned in specialist lessons.
52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and sometimes good. The teacher knows the subject well, and gives clear explanations and demonstrations using the digital projector. Good use of questioning ensures that all pupils contribute, and learning benefits from a brisk pace of work. Discussions with pupils and examples of their work show they are confident in accessing the Internet for research, recording sensor data and presenting text. They are enthusiastic about the use of ICT, enjoy their lessons and work well with partners or groups. Many have computers at home, and use them to produce well-researched homework.
53. Good leadership and management by the subject leader and the headteacher are raising standards and extending the range and quality of provision. The school has carried out a rigorous audit of its provision, and has used the results to plan its investment in resources and

training. Parents are made aware of Internet safety. The school is beginning to monitor pupils' progress, but recognises that monitoring and assessment are not yet good enough to enable teachers to match tasks precisely to each child's needs. The school has good plans for further development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. There are some examples of effective teaching, including good use of computers for portrait work in Year 2 and good multimedia presentations for geography in Year 6. ICT is used consistently for investigation in science lessons. Nevertheless, the use of ICT to promote learning is under-developed in many subjects, and the school has suitable plans to improve it.

HUMANITIES

55. History and religious education were inspected fully. Provision for geography and religious education was sampled by observing lessons and analysing pupils' work.
56. The quality of work sampled in geography was **satisfactory** and had good features. These included good use of the local environment and visits, and increasingly effective links between geography and other subjects. The standard of work sampled in Year 6 was broadly average. It showed good achievement in work on St Lucia in response to teaching that challenged pupils to evaluate evidence critically and make multimedia presentations of their findings. Work seen in other year groups, was less detailed and challenging, but is being effectively developed through themed weeks and 'school grounds day'. These are helping to raise the profile of geography and increase opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding in a practical way. The newly-appointed co-ordinator has good plans to develop the subject further.

History

Provision in History is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good use of visits to extend learning.
- History is increasingly well linked to work in other subjects.
- Some of the tasks pupils are given, particularly in writing, do not fully challenge them.

Commentary

57. Standards in Year 6 are in line with those seen in most schools and represent satisfactory achievement. Pupils are able to use their factual knowledge and understanding of the past to identify changes across time. They have learned about Ancient Egypt and made their own non-fiction books to present their findings. Pupils show a factual knowledge of what happened at this time and are able to use resources to gather information.
58. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons ranges from satisfactory to very good, and is satisfactory overall. In a very good lesson in year 1, pupils were very enthusiastic and keen to share the information they had found from their parents and grandparents about the seaside today and 100 years ago and about their recent visit to the seaside. They settled very well to discuss in pairs and groups how they could find out information from 100 years ago. Good questioning from the teacher sharpened their thinking and pupils were able to use various sources of information. The effective use of the interactive whiteboard engaged the pupils very well. They responded particularly enthusiastically when the teacher was able to show them a photograph of Southend Pier 100 years ago to compare with photographs they had taken the previous week. Pupils produced very detailed posters, and made very rapid progress during the lesson. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers' planning allows all pupils in the class to

make satisfactory progress, but does not fully challenge them. Some writing tasks are undemanding, and the range and use of resources, including ICT, are limited. History is increasingly successfully linked to work in other subjects, including art, where pupils use work on printing techniques to prepare for a study of Tudor costume

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has used her year in the post to develop a detailed action plan for improving teaching and learning, including a review of the curriculum and resources. She has introduced the idea of history topic weeks each term to develop links to other subjects and is currently focussing on improving the use of ICT in history.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know the subject well, and provide good explanations of points of detail.
- Attractive displays, which include good use of religious artefacts, stimulate pupils' interest.
- Pupils treat their own and other religions with interest and respect.
- There is some good writing in Years 1 and 2, but older pupils' written work is weak.
- Teachers do not use assessment effectively to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are consistently challenged.
- There is little use of ICT for investigation or other aspects of learning.

Commentary

60. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed broadly average levels of knowledge and understanding in discussion observed during the inspection, though their written work over the year was below average, with too much copied work and too little scope for independent investigation. Because of the timetable, it was not possible to observe teaching in Years 1 and 2, but written work sampled showed broadly average standards in the aspects of the subject it covered, with good understanding of the moral dimension of religious experience. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in response to work that is well matched to their learning needs. Overall, inspection evidence shows satisfactory achievement.
61. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was in Years 3 to 6. This was satisfactory overall, and had some good features. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of religions, and the timetable is organised well to make effective use of teachers' individual strengths. They manage discussions well, involving all pupils, including those with behavioural difficulties, and sustaining a good learning atmosphere. Teachers' clear explanations of Hindu ceremonies and symbolism, and good use of resources, engaged pupils and led them to treat the religion with respect. On the other hand, written work during the inspection was limited in scope, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, and there was too much variation in the pupils' writing over the year. Pupils in Year 2, for example, had written thoughtful prayers, showing care and consideration for others, while some of the work seen in Year 6 was either copied or contained major errors.
62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is clear direction for the subject, and its contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures is well developed. On the other hand, the design of written tasks for pupils in Years 3 to 6 does not take enough account of the needs of higher-attaining pupils, and there is very little use of ICT to promote learning. These weaknesses prevent the subject from contributing to the school's broader aims of promoting independent learning and research.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. Physical education was fully inspected in Years 3 to 6, but teaching was not observed in Years 1 and 2. Art and design and design and technology were sampled by analysis of pupils' work and discussion with pupils and co-ordinators. It was not possible to find sufficient evidence of teaching and learning to support a judgement in music, but extra-curricular music was sampled through a video of a production of *Rats* and observation of a Year 6 rehearsal for *David and Goliath*.
64. The quality of **extra-curricular music** sampled was very good. Pupils and teachers took part in the videoed production with skill and enthusiasm, and sang tunefully and rhythmically in rehearsal. Pupils have good opportunities to perform in local festivals and at homes for the elderly. Discussions with the co-ordinator and headteacher indicated that provision is well planned, and that the co-ordinator provides good guidance and encouragement to colleagues.
65. Work sampled in **art and design** and **design and technology** was of average overall quality, with good features in art and design, particularly in pupils' painting of scenery for dramatic productions and in ICT in Year 2. In design and technology, pupils show average making skills, and a good computerised design program has recently been introduced by a visiting secondary teacher. However, pupils do not keep adequate records of their design work, and assessment is weak in both of these subjects.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average.
 - Teaching and learning and achievement are good in games.
 - There is wide participation in sporting activities outside lessons.
 - Co-ordination of the subject is good.
-
66. Standards in Year 6 are above average and achievement is good. There is insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement on standards and provision in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and know the subject well. Lessons have a good balance of practical and theoretical work and are carried out with a brisk pace and good humour. Pupils respond very well to this, trying hard and doing all they can to improve their work. Pupils enjoy physical education, and both boys and girls are equally involved. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
 67. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a range of activities outside school, including swimming galas, football, netball and athletics. There is an annual sports day and two school journeys to Wales each year, where the focus is on outward bound activities. Pupils' gifts and talents are carefully considered and programmes adapted well to individual needs.
 68. Physical education is well co-ordinated. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and provides a good role model for pupils and staff. He has audited provision and devised a good action plan which includes staff development. He is leading the school towards accreditation for the Active Sports Mark. Resources for learning are good, and very good use is made of the school field.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69. Work was sampled through discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator, and observation of a lesson. The quality of work sampled was good. The lesson, part of a series on growing up, was well planned and relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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