

INSPECTION REPORT

GRAHAM JAMES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stanford-le-Hope

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114796

Headteacher: Mr Alan Clark

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 17th-19th May 2004

Inspection number: 256237

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	198
School address:	The Sorrells Corringham Stanford-le-Hope Essex
Postcode:	SS17 7ES
Telephone number:	01375 675889
Fax number:	01375 674290
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Graham James Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bradley Lane
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Graham James Primary School is similar in size to other schools of the same type. There are 198 pupils on roll. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls overall, but there are noticeable imbalances in Years 2, 3, 4 and 6. Approximately four per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is broadly average. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning the English language. The school has 40 pupils (20 per cent) on its register of special educational needs, which is similar to the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Four pupils (2 per cent) have statements of special educational need, which is also broadly average. The turnover of pupils is fairly high. For example, 53 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 and 47 per cent of those in Year 5 have not attended the school throughout their primary education. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school achieved the Investors in People Award in 2003 and has received Achievement Awards from the Department for Education and Skills in each of the past three years. It is heavily oversubscribed for the coming year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23169	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology (ICT), art, music.
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, the foundation stage curriculum.
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology (DT), religious education (RE), physical education (PE), special educational needs (SEN).

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
Thule
60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4LT

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	20
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	36

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school with a number of very good features. Overall, pupils' achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good. Good leadership and management ensure a continuing focus on improvement. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership by the headteacher creates a strong team spirit and sets high expectations for pupils and staff.
- Good provision for children in Reception helps them to make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics because of good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Good teaching and improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have raised standards significantly.
- The curriculum is varied and interesting and it is enriched by a very good range of additional activities.
- Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development is reflected in their very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but there are inconsistencies which limit their effectiveness.
- The role of curriculum co-ordinators in checking standards, teaching and the curriculum is developing appropriately but not yet fully effective.

The school has made a very good improvement since it was inspected in 1998. There has been good progress in raising pupils' achievement, especially that of boys, and very good improvement in the quality of teaching. The provision for ICT is greatly improved following the installation of a computer suite. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very much better, as is the effectiveness of the learning support assistants. The school improvement plan is more effective in moving the school forward as it is informed by more rigorous self-evaluation and analysis of the school's performance.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - top 5% of schools; 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. In Reception, children achieve well. They are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning, and many are on course to exceed them in communication, language and literacy, physical and creative development and in personal, social and emotional development. In Year 2, achievement is good: standards are above average in reading, writing, ICT and DT and average in mathematics and science. In Year 6, achievement is good because pupils have progressed from below average standards when they

were in Year 2. Standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science and above average in ICT and DT. In 2003, standards were higher because there were fewer pupils with SEN and more higher attaining pupils in the year group. The school has achieved national recognition for the improvements it has made in pupils' achievements over the past three years.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They show interest and enthusiasm in lessons and other activities. Pupils show initiative, take responsibility willingly and form very good relationships. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, who apply themselves well to tasks and work productively. Lessons are lively and interesting: they engage the pupils' attention and make learning fun. The competent and well trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but are not yet used consistently throughout the school to track pupils' progress. The curriculum is well-planned and provides pupils with a wide range of activities which they find interesting and enjoyable. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good and ensures their good progress. The school works very well in partnership with parents and provides very good levels of care for all pupils. All of these factors contribute significantly to pupils' good achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Very good leadership by the headteacher has created a very strong team spirit and shared aspirations for the school's success. The governors, many of whom are new to the role, make a sound contribution to the strategic management of the school and meet all statutory requirements. The management team is effective in monitoring provision and evaluating the school's performance. The role of subject co-ordinators is developing appropriately but is not yet fully effective in checking on standards, teaching and the curriculum. Financial management and administration are very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and find it warm and welcoming. Pupils also have positive views of the school and enjoy all that it has to offer. Pupils' opinions are sought and represented effectively by the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to refine and improve the procedures for assessment, individual target setting and tracking pupils' progress through the levels of the National Curriculum;
- Continue to develop the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating standards, teaching and the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Standards are above average in English, and average in mathematics and science in Year 2. They are average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement in the Foundation Stage prepares pupils well for learning in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 1 to 6 due to good teaching.
- The school has received a national Achievement Award for the past three years and is sustaining the drive to improve standards.
- Pupils achieve higher than average standards in ICT because teachers develop their skills well across the curriculum.
- Achievement is also good in DT and standards are above average.
- There has been a good improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. This reflects the good teaching and learning the children receive in the Reception class. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning with many exceeding them in communication, language and literacy, physical and creative development and in personal, social and emotional development. This represents particularly good achievement from their mostly below average starting point in communication, language and literacy. Attainment is in line with expectations in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.5 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.4 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards were slightly below the national average in reading compared with all schools and well below the average for similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Compared with all schools, standards in writing and mathematics were well above the national average and above average for similar schools. This represents an outstanding improvement in mathematics and writing on the low standards of the past two years and a significant upturn in the school's overall performance. The marked upward trend in 2003 was brought about by improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, in particular the emphasis on improving boys' achievement. However, standards in reading were lower because there had not been such a clear focus on teaching reading skills. This has now been addressed. Teachers' assessments in science also showed standards to be below average, because no pupils reached Level 3 (above average).

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are above average in both reading and writing, and average in mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for this group of pupils and shows that the increased focus on reading has had good effect. Standards are above average in ICT and DT, and average in RE, geography, history and PE, which were the only other subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make reliable judgements. These standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection in mathematics, science, geography and history. Standards have risen in reading, writing, ICT, RE and DT. The judgements of the inspection are not as high as the school's results in the 2003 national tests. This is because a different group of pupils is involved and there are fewer pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment. Pupils achieve well because the teaching of basic skills is consistently good. As a result, by Year 2, they have good levels of competency in literacy and ICT and sound numeracy skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.0 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.6 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, the school's results in English were in the top five per cent of schools nationally. They were above average in mathematics and science compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, based on pupils who performed similarly in Year 2, standards in English were, again, in the top five per cent of schools, and above average in mathematics and science. Standards have fluctuated from year to year over the past five years due mainly to differences between groups of pupils, but had remained below average in English until 2003. In the past, there has been some underachievement, particularly amongst boys, even allowing for their below average attainment on entry to the school. The school has addressed the causes of this successfully in order to raise boys' achievement in English. The pupils who took the national tests in 2003 were a particularly able year group, who reached above average standards in English when they were in Year 2. Nevertheless, statistics show that these pupils made very good progress between Year 2 and Year 6. The school has achieved national recognition for the improvements it has made in pupils' achievements over the past three years.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement for this group of pupils because in the Year 2 national tests four years ago they achieved below average standards. In addition, over half of the pupils have joined the school at different times over the past five years, and many of these pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Standards are above average in ICT and DT, and average in RE, geography, history and PE. Standards are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection in science, geography, history and PE. They are higher in English, mathematics, ICT, RE and DT. Throughout the school, standards in these subjects have risen because of improvements in teaching, the curriculum and resources, brought about by strong leadership and a clear vision for the school.

6. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' speaking and listening skills were below average throughout the school because there was insufficient emphasis on improving them. Since that time, the school has planned more opportunities for pupils to take part in discussions, particularly at the beginning and end of lessons, and also through whole class discussions about moral and social

issues. These initiatives have had a beneficial effect on standards, which are now average throughout the school. Improved speaking and listening skills are also having a good impact on pupils' achievement in other subjects. Reading and writing skills are developed well in other subjects of the curriculum and the use of mathematics in other subjects is also good. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

7. All groups of pupils in this school achieve well by the time that they leave Year 6. Parents have positive views of how well their children are progressing. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and they are very well integrated into classes. The school's results in the national tests over a three year period indicate that girls do better than boys. However, the findings of the inspection are that boys and girls achieve equally well. Teachers pay particular attention to boys' needs when planning lessons and choosing resources to ensure that they are well motivated and interested. The school also caters well for more able pupils. Teachers prepare work that matches individual pupil's needs and ensure that tasks are sufficiently challenging for higher attainers. The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils and is taking steps to ensure that their needs are met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. Behaviour is very good in and around school. Pupils' punctuality to school is good; their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good procedures in place to promote and monitor attendance.
- The school expects pupils to work hard, and to behave well, and they respond very well to these expectations.
- Pupils' enjoy very good relationships with each other and with adults.
- The school ensures that pupils are free from bullying and harassment.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- The very good ethos and role models created by the headteacher and staff enable pupils to know right from wrong, and behave very well.

Commentary

8. Attendance is broadly in line with the national median and is therefore satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is also in line with the national median. Staff monitor attendance very closely and have very good strategies in place to promote good attendance. An attendance cup is awarded each week to the class with the highest level of attendance, and this is highly prized by the winning class. Children are eager to come to school and arrive punctually, which ensures that lessons begin promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. In lessons they settle quickly to their work, they concentrate on their tasks and remain engaged in activities. Very good relationships ensure that pupils are willing to take turns and to share with each other. Pupils are attentive and listen to their teachers very well, which means that they know what they have to do and feel confident with their learning. Many pupils attend the wide range of after school clubs available to them.

10. In lessons, around the school and when pupils are on the playground, they behave very well. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare and both pupils and parents are confident that the school deals with any problems very effectively. There is good racial harmony. Pupils know and understand the school rules and respond to them. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils, they have high expectations and encourage good behaviour very effectively. There were two fixed period exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection and these were dealt with appropriately.

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	161	2	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0

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

11. The school promotes very good relationships. As a result there is harmony throughout the school; pupils have respect for each other and each other's beliefs and values. Expectations of staff ensure that there is a feeling of community throughout the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibility and pupils respond well to these opportunities, which include membership of the school council, acting as school librarians and other general responsibilities in class and around the school.

12. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and the headteacher and staff foster this very well. They provide very good role models for pupils to follow and the overall ethos of the school is very caring. Adults' expectations for good behaviour are high and pupils respond very well, showing respect for other people and their feelings. For example, in a Year 1 RE lesson, pupils took turns to add to the class discussion, but were willing to wait and hear what others had to say first. There are many opportunities for pupils to express their own views and feelings and they do this with confidence and openness. This was observed, often in casual conversations with pupils, such as while waiting in the dinner queue with them. Circle time helps pupils to express their feelings, and there are many examples of how they are being taught to appreciate the world around them. Some study countries of the world, as in the Year 4 work on Mexico. Others grow plants, or observe the weather. Involvement in local events such as the outdoor Christmas Nativity play and visits to the church and from the clergy all add to pupils' spiritual awareness.

13. Social development is fostered in many ways and is very good. These include fund raising for charities, carol singing locally, visits to places of interest, and visitors coming in to talk to the children. The school council provides opportunities for some pupils to take more responsibility for school life. This is added to by Year 6 pupils, and others, helping with younger pupils in reading or in

the playground. Cultural development is good overall and is enhanced by provision in art, music and dance. While multi-cultural development is generally good, there is room for improvement in presenting some of the aspects of multi-cultural Britain to pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, as is the curriculum. There are some inconsistencies in the school's assessment procedures. Good provision for children in the Foundation Stage promotes good progress in learning. Very good provision for pupils with SEN helps them to achieve well. There are very good arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare. The school works very well in partnership with parents. Its ethos is very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but there are inconsistencies in the way they are applied.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers engage pupils effectively in learning and motivate them very well.
- They set consistently high standards for pupils' behaviour which ensure pupils apply themselves well to their work.
- Teachers expect pupils to do well and succeed, whatever their capabilities, and they are effective in building pupils' self-esteem.
- Consistently good teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is helping to raise standards throughout the school.
- The close working partnership between teachers and learning support assistants is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, especially those pupils with SEN.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in teachers' assessments and in the way they keep records throughout the year which detract from their overall effectiveness.
- There are also inconsistencies in marking and setting targets for individual pupils to achieve.

Commentary

14. The previous inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory. Overall 14 per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and one in 12 was good. Since that time, there has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching, as the table below illustrates. It is now good, overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching and just over three quarters of the lessons seen good or better. This has been brought about through careful monitoring of the quality of teaching, combined with clear performance targets and continuing professional development for all staff.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (16%)	23 (62%)	8(22%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. A key factor in the successful teaching is the way teachers make learning interesting and fun for the pupils. They plan and structure lessons effectively to hold pupils' interest and attention and move learning along at a good pace. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when there was no consistent approach to lesson planning. Lively teaching motivates pupils to learn and helps to ensure that they concentrate and work productively without being distracted. A particularly good example was the beginning of a Year 5 English lesson, in which the teacher engaged pupils from the outset in discussing the reasons for and against a proposed road development. The teacher made the task interesting for pupils by asking them to take on the roles of a farmer, a historian and a local resident as they considered the impact on people's homes, animal habitats and a historical site.

16. The previous inspection found that there were significant weaknesses in teachers' management of pupils' behaviour and the level of noise in lessons. There has been a very good improvement in this aspect. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and to work hard in lessons and are consistent in the way they manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and rarely have to be reminded or chastised for inappropriate behaviour. This very good behaviour extends beyond the classroom and is typical of the school's very good ethos, caring relationships and mutual respect amongst pupils and staff. Parents express very positive views of the quality of teaching and most are satisfied with the way teachers use homework to support pupils' learning. This is also an improvement since the last inspection.

17. Teachers also have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide suitably challenging work for pupils at all levels of attainment. This shared expectation of success is communicated very effectively to the pupils and helps to build their self-esteem and confidence. This has a good effect on their learning as they approach tasks with enjoyment and a desire to do well.

18. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and ICT is consistently good. There is good teaching of basic skills in lessons, coupled with a variety of well-planned opportunities for pupils to use and develop them further in subjects such as science, history, geography, RE and DT. As a result of this good teaching, standards have improved and the improvements are being sustained and built upon from year to year. For example, pupils in the current Year 3 achieved high standards in the 2003 national tests in writing and mathematics. The present Year 3 teacher is building further on these high standards as well as raising standards in reading through effective teaching of how to look for evidence in a piece of text. Some good teaching was also seen in RE lessons, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory.

19. The last inspection found that the partnership between teachers and learning support assistants was unsatisfactory because they did not work closely together to support pupils' learning. There has been a very good improvement in this aspect of the school's provision. Teachers and assistants work well together to plan work for different groups of pupils and to assess their progress. Learning support assistants are well informed about what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson, and fully understand their own role in enabling them to achieve it. They are fully involved in all parts of lessons and keep their own notes, which they later share with the class teacher, about how well pupils have learned or where difficulties have arisen. The ICT assistant provides very good support for teachers and pupils in all lessons in the computer suite.

20. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall, and include annual standardised tests in English and mathematics, regular reading assessments and portfolios of pupils' work to show their progress. Teachers also judge pupils' attainment in other subjects at the end of each year and pass information on to their new teacher. However, there are inconsistencies between teachers in the way they assess pupils' attainment against the levels of the National Curriculum. Teachers have devised their own methods of recording assessment information from week to week, which also results in inconsistencies. The school is aware of the need to sharpen teachers' skills in assessing and recording pupils' progress throughout the course of a school year and has identified this as its main priority for development in the school improvement plan.

21. Teachers' marking is also variable in effectiveness. Some shows pupils clearly how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work; some gives little constructive help. Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers set individual targets for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics. Some are specific, while others are too general, and some teachers only set targets for behaviour or personal development. There is no consistent system for setting targets that are linked to the levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils and parents are not sufficiently involved in setting targets and checking progress. Consequently, pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of how they can improve.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good. The school supports the pupils' learning outside of the school day and develops the range of their interests very well. The school's staffing and accommodation are satisfactory overall. Resources to support the implementation of the curriculum are good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage children make a good start and progress well because of the range of curricular activities organised for them.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is well balanced and interesting and good innovations are taking place.
- The pupils' learning is enriched successfully through a variety of educational visits and the very good range of clubs and extracurricular activities provided by the school.
- Equality of opportunity is good.
- Good links with local secondary schools enhance the curriculum for pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- A good range of resources supports and enhances pupils' learning.
- The accommodation is spacious and well kept but in poor condition externally.

Commentary

22. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is varied and interesting, incorporating all areas of learning successfully into broad topics and themes. The detailed weekly plans make a significant contribution to the children's good achievement. The accommodation is satisfactory for the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the children and includes a secure outdoor area, which has a satisfactory range of resources.

23. The school has successfully addressed the key issues identified at the time of last inspection when provision for RE, SEN and resources for literacy were judged as being key areas for development. The school now provides a well balanced curriculum that allows pupils to discover and work with a wide variety of activities. The school is working towards the introduction of a new curriculum map to allow for different subjects to be linked in new and interesting ways. It has identified the need for a skills development programme to run alongside this approach. ICT is used effectively in a range of aspects of the curriculum. It is most commonly used in English but many examples were seen of pupils' work enhanced in subjects such as history, art, mathematics and DT.

24. The school supports the curriculum well through a good range of educational visits. For example, a visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford brings the history topic on World War 2 to life. Other topics and subjects are similarly supported, such as geography and science through visits to Walton-on-the-Naze and the Wat Tyler Country Park. Pupils in Year 6 also benefit from a residential visit. The National Healthy Schools initiative has a high profile within the school and provides good support for pupils' personal, social and health education. There is a very good choice of out of school clubs, which are well supported. These include a magazine club, football and netball,

gardening, art, homework, cross-stitch, 'Roboteers' and a Connect 4 Challenge club. Pupils also enjoy singing in the choir and playing in the orchestra. This judgement supports the parents' view that the school provides a good range of activities.

25. The school has been involved in a number of successful projects with both the local Technology College and the Performing Arts College, which has enabled them to utilise their resources and expertise to lift pupils' interest and capability as well as supporting teachers' subject knowledge. The school's involvement with 'SET POINT' also provides pupils with a wide range of exciting activities such as a maths challenge day, a visit from 'Big Bugs' and the opportunity to become 'Rocketeers' for a day.

26. The school provides very well for pupils who have special educational needs, and they have full access to the school's curriculum. Individual education plans focus well on the needs of the pupils, and their targets are appropriate and achievable. A very good initiative is the very well organised folders that record targets and show how well the support went in each session and the progress pupils are making.

27. The school has a satisfactory number of teachers and a good number of teaching assistants which enables them to organise classes in a manner that supports the needs of pupils well. Teaching assistants' skills and expertise are used effectively by teachers, so that they are contributing positively to the learning process. As a result, pupils receive good equality of opportunity. The school's accommodation is spacious. The building provides a good sized working environment inside and the large playground and playing fields allow for extensive outdoor games. However, the external structure of the building is in need of extensive refurbishment. The school has a good number of well-chosen resources to support pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good. The provision of support based on monitoring academic achievement is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils' through seeking and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good procedures for health and safety.
- There are very good procedures for child protection and for the administration of first aid.
- Adults know pupils well and provide very good levels of care for all their needs.
- Pupils' feel very well supported by all staff in the school.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is very good.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good.
- The tracking of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, but is not done consistently well in all classes.
- The induction arrangements for pupils when they enter the school are good.

Commentary

28. The school has good health and safety procedures in place. Regular reviews are made of the site, which ensures that the buildings and grounds remain safe. The Headteacher has responsibility for health and safety matters and he carries out regular health and safety checks along with the Chair of Governors, the outcomes of which are regularly reported to the governors.

29. The Headteacher is the nominated officer for child protection procedures and has received appropriate training; he ensures that all staff are kept up to date with the procedures and that they

are well aware of the need to inform him should they have any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell, or who have specific medical needs are very effective and help them to feel safe and secure at school.

30. Pupils are very well supported and cared for. They have very good relationships with the staff who monitor their personal development very well. All adults know the pupils well and this enables them to give very good levels of support. Pupils are confident that staff are always available to turn to for support and advice and they feel well supported. Parents also confirmed that they are confident that pupils are well cared for and happy coming to school. The care and support given to pupils who have special educational needs are good. Pupils are well looked after and fully integrated into all that the school does. Reports and help from outside agencies are used well for reviewing pupils' progress.

31. Pupils' academic progress is tracked appropriately from year to year. The school has, however, recognised the need to improve its procedures to incorporate termly target setting for individual pupils in English and mathematics, with accompanying assessments to check that targets have been met. It is also seeking to improve the format in which these assessments are recorded to improve consistency and efficiency.

32. There are very good opportunities for pupils to offer their views about the school. Each year pupils are asked to complete a questionnaire. The school council seeks suggestions and ideas from the pupils in each year group; pupils are elected to represent their class and take their responsibilities seriously. They are confident that their views are taken seriously.

33. There are good induction arrangements for pupils, both when they enter the school in the Reception class as well as later on in the school. Procedures are well set out, with a range of visits made to the school prior to admission. This ensures that pupils feel welcome in the school, settle well and have a good start to their school life. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents overwhelmingly agreed that they felt the arrangements for settling in were good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and other schools are very good. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school.
- Parents make a positive contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.
- The school gives parents a very good range of information about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.
- Written reports about pupils' progress do not show parents clearly enough how well their children are progressing.
- Regular newsletters provide parents with a range of information about what is happening in school
- Links with other schools are very effective.
- Links with the community are good and contribute well to pupils' learning.

Commentary

34. Parents and carers have positive views of the school; in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents confirmed that they felt comfortable about approaching the school. The school encourages parents to support the school by helping in the classroom as well as through the

PTA, which raises funds on behalf of the school. Parents are also supportive of their children's learning by ensuring that homework is completed.

35. The school provides a regular newsletter for parents, which informs them of what is happening in school. Comprehensive information about the topics to be covered in class is sent out at the end of each term; at the pre-inspection parents meeting, parents confirmed that they valued this information.

36. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff formally and informally to discuss their children's progress. Written annual reports for parents are satisfactory: they inform parents what their children know, understand and can do, and some give areas for development, but this is not consistent across the school. Reports do not clearly inform parents how well their children are progressing, nor do they give information about how well children are doing in relation to national expectations. Parents of those pupils who have special educational needs are involved well in their children's education. They receive details of individual education plans, and there are termly opportunities for them to talk to teachers and the co-ordinator at consultation evenings

37. There are good links with other schools to assist with the transfer of pupils at the age of 11. Close links with three secondary schools benefit pupils through curriculum links such as activity days, as well as giving pupils the opportunity to visit the schools prior to transfer. This ensures that pupils feel comfortable when the time comes for them to change schools. Very effective links with the East Thurrock Cluster Group enable staff to meet together regularly which enhances curricular provision.

38. There are good links with the local community. There is a wide range of visitors to the school, which include members of the local church who come in for assemblies as well as local theatre groups and road safety officers. Visits to the local community include the choir carol singing and visits to local museums and country parks. In addition the pupils' support a number of charities each year

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good, but that of other curriculum areas is satisfactory. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's high aspirations and vision for the school inspire and motivate staff and pupils and set the tone for the school's ethos of high expectations.
- There is a shared commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and a strong expectation of success.
- The leadership and management for the provision of SEN are very good.
- Strategic planning is effective in improving provision and raising standards.
- There is a strong commitment to improving curricular provision but the role of subject co-ordinators is not yet fully effective in monitoring and evaluating teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; their involvement in strategic planning is satisfactory, as is their role as a critical friend.
- Very good financial management ensures that the school achieves its educational priorities.

Commentary

39. The headteacher's vision for the school and his high aspirations for the pupils underpin the school's very good ethos. Respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents, he has created a very strong team spirit throughout the school and maintains a clear focus on pupils' achievement. The headteacher is supported well by the assistant headteacher and the school's finance officer, who form the management team and share his ambitions for the school. The headteacher motivates colleagues and has a high profile around the school and in classrooms, providing an excellent role model for staff and pupils.

40. A defining factor of the school's ethos is the shared commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and a firm belief that all will succeed, whatever their background or capabilities. This is evident in the way the school has responded to the key issue from the last inspection regarding its unsatisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. Very good improvement in the quality of this provision, due largely to the very good leadership of the co-ordinator for SEN, has resulted from a concerted attempt to ensure that pupils with SEN receive the best possible education. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has done a great deal and has put in place the very good provision that the school offers these pupils. Because she is part-time, much of the administration is done in her own time. She leads by example with her very good support of pupils in classes, and by taking some of the withdrawal sessions that provide extra help for the pupils who need it. Another good example is in the school's response to raising boys' achievement, which is now good. Investment in resources, learning support assistants and professional development for all staff has been well planned to ensure success in addressing previous weaknesses.

41. The last inspection found that strategic planning was insufficiently informed by analysis of the school's performance. This situation is greatly improved. There is detailed analysis of the school's performance in national and internal tests in order to identify priorities for improvement. This has led, for example, to a focus on improving standards in writing and mathematics, and, in particular on boys' achievement which was lagging behind that of girls. The headteacher's regular monitoring of teaching across the school, as well as that carried out by some subject co-ordinators, has also contributed to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

42. The school improvement plan shows a continuing commitment to improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. For example, the current plan includes music and DT as priorities for improvement, and the school has already taken steps to improve provision in both of these subjects. The role of curriculum co-ordinators is developing well in terms of providing support for colleagues, drafting policies and schemes of work and ensuring that their subjects are adequately resourced. However, the role of most subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating standards, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning is at a relatively early stage of development. This was also identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. The school has highlighted this as a priority for development in the school improvement plan for the coming year.

43. Many governors are relatively new and inexperienced in the role and are still reliant on the headteacher for information and guidance. The headteacher and finance officer keep them very well informed about all aspects of the school and, as a result, they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are also beginning to ask challenging questions in their critical friend role. Their contribution to the strategic management of the school is satisfactory, and growing as they become more familiar with their areas of responsibility. For example, the governor who oversees special educational needs liaises regularly with the SEN co-ordinator to keep abreast of developments. Governors fully meet their statutory obligations.

44. The financial management of the school is very good. The finance officer works very closely with the headteacher to set and monitor the budget and ensures that governors are kept well informed. Long-term financial planning is efficient and effective in enabling the school to take steps to meet potential shortfalls and to ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school has carried forward a much larger than average budget surplus for the past two years, which is now being used to meet a shortfall in funding

in the current year and to sustain staffing levels in the interests of the pupils. Financial resources have been used very effectively to improve the provision for ICT, including the installation of a suite of computers. Similarly, money has been allocated to improving the range and quality of books in the school, with a specific focus on those that appeal to boys. This has had a positive effect on standards in English for all pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	547798
Total expenditure	549992
Expenditure per pupil	2683

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59254
Balance carried forward to the next	57060

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

45. The strengths recognised during the last inspection have been maintained and further improvements have been made to the accommodation and the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching is never less than good and some very good practice was seen in the Reception class. Consistently good teaching across all areas ensures that children make good progress and by the end of Reception they comfortably reach the early learning goals, with many exceeding them in communication, language and literacy, physical and creative development and in personal, social and emotional development. This represents particularly good achievement from their mostly below average starting point in their language and literacy skills. Attainment is in line with expectations in their mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The Reception teacher provides good leadership and has created an effective team that work well together.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and reach standards above those expected for their age by the end of the Reception year.
- Very good working environment provided.
- Relationships between adults and children are very good.

Commentary

46. This area of learning is given a high priority when children start school and they achieve well as a result of good teaching. The trusting relationships and warm personalities in the Reception class help children to recognise that each of them is valued and this helps to promote their self-esteem and confidence. An enthusiasm to try hard and do well is evident. Staff expect the children to make choices and become independent learners, taking every opportunity to encourage this. As a result, the children's ability to initiate ideas for themselves is well developed. The children feel confident and secure and are completely engrossed in their activities. They also sit quietly and listen attentively when necessary.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good quality experiences provided.
- The children achieve very well from a below average starting point.

Commentary

47. Children achieve very well in this area of learning. Teaching is very good as great attention is paid to improving a wide range of skills in all children. High priority is given to promoting language skills, particularly through role-play, and this results in significant benefits to all of their other learning. An early start is made on an appreciation of books and children make particularly good progress in reading. All children listen well to stories and most can recognise letter sounds and competently read a suitable range of words in simple texts. The promotion of early writing skills is very good and there was much evidence of children writing independently, sometimes at length. The Reception teacher provides a range of exciting activities that encourage children to write, such as writing a message in a bottle about their own personal experiences of going to the beach or a park. They are taught to form letters correctly and a good number of children are already beginning to write in a joined up style. Very good use is made of ICT to support the development of children's writing skills. The work based on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' was particularly impressive as they made storybooks and wrote letters to the bears from Goldilocks, all of which were word-processed and beautifully presented. All children benefit as a result of the stimulating and very well planned activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Plenty of mathematical experiences linked to numbers are provided.
- Good development of mathematical language.

Commentary

48. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Teaching is good and the children's learning takes place through relevant play and games that make them want to take part. Adults take every opportunity to develop the children's mathematical skills and, particularly, mathematical language. For example, when filling bottles with water the language of capacity such as 'full, empty, almost and holds more' was introduced to the children in a way that made learning fun. Children are familiar with number rhymes and enjoy using counting skills to play games. When, for instance, singing the song, 'Ten Green Bottles' they counted the bottles, put them in the correct order and learnt how to take away from 10 as they knocked each bottle over in turn and had to count how many were left standing. Adults use good clear questioning and correct mathematical vocabulary when teaching the children. The children's previous work showed that they had made a good start in recognising coins, comparing size and repeating two colour patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good range of experiences provided for children to investigate.
- Children use computers confidently to support their learning.

Commentary

49. Achievement in this broad area of development is good. Teaching is good with strengths in the organisation of suitable topics to stimulate further learning. For example, this term, the topics covered are based on water and mini-beasts. Children are studying the life-cycle of the frog through their own observations and considering the use of water for cleaning and washing. Through this they have developed an awareness of the past as they looked at ways of washing and ironing clothes then and now. A good variety of interesting activities is well planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. The use of toy creatures named 'Querks', is particularly effective in developing such things as awareness of direction in an enjoyable way. For example, when taking 'Bogdon' to visit the nearby building site to watch the diggers they knew they had to take him east. Role-play is also used well to increase their knowledge and understanding of everyday life. Play areas are converted to enable children to use their imagination, such as assembling a strong wall as 'Bob the Builder' and enjoying a lunch break in 'Bob the Builders Café'.

50. A particular strength is the children's use of computers. Children were seen to be using the mouse confidently to select items to make things happen and many were already adding text to the pictures they had created. They know how to change colours, use different tools to create visual effects and can print and log off independently. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is successfully enhanced through stories and special events such as the celebration of festivals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop their manual dexterity.
- The teaching of physical education is good

Commentary

51. Children achieve well in physical development. There is a safe outside play area attached to the Reception class which provides them with a suitable range of opportunities to enable them to gain confidence and extend their skills in running and in using wheeled toys. The time outdoors is planned to extend the learning that occurs in the classroom and the opportunities provided support the physical development of children well. Most children were seen to move with suitable control and increasing confidence as they rode the tricycles and crawled through a tunnel. The quality of teaching is good overall and activities in PE lessons have a real sense of purpose and a good level of challenge. In the lesson observed, children explored different ways of balancing. They demonstrated that they were able to hold balances well on different parts of the body and join three different balances together in a sequence. Children are provided with a good range of interesting tasks to support the development of their fine motor skills by for example, handling dough, filling containers in the water tray and building models with construction sets. They use pencils, crayons and brushes efficiently and demonstrate increasing skill and control in the use of scissors when for example, cutting and folding paper to make a frog with concertina legs.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- The range of well-planned creative activities.

- Good range of opportunities for imaginative play.

Commentary

52. Children achieve well in most aspects of this area of development. They work with a range of different media and materials and produce some work that is of a high quality. For example, their observational drawings and paintings of trees and flowers are very effective and show great attention to detail. They have made bubble prints and particularly enjoyed 'painting' the wall they built with large play bricks. Teaching is good overall. Resources are organised well, enabling children to select activities. There are many opportunities for imaginative play and the children need no encouragement to participate, for example, as 'Bob the Builder' using tools for building a wall and in 'Bob the Builder's Café' taking orders and serving food. They play willingly and co-operatively with other children. Adults provide sensitive support to the children while they play without dominating their creativity. The organisation enables all children to experience the activities on offer. In music they are familiar with a suitable selection of songs and sing tunefully. A good response was seen to the stop and start hand signals of a conductor as they sang.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Speaking and listening skills are being developed well.
- Good teaching of reading skills and very good resources enable pupils to achieve well.
- Writing skills are taught effectively within meaningful contexts.
- Teachers make very good use of ICT to develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory but not always used consistently to show pupils how to improve.
- The co-ordinator provides sound leadership in the subject but is not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision.
- Language and literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum.

Commentary

53. Over the past few years the school has worked successfully to raise standards in English. Teachers identified weaknesses in boys' achievement and have invested in resources and planned activities that appeal to boys as much as girls. There has been a strong emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills by introducing a wider range of opportunities for pupils to write in different genres and in greater depth. Teachers have had considerable well planned training to enable them to improve their own skills in teaching the subject. Underlying all of these initiatives has been a rise in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result of all of these factors, pupils now achieve well in English. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, which is higher than the results of the 2003 tests, and in writing, as they were in the 2003 national tests.

54. In 2003, the Year 6 test results were in the top five per cent of schools in the country and showed that pupils had made very good progress. This group of children had achieved well throughout the school and contained few pupils with special educational needs. The current Year 6, on the other hand, contains a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a very

high proportion of pupils who have joined the school at various times during their primary education. Standards are in line with the national average in the current Year 6. This represents good achievement as standards for this year group were below average when they were in Year 2. Of the 18 pupils who have joined the class at various stages during the past five years, half have special educational needs. These pupils receive very good support from teachers and assistants which helps them to achieve well.

55. The previous inspection found that speaking and listening skills were below average in Year 2 and Year 6. The school has introduced more opportunities for teachers to develop these skills in a planned way. For example, all teachers involve pupils well in discussions and ask them to explain their ideas in whole class sessions at the beginning and end of lessons. They have taught pupils to listen carefully when someone else is speaking; this was a strong feature in most lessons. As a result of this increased emphasis on developing oral skills, standards are now in line with the national average.

56. Standards in reading have also risen throughout the school as a result of improvements in teaching. They are above average in Year 2, which is an improvement on the 2003 national test results and on the standards found in the previous inspection. Standards in Year 6 are in line with the national average. Achievement in reading is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers provide a variety of well-planned experiences for pupils to read independently and in groups with the teacher, where they discuss storyline, characters and authors' techniques in increasing depth as they get older and become more competent. A significant factor in these improvements has been the school's commitment to purchasing a wide variety of good quality reading material for pupils of all ages. The school libraries are very well stocked and attractively laid out which encourages pupils to browse and enjoy books. Teachers have also ensured that the range of books and other reading resources include those that appeal to boys' interests. This has had a major impact on raising boys' achievement over the past two years.

57. The school identified the need to raise standards in writing, especially for boys, and has been successful as a result of the initiatives introduced over the past two or three years. Standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive. Teachers place a strong emphasis on showing pupils how to construct a piece of writing in the early stages of learning and build on this effectively as pupils progress. Pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to write for different purposes and in different contexts. For example, they write stories, formal letters, lists, and poems and recount what they have done in a science investigation or explain how they have made something in DT. There is good teaching of spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

58. There are many examples of the very good use of ICT to enhance and develop pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils in Year 1 type simple sentences to tell the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* while Year 2 pupils type out information they have found about famous people. Year 4 pupils created World War 2 posters designed to give information to the public, and pupils in Year 6 carry out research on the Internet and write what they have learned about the Victorians. Overall, displays of pupils' written work, both hand-written and word-processed, are of a high standard and reflect the school's commitment to ensuring writing remains a clear focus for the whole school.

59. There is an appropriate range of assessments in reading and writing to track pupils' progress from year to year. The school is currently developing a system which would incorporate setting individual targets for pupils each term and tracking their progress through the levels of the National Curriculum. It has identified the need to provide training for teachers in assessing pupils against National Curriculum levels, as this is an area where there are inconsistencies between teachers. Similarly, the setting of targets for individual pupils to achieve and teachers' marking are variable in quality and effectiveness. As a result, pupils are not shown clearly what they need to do to reach a higher level of achievement and are not involved in assessing their own progress.

60. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership in the subject and is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. She has worked hard to improve resources and to support staff in the development of boys' literacy skills and in improving achievement in writing. However, the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning is in the early stages of development. The school has identified this aspect as a priority for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. This is a significant strength of the provision for English. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use and develop their language and literacy skills in a range of subjects. Oral language is developed well through discussions and questioning across all subjects. Reading and writing skills are used and improved through carefully planned opportunities in history, DT, RE, geography, ICT and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's results in national tests were very good in 2003.
- Teaching is good, with some that is very good.
- Pupils generally make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard.
- ICT is used very well to enhance pupils' learning.
- National Curriculum levels are not used for pupils' specific targets, enabling them to know how to achieve the next stage.
- Assessment records are not used consistently through Years 3-6

Commentary

62. Standards of attainment are average in the current Year 2. This represents lower standards than those attained in the National Curriculum tests in 2003, which were well above average, but is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Almost a third of the pupils are attaining Level 3. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is also average. These findings represent good improvement since the last inspection, but pupils' attainment is lower than the results of last year's National Curriculum tests, which were above average. However, about a third of the pupils in this Year 6 are entered on the special needs register, and over half joined the school after their Reception Year.

Pupils in all years make good progress and achieve well, including pupils who have SEN, because they are so well supported by teachers and assistants.

63. Teachers make mathematics lessons interesting, and, as a result, pupils enjoy the lessons and apply themselves to their work very well. One of the ways that teachers engage pupils' interest is the very good use of computers in mathematics, which also improves pupils' learning and achievement very well. It extends what they do in the classroom and adds a strong element of enjoyment. Several lessons were seen when pupils used the computer suite. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, standards were above average when everyone used computers to make repeating patterns and clicked the correct icon to turn their shapes through a quarter turn at a time. Because there are more than enough computers to go round, pupils all had their turn frequently, working in pairs. Later, in another good lesson, this time in Year 3, pupils learnt how to construct Carroll diagrams when sorting and handling data. They successfully sorted by shape and by colour. Year 1 were also seen doing well, using computers for a shopping programme, learning to give change, and making good progress.

64. Teachers have established good relationships with pupils and their expectations for pupils' good behaviour and hard work are to be seen clearly in lessons. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher's humour and partnership with the pupils led them to work very hard, mostly independently, but with very good support from the adults present, including the special needs co-ordinator. In all of the lessons seen, those pupils who have special educational needs were given good levels of support, both from teachers and assistants. They are provided with work that is suitable for them, and assistants usually work with them in group time. Teachers draw these pupils into full class sessions well and make sure that they contribute to class work when the lesson is drawn together at the end.

65. Mathematics is led and managed satisfactorily by a new co-ordinator, who has made a good start by bringing the resources up to date and revising the policy for mathematics. There has been no chance for her to monitor teaching and learning in the short time she has been the co-ordinator.

66. When targets are set for individual pupils, they are not always specific enough to ensure that pupilst understand what they need to do in order to gain the next level of attainment. In general, although assessment is satisfactory, recording procedures are not consistent throughout Years 3 to 6, and pupils' records of attainment are not completed to enable progress to be seen at a glance.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Mathematical skills are used well across other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in an experiment which included science and DT, pupils in Year 6 had to calculate how much weight a carrier bag could hold and they measured this in kilograms and Newtons. The use of mathematical skills in ICT is very good and the school has good computer programmes that further pupils' mathematical skills well. Younger pupils use counting skills in dance lessons, and in geography some pupils calculate the distance between places, or work out travel timetables.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills.
- The learning tasks set for pupils do not always sufficiently match their attainment levels.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well through science.
- Most marking gives pupils little guidance on how to improve their work.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support learning in science.
- The role of the co-ordinator in checking pupils' work and teacher's planning is not yet fully effective.

Commentary

68. Standards in science are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory overall. However, the analysis of pupils' work in the current Year 6 class shows that they have made good progress, as they entered Year 3 with below average attainment. There are also a significant number of pupils with SEN in Year 6. Throughout the school, there has been a good improvement in experimental and investigational work. Pupils are being given well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments and learn the correct scientific vocabulary during practical activities.

69. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and is based on frequent opportunities for practical investigation so that pupils learn to approach this in a sensible way. This was well illustrated when pupils in Year 2 investigated the effect water had on the germination of seeds. Pupils made sensible predictions and stressed the importance of the need for a fair test in their investigation. Opportunities to apply their numeracy skills are suitably developed through this unit of work as they measure the growth of sunflowers. They identify the differences between plants and animals and know that humans need different types of food to stay healthy. They sort materials into groups according to their properties and know that different materials can be changed in shape by twisting, squeezing, stretching and bending. Their understanding of pushes and pulls as forces and electricity is satisfactory. However, the analysis of pupils' work indicates that much of the work set is the same for all pupils and showed some over direction by the teacher in the recording of their work.

70. Teaching seen in Years 5 and 6 was satisfactory, overall. There is good emphasis in lessons on the correct use of specific vocabulary, which ensures that all pupils fully understand scientific terms. Pupils are encouraged to think clearly about what they are doing so that most pupils are able to predict outcomes and suggest which variables should be altered in an investigation. In a Year 5 lesson for example, the teacher presented information and gave simple demonstrations on how quickly water cools after heating. This captured the pupils' interest quickly and together with skilful questioning, it helped him assess the pupils' understanding about what makes a fair test. However, in the lessons seen, the follow up work provided did not help all pupils, particularly the more able, to improve their enquiry skills further.

71. In Year 6, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of life processes and the wide variety of living things, including micro-organisms. They use their knowledge of materials to describe changes such as melting and freezing being reversible and recognise that heating a mixture, as for instance when cooking cakes, is irreversible. Pupils know about the different kinds of forces and understand what happens when a force is applied. They can use a force meter to weigh a series of objects suspended in air and water and have gained sufficient understanding of electricity to describe which materials are good electrical conductors or insulators. Throughout the school, marking offers pupils little guidance on how they can improve their work.

72. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator provides useful support and guidance when needed. However, there has not been any systematic monitoring of teachers' planning or pupils' work. As a result the co-ordinator does not have an overview of teaching and learning. Much of the work makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, apart from research work, ICT is rarely used in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.
- Teachers make very effective use of the ICT suite.
- The specialist learning support assistant contributes significantly to the good provision.
- Good leadership ensures that the subject is developed well but there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor pupils' achievement and the curriculum.
- ICT is used very effectively to enhance learning in other subjects.

Commentary

73. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. Since that time the school has made a significant investment in developing ICT. The school day was extended to provide more time for teaching the subject and a suite of computers was installed that allows for whole class teaching of skills. National guidelines for the ICT curriculum have been implemented and adapted to the school's needs and appropriate assessment procedures are in place. All of these factors have had a positive influence on pupils' achievement.

74. The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers have benefited from training in the subject and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use computers, practise skills and apply them in a wide range of situations. Very good teaching was evident in Year 6, where pupils were introduced to the Power Point program in the first lesson of the week, and, in the second lesson, were able to use the program to create a multi-media presentation about Britain Since 1948. All teachers make very effective use of the ICT suite to enrich pupils' learning. It is used very well in mathematics lessons, for example, to present new challenges to pupils in interesting ways. It was evident that pupils thoroughly enjoyed working in the suite as they immediately settled to work and remained engrossed in their tasks throughout the lesson.

75. The school also employs a learning support assistant for ICT who supports all teachers in lessons in the ICT suite and acts as a 'troubleshooter' should problems arise with the equipment. She has high levels of expertise in ICT which she uses very effectively to teach skills and prepare the hardware and software for each lesson. This both relieves pressure on class teachers and ensures that they are able to use lesson time very productively.

76. Strong leadership in the subject has ensured that it has developed very well since the last inspection. Governors and staff have worked well together to improve the quality of provision and the co-ordinator has a clear idea of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. A relatively weaker aspect is the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, teaching and learning and pupils' progress. The school has identified this as a priority for development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. This is a significant strength of the provision. Teachers plan a variety of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills through other subjects. On display around the school are many examples of pupils' writing, word-processed and often enlivened by illustrations. Pupils in Year 1 have created block graphs and pictograms in mathematics and Year 2 pupils have produced pictures using a drawing program. Year 5 pupils used computers to explain and illustrate their work on package design.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in geography are average and achievement is satisfactory.
- There is insufficient teaching of higher level geographical skills.

78. In geography, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by Year 2 and Year 6, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In Year 2, pupils compiled a list of things they would find and do at the seaside. By considering places they had visited they put forward a suitable range of observations

about features of the seaside. However, the resources provided for pupils were limited and did not really extend their learning. This work is planned to link with history as they consider the historical perspective of seaside places in the past. Previous work shows pupils had used their knowledge of the immediate locality to produce a simple tourist guide to the nearby town centre, identifying the main facilities available.

79. In Year 3, their understanding is developed further when pupils learn how the local area has changed and begin to consider if the changes have led to an improvement, particularly in their own school environment. The work of pupils in Year 4 shows that they study Mexico in some detail, and begin to understand how life in a Mexican village differs from their own. Pupils in Year 6 spoke confidently about their work on water. They understand a four-figure grid reference and can use the key to discover the correct symbols.

80. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work covers all aspects of the required curriculum and in Year 6 is closely linked to the residential visits, so that pupils can apply skills in a practical situation. Other subjects such as literacy, history and information and communication technology are used to provide suitable links with geography. Currently, while time allocated for the subject is adequate overall, there is not sufficient time for pupils to develop more demanding high level geographical skills in order to attain better standards.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work provided interests pupils.
- They have a secure knowledge of the periods of history that they have covered.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning.
- The monitoring role of the co-ordinator is a relative weakness.

Commentary

81. Overall, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average in Year 2 and in Year 6. The analysis of pupils' work showed that pupils are making good progress, which is due to the quality of teaching. Pupils build well on previous knowledge and understanding of events and changes in the past as they move through the school and overall, are achieving well.

82. Pupils' previous work in Year 2 shows that they have an emerging sense of chronology as they each produce a history book of their own life. They know about the Great Fire of London in 1666 and make good use of their literacy and ICT skills, as they write an eye witness account of the fire and produce a simple newspaper report for 'The London Gazette'. In their study of the life of Florence Nightingale, they compare and contrast the conditions in hospitals during the Crimean War with those of today.

83. By Year 6, pupils have progressed from recalling facts to making judgements, such as comparing the lives of the rich and poor in Victorian times with their own lives. Year 5 pupils' work on the Ancient Greeks is presented well and shows their knowledge and understanding to be satisfactory overall. Year 6 pupils develop this further, making good use of research skills to extend their knowledge of Victorian life, and to bring out the main themes in their work. Pupils use the Internet well to further their knowledge.

84. From the samples of work and in the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning in history is good. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection, when teaching and learning were satisfactory. Year 6 pupils' work has been closely linked to literacy. For example when studying the Victorians, pupils wrote reports as if they were a coal miner. Strengths in the teaching of history and its effect on learning were evident in a good Year 6 lesson about Britain since 1948. The teacher's effective questioning enabled pupils to consider the changes that had occurred in work, home life, technology and sport since 1948. After discussing what they wanted to find out, pupils decided on the questions they could ask that would help them with their enquiry. Pupils were absorbed in their work and by the end of the lesson had made a good start to conducting an historical enquiry.

85. Literacy skills are used well in history and there are good opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills, which enhance the development of their historical enquiry skills. Pupils in Year 6 have started to create a series of slides about Britain since 1948 in preparation for a multi-media presentation using PowerPoint. Visitors, such as grandparents, who speak about their early lives, and visits to places of historical interest, such as the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, enhance pupils' learning well.

86. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a suitable overview of its development, but has not observed any teaching and rarely examines pupils' work, apart from displays around the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The programme for RE successfully relates the teaching and learning to pupils' everyday lives.
- In the lessons seen, teaching was good.
- The programmes of study are satisfactorily linked to the locally Agreed Syllabus for RE.
- The schemes of work often have no logical sequence to them.

Commentary.

87. The attainment of pupils of all ages meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for RE and their achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average. In discussion with Year 6 pupils it is apparent that teachers often relate RE to the experiences that pupils have in their everyday lives. For example, they have spent time thinking about friends and the nature of friendship. They discussed what attributes they would look for in a friend such as loyalty and being there for one another. Year 6 pupils have recently studied Judaism and demonstrate knowledge of a synagogue, where they know that women sit apart from men. They understand the importance of the scrolls of the Law and that they should not be touched by the reader, but that the text should be followed using a pointer.

88. Standards in RE have improved since the last inspection because the quality of teaching is now of a higher standard. Teaching and learning in the two lessons seen were good. In Year 1, the teacher made sure that pupils were able to talk about their own experiences as well as hearing and acting out a Biblical story. They heard the story of the storm on the lake and used a large blue sheet for the water and a paper cut-out for the boat. This led to a discussion about times when they needed someone to make them feel better, such as parents or grandparents. This was related well to Jesus making the disciples feel better when they were all in the boat. Pupils were all well behaved and took turns to give their examples of when someone had made them feel better.

89. In the Year 4 lesson, pupils were thinking about the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah. The teacher had prepared a good display on the board using pictures and titles. Pupils understand some of the terms used, such as the shofar (the ram's horn trumpet) and the challah (plait of bread used at the festival). By the end of the lesson pupils had learnt well and could answer some questions about what they had heard and seen. Analysis of pupils' work shows that they hear Bible stories such as those about Moses, and they often relate these to their own lives. For example, in Year 4, when they heard the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments, pupils wrote their own ten rules for living. These included, 'do as you are told', and 'don't fight in the playground'. Pupils have studied the story of Abraham and the origins of the Passover in the Exodus story. Pupils in Year 2 have thought about the story of St. Francis and how his life changed so radically. Pupils visit the local church and are knowledgeable about what they found there including what things are used for.

90. The new locally Agreed Syllabus is to be adopted in September 2004 and this will be used to provide a structure for schemes of work and study. At present the topics are presented with too little regard for continuity. For example, there are several stories and pieces of work that relate to the Old Testament and therefore could be included in Judaism as a block of study. Instead they are interspersed with other topics that do not follow on well and have nothing to do with Judaism. Discussions with Year 2 pupils showed that they could remember some of the story about Daniel though not in any detail. They were much clearer about the Christmas story. Likewise, Year 6 were not at all clear about the story of the Plagues and the Exodus, but talked well about loyalty and trust, relating well to assemblies as well as religious education lessons. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. Inspectors were unable to make reliable judgements about art and music as it was possible to observe only one lesson in each subject. The teaching seen was satisfactory. Evidence from displays and teachers' planning indicates that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum in art, which includes drawing, painting, printing, collage, weaving and sculpture. Pupils in Year 2 have created symmetrical patterns and made observational drawings of fruit, sometimes using ICT as well as paint, crayon and pastels. Year 4 pupils made effective charcoal drawings of half of a tiger's face to match the other half of a picture. Pupils in Year 6 sketched parts of the local landscape while Year 5 pupils painted pictures in the style of Van Gogh and Seurat. Some pupils take part in an art club and a cross stitch club which further enhance their skills in art and design.

92. The school has identified **music** as a priority for development in its improvement plan. A new scheme of work has been purchased, which is being adapted to meet the needs of the school. Teachers' planning shows that there is insufficient differentiation in the work that is planned for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, planning shows that there is progression in the teaching of singing, for example, as older pupils learn multi-part songs and develop musical ideas in greater depth. A specialist teacher has recently been appointed to teach some lessons and to support staff, none of whom is a music specialist, in developing their own expertise. The school has a strong commitment to music as an extracurricular activity. There are two choirs and an orchestra who take part in a number of local festivals and concerts. The school's strong links with a local Performing Arts College further enhance this provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- From the evidence gathered, indications are that standards are above average.
- Pupils have good opportunities to design, make, and evaluate their work.
- After school clubs provide good opportunities to extend pupils' experiences and skills.

Commentary

93. Indications are that standards in DT are above average and pupils' achievement is good. This was borne out in both lessons observed, one in Year 1 and one in Year 2, where pupils attained above average standards in their work as a result of good teaching. Year 1 pupils, in a very good lesson, were seen making models using different media such as plasticine, tissue, card and shiny materials. They used books and models to give them ideas and some of the models that they made of a squirrel were very good. The room was a hive of activity and pupils behaved very well, fully engrossed in their work and very pleased to show it off when finished. In Year 2, pupils were designing a hot-air balloon. The teacher used good questioning to draw pupils into thinking their designs through, discussing which colours would go with which. They wrote lists of materials needed and there were good links to other subjects such as geography, art, English, and ICT. The teacher presented a good challenge to pupils who were delighted to work at this project and they behaved very well. Clear explanations and continuing good questions enabled pupils to make good progress and learn well. Year 2 pupils have also made hats, using their measuring skills in mathematics as they needed to measure their heads first to find the correct size.

94. Displays round the school also provided good evidence of pupils' work and showed that good teaching takes place. For example, Year 5 pupils have made some good musical instruments using lolly sticks, paint cans and tubing. They made pan pipes, drums and flutes and a very good shaker using a frame and bottle tops on strings. Year 5 and 6 pupils have produced some good designs for various kinds of bridges. This was an extended project and the results are on display in the dining room. They used balsa wood, building kits and art straws. The designs show that they researched well and know about several sorts of bridges such as arch and suspension bridges. In after school clubs pupils have made models using cams, powered buggies and learnt appropriate skills.

95. Discussions with pupils show that younger and older pupils are enthusiastic about their work in this subject. Year 2 pupils talked well about finger puppets made of felt, and the large Joseph's coat they made altogether, with a good link to RE. Year 6 pupils spoke well about their bridges, buggies, and the roboters club they attended. Skills such as sawing, drilling and soldering are used well and pupils can accurately describe how they did things when making models. They have the chance to evaluate their work and think about how they would improve it next time. Quite clearly, the pupils are very enthusiastic about DT and are very interested in all they do. The co-ordinator provides good, enthusiastic leadership in the subject which helps to ensure that it maintains a high profile throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in PE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The requirements of the curriculum are met well.
- In the dance and gymnastics lessons seen, some pupils achieved above average standards.
- The programme for swimming enables pupils to learn well and gain Water Skills certificates.
- After school clubs add much to the provision for PE.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

96. Very few PE lessons could be observed during the inspection. Evidence was gained from

discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of teachers' planning and the lessons observed. Indications are that standards overall are average for pupils' ages. However, in some instances, pupils attained above average standards. These included a lesson about the interpretation of circus music in Year 3, and some of the pupils' gymnastics under the leadership of the co-ordinator in a Year 2 lesson. Pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well in PE.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good, with some that was very good. Teachers have established good routines so that pupils respond well to instructions and behave very well. They stop instantly when asked, and they are very aware of safety when running about the hall or moving apparatus. Teachers plan well and provide good sequences of lessons to arrive at the learning objectives. For example, in Year 3 pupils have had several lessons building up movements to simulate circus movements such as marching, tightrope walking and using a unicycle. Some of their interpretations were of a high standard, and when they put the various movements into one sequence they all did very well. Everyone put great effort into it and really created the atmosphere of a circus, marching, playing the trombone and juggling. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator was clear to see in a Year 2 lesson when pupils were making sequences using jumps and rolls and adding good starts and finishes. Several pupils, mostly members of the school gymnastics club, reached good standards in their performances. There was a good sense of partnership between teacher and pupils, and they all tried hard to make up the sequences asked for.

98. Teachers' planning provides good coverage of all the topics and skills required for the subject. These include games skills, athletics, dance and gymnastics, as well as swimming. Pupils complete the swimming programme by the end of Year 3, and they are entered for the Water Skills certificates at appropriate levels. This means that the very great majority of pupils can swim by the time they leave the school. Most of them can swim well by Year 3. Planning shows that Year 6 pupils are engaged in cricket this term, learning the skills needed for batting and bowling as well as fielding.

99. Discussions with pupils showed that they are keen on PE and both younger and older pupils talked knowledgeably about their lessons. Year 2 pupils know about jumps and landings, all sorts of rolls on the mats, and the use of some apparatus. Year 6 pupils were keen to talk about clubs such as football, for both boys and girls, rounders and tennis. They are enthusiastic about athletics and were especially good at describing some interpretative dance they had done. In this they worked out movements to convey words given by the teacher such as glue, water and even spaghetti Bolognese!

100. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher who also leads the gymnastics club. Clearly, physical education is enjoyed by the pupils and plays a large part in the success of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very good ethos strongly promotes pupils' personal development.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for discussion
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take responsibility
- Health education is planned well.

101. The strong caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development well and the teachers' use of '*Circle Time*' provides suitable opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics as and when needed. Stories are also used to help pupils consider their own personal effectiveness and learn that mistakes will be made. Pupils in Year 3 for example were considering things they

should have tried harder at, after listening to the story of 'The Discontented Pig'. As pupils get older, teachers give them increasing responsibility, preparing them well for the next stage of their education. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are very confident and independent individuals and able to discuss a range of issues based on their own interests. The work pupils undertake in personal, social and health education is not formally recorded.

102. As part of the personal, social and health education programme the school nurse works with pupils in Year 6 for sex education lessons. Healthy living, drugs and other substance misuse are sensitively covered in science lessons. The school has participated in a wide range of health education events that make a good contribution to pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 attended a 'Crucial Crew Activity Day' where they were involved in a health and safety programme. The school is currently working towards Healthy Schools recognition.

103. In discussions with pupils, they feel confident that they can discuss any problems with any adult in the school, which shows that very good relationships are firmly established. The School Council provides many opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school and helps to develop their awareness of citizenship. The appointment of a School's Worker in a joint partnership venture between the schools and churches within the locality further enhances pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship.

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

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory

(4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).