

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRANGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Felixstowe

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124630

Headteacher: Miss S Frost

Lead inspector: Miss M A Warner

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Inspection number: 256238

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	172
School address:	Grange Road Felixstowe Suffolk
Postcode:	IP11 2LA
Telephone number:	01394 283912
Fax number:	01394 277921
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev R Corke
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Grange Community Primary School is smaller than most schools nationally, with 183 pupils, aged 4 to 11, on roll. This includes 12 children who attend part-time in the Reception. No children have been to Nursery and, although only a few children have not had any pre-school experience, almost all children begin school with standards that are far below those expected in all areas of learning. Children enter the Reception class full-time in the term they are five, with some attending part-time before this. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 28 per cent, is above the national average which is 18 per cent. The percentage of pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs, 34 per cent, is well above the national average at 18 per cent. Three per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need, which is above the national average of two per cent. The school serves a mixed housing estate of private and housing association accommodation from inside and outside the catchment area. One pupil, whose first language is believed not to be English, has recently joined the school from Malaysia.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17288	M A Warner	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science, Music, Citizenship, English as an additional language.
1165	P Dannheisser	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
22631	C Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics, Art and design, Design and technology, Physical education, Foundation Stage.
7813	K Wood	<i>Team inspector</i>	English, Information and communication technology, Geography, History, Religious education, Special educational needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is fairly effective but there are also serious weaknesses.** The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is generally good. Subject leaders carry out their responsibilities well and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The governance of the school is good and the school provides an effective and enriched curriculum. The school provides satisfactory value for money. However, there are serious weaknesses in aspects of school leadership and management, teaching and management in the Foundation Stage, and provision for more able pupils in English and mathematics.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Aspects of leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in, and the management of, the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.
- Standards in English and mathematics are well below average by Year 6.
- More able pupils are insufficiently challenged, as seen in reading, writing and Year 2 pupils' science books.
- Standards in science are in line with the national average in Year 6, and in information and communication technology (ICT) they are above it. Pupils achieve well in these subjects because of confident teaching and well-planned activities.
- Subject leaders carry out their roles well.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6: this is after a time of instability for Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and adults listen to and value pupils' views.
- The governance and financial management of the school are good.
- Links with other schools and provision for extra-curricular activities are good.

Whilst the school is fairly effective, overall, it is not as effective as it was at the last inspection. Since the last inspection, standards in science and ICT have improved, but standards in English and mathematics have declined. Because of changed circumstances, the headteacher, who gave sound leadership and clear direction to the work of the school at the last inspection, is not at present giving the clear leadership that is needed. The deputy headteacher, when in the position of acting headteacher for part of the week, is expected to carry out too many responsibilities. He has many strengths and has shown initiative in this acting headteacher role. Monitoring and self-evaluation have recently improved. However, clear lines of responsibility and a workable management structure need urgently to be drawn up and rigorously monitored, to enable members of the senior management team to work effectively to their strengths.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the school,** although standards are below average. Standards in the Foundation Stage are very low and children's achievement falls well short of expectations. Records show that children are not expected to reach any of the Early Learning Goals, nationally set for children of this age, by the time they leave the Reception class.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 are well below average. By Year 6, pupils have made some progress, but standards in English and mathematics, as seen during the inspection and in test results, are still well below the national average. In 2003, most pupils achieved satisfactorily, but standards remained below average in comparison with similar schools in English. However, they were well above those schools in science. Children's slow start on entry to school puts them at a disadvantage throughout their primary schooling. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good and their attendance is average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage.** Assessment is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage but is inconsistent in Years 1 to 6. Whilst the school aims to provide equally for all pupils, the limited range of teaching styles used prevents pupils who have different learning styles from achieving as well as they could. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school takes satisfactory care of its pupils and provides good support, advice and guidance for them. Links with the community are satisfactory, and with parents and other schools they are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management at senior management level are unsatisfactory.** The work of the governing body is effective and leadership and management by other key staff across the whole school is satisfactory. All statutory duties are fulfilled.

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

Parents are pleased with the school's work. They feel that their children are happy to come to the school and behave well, and that teaching is good. Most pupils say they like the school and its staff. Both the parents and the pupils wish that the school building served its purpose better, and they are not happy with the state of the toilets.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to raise standards and improve the quality of education are:**

- Improve leadership and management arrangements, especially at senior management level, so that the school has an agreed management structure and roles are clarified through revised job descriptions, subject to rigorous monitoring.
- Improve teaching and management in the Foundation Stage and provide a self-contained outdoor play space for this age group.
- Raise standards in English and mathematics across the school so that they are nearer to the standards pupils reach in science and ICT.

**In addition, the school should improve the already good teaching and learning found in the school by:**

- using a wider range of teaching and learning strategies so that pupils who learn in different ways are better motivated and make the progress of which they are capable;
- promoting pupils' speaking skills and providing regular opportunities for pupils to use subject specific vocabulary;
- finding further ways to address the problem of disruption to lessons, which is adversely affecting teaching and learning because of the unsatisfactory accommodation.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Standards in English and mathematics are well below average by Year 6 but pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory, as in other subjects standards are often average and occasionally above average. Standards on entry are very low, progress is limited and children's achievement in the Foundation Stage falls well short of expectations, even when the low start is taken into consideration. Pupils in Year 2 reach below average standards, overall, and their achievement is satisfactory: boys and girls often reach similar standards. In Year 3, there is a group of able boys and girls. In the school, generally, there are more boys with special educational needs (SEN).

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards reached by children at the end of the Reception year are well below average and their achievements are far too low.
- Progress across the rest of the school is satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactorily, overall.
- Standards by Year 6 are average in science and above average in ICT. Pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The school has not identified pupils who are gifted or talented, in spite of a group of more able pupils in Year 3.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Performance data shows that children enter school with low levels of attainment and limited speech and communication skills. A significant number have been identified as in need of extra support for speech and language. Almost all children leave the Reception class with standards that are well below those expected of children of this age in all areas of learning. This is partly due to the short time that many of them spend in the class. Their achievement, as a result, is unsatisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.6 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.0 (12.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (14.2)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In 2003, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 showed that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were average, which was an improvement on the previous year when they were well below the national average. This reflects the particular cohort, where a few girls exceeded the national average in writing and mathematics, and is not typical of others cohorts in the school. Girls reached higher standards than boys in writing and mathematics in these tests. Compared with similar schools, standards were above them in reading and mathematics and well above them in writing.

3. Standards seen during the inspection reflected the different standards found in this cohort, now in Year 3. Standards in the present Year 2 are below national expectations in speaking, listening and reading and well below national expectations in writing and mathematics. In science they are below what is expected but most pupils achieve satisfactorily, as in this cohort the percentage of pupils with SEN is greater. More able pupils, however, are not always working at the

appropriate level for their age and ability in this year, although in a science lesson observed this was good. In music, standards in Year 2 are in line with what is expected at this age and in ICT they are above this. Judgements on standards in other subjects were not made, as subjects were sampled.

4. Pupils in Year 2 achieve very well in some subjects, such as ICT, but make unsatisfactory progress and achieve less well than expected in English and mathematics. The slow progress made and limited time spent by children in the Reception class has much to do with these results later. Teaching in Year 1 and 2 is good, but children in Year 1 are often at a Reception, and sometimes Nursery, stage of development and progress in later years is therefore slow.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.0 (24.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.0 (23.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.7 (25.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. In 2003, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 show that standards were well below the national average in English and mathematics and in line with them in science. However, when compared with similar schools, the progress pupils made since Year 2 was below other schools in English, in line with other schools in mathematics and well above other schools in science. In Year 6 boys and girls reached similar standards. If the pupils can achieve at these levels in mathematics and science, their achievement in English is less than it should be.

6. During the inspection, standards were well below average in English and mathematics, average in science, music and religious education and above average in ICT. Geography, history, art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled during the inspection and no judgement is made on standards in these subjects. The good results in ICT and science are because of strong, confident teaching, well-trained teaching assistants, practical activities and the pupils' own keen attitudes. They gain considerable pleasure from these activities. These more active methods are not used in the same way in English and mathematics, where standards are not as high and not enough provision is made for pupils' different learning styles. However, due to the overall good teaching, pupils with SEN achieve at least as well as their peers, and their progress is good. They generally meet the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). Where there is individual support in classes, the progress of these pupils is enhanced well. The pupil who speaks English as an additional language is relatively new and has been assessed by support agencies to the school.

7. In Year 2, girls reached the higher level in the 2003 National Curriculum tests. Now in Year 3, there is a group of able pupils, boys and girls, who work very well and achieve good standards. However, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in reading across the school or in English, where there is little evidence of planning specifically for different groups of pupils. The school has not identified gifted or talented pupils and should address this matter quickly to ensure that all pupils who excel at different subjects are challenged sufficiently.

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

In most lessons, behaviour and attitudes to school are good. This is evident in lessons and around school, and includes the significant minority of pupils who have been identified as having SEN. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. The school's action to promote attendance and punctuality is good. The school has considered ways of enhancing spiritual and cultural education across all lessons but these have not been implemented fully.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's ethos promotes good relationships, attitudes and personal development.
- The staff ensure that pupils quickly know the difference between right and wrong, and involve them closely in the formation of rules.
- The school council is well established and in Year 6 there are many other formal opportunities for pupils to develop their roles and responsibilities.
- Aspirations could be further raised by a fuller programme of visits and visitors.

## Commentary

8. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and parents agree that this is the case. This is a similar picture to the one described in the previous inspection report. Most pupils are well behaved and respond very well to the caring ethos of the school. In class and in the playground, there are very few incidents of challenging behaviour. This is because of the expectation of the school, and the presence of knowledgeable and sensitive teachers and teaching assistants. In an assembly for all pupils, the visiting clergyman held everyone's attention. There was a pleasant atmosphere as pupils enjoyed contributing to an exploration of the Judeo/Christian creation story. The very few examples seen of unsatisfactory behaviour in class were associated with restlessness in lessons that did not take into account the more limited attention span of some of the pupils.

9. In several lessons, behaviour was very good when imaginative teaching, sufficient challenge and a good pace stimulated pupils' interest and involvement. For example, in a Year 3 class in which there are several pupils who have SEN, behaviour was excellent as they investigated forces associated with elastic material. The pupils listened sensibly and worked industriously in small groups.

10. Pupils enjoy school, and say so. They like their teachers and know that any problems will be quickly and efficiently dealt with. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and there were just two fixed-term exclusions in the previous year. Parents and pupils say that any past problems have now been sorted out, and the Local Education Authority (LEA) has noted that the number of exclusions has been greatly reduced.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
172	2	0

11. Pupils enjoy their friends and appreciate the staff. They say that they like their colourful classrooms, the ICT suite, physical education and the fun they have at events arranged for them by the Friends' Association. Many like to go to the after-school clubs.

12. Pupils' relationships with most adults and each other are good. This has a positive impact on learning. Pupils are happy and secure, and enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are valued. They respond well to the help provided, enjoy the praise and look forward to rewards that are given. Some younger ones were delighted to earn 'golden cubes' awarded to the whole class for good work and behaviour. These can add up to a small treat when enough have been collected.

13. Successes of all kinds are celebrated in assemblies. For example, the whole school applauded a pupil who was awarded a certificate for passing a music examination. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted from a very early age. Staff have had training in behaviour management techniques, which has resulted in effective and consistent strategies being used throughout the school. Pupils contribute to the formation of class rules and benefit from the good role models set by the adults in school. Lessons in personal, social and

health education (PSHE) make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, often through the whole-class discussion periods known as 'circle time'. Although PSHE lessons occur for all, the school has yet to develop a fully worked out programme for all pupils.

14. Residential trips for pupils in Year 6 provide a good opportunity for pupils to develop socially and mature. Pupils are encouraged to participate in all school activities, including the school clubs and charity fund-raising events. There is a well-established school council. Pupils from each class are elected and meet regularly. All Year 6 pupils take on jobs around the school, such as litter collection, looking after the office at lunch time and looking after younger pupils, especially if the weather is inclement at play time. However, there is room to widen these tasks so that younger pupils are also given appropriate responsibilities, as this will help them develop greater maturity and self-esteem.

15. There is a clearly spiritual component in assemblies, but this aspect could be enhanced within lessons to take pupils beyond the mundane learning of facts and skills. This has been noted by the LEA and recognised by the school. As a result, the school is committed to planned spiritual and cultural elements across lessons. The previous inspection had also noted that spiritual elements were underdeveloped. It also noted that there were too few opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge of various cultures. Pupils are not as yet provided with a curriculum that promotes a wide experience of a range of cultures in art, music, dance, literature, drama and film. Despite a number of visits, there are few to cultural centres. Many pupils have very limited knowledge of the world beyond the school, the world of work, the multi-cultural world and the world of sport and culture. There are some valuable visits and visitors, but the school agrees that still more could be done to stimulate and enthuse pupils and widen their horizons. The school accepts that pupils with greater and wider aspirations will be better motivated.

16. Pupils' understanding and experience of England as a multi-faith country, however, is promoted very well through religious education, in which pupils learn about the major world faiths. The school has built up a good bank of multi-faith artefacts and pupils visit different places of worship.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	0.4

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

17. The absence rate is below the national average and the percentage of unauthorised absences in the last year was slightly above the national average.

18. The school has effective procedures for encouraging good attendance and punctuality. Almost all pupils arrive punctually for the start of school. This is similar to the situation noted during the previous inspection. There is close co-operation with the local authority's educational welfare officer.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage but is inconsistent in Year 1 to 6. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school takes satisfactory care of its pupils and provides good support, advice and guidance for them. Links with the community are satisfactory, and with parents and other schools they are good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage, although assessment is satisfactory. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in Year 1 and 2 (where they are still working at well below average standards) and it is good in Years 3 to 6. Assessment, however, is inconsistent in Years 1 to 6.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers encourage and engage their pupils well.
- Pupils work well, independently and together.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The pace of learning in the Foundation Stage is often very slow.
- Assessment is not always sufficiently linked to National Curriculum levels to ensure that the pupils are working at different levels.

### **Commentary**

19. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Whilst teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and planning is generally satisfactory, children are not given sufficient guidance, and instructions are often vague. Children are not encouraged or challenged enough and, as a result, they are often not fully involved in activities: methods are not effective. Time is not used at all well and, as a result, children are not productive and do not acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding that they should. While assessment procedures are satisfactory, the results are not used well to match work to the children's differing needs.

20. Teaching overall is good, and this results in pupils achieving well. Three of the class teachers have only been in the school for half a year, and the Year 6 teacher has been in post for 18 months. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in some subjects, such as science and ICT, pupils are taught very well through well-paced activity methods. In the best lessons, the short concentration span of many pupils is planned for well; work matches the attainment of different groups of pupils and they are highly motivated by the methods used, with good support being given by teaching assistants or volunteers. However, whilst planning, overall, is satisfactory, in some lessons, teachers do not use assessment data and National Curriculum levels sufficiently to plan at different levels. As a result, pupils who are more able are not challenged as well as they could be. Also, too few planned and unplanned opportunities are given for pupils to develop their well below average speaking skills and widen their vocabulary. Marking is variable, but there are examples of very good practice, such as in the science books in Year 6. In lessons, pupils are not always told clearly how they can improve their work. Praise is sometimes given at the expense of improvement. Occasionally, where teaching was unsatisfactory, as in a literacy lesson, the teaching was dull, the lesson lacked pace and, as a result, the pupils' interest was not captured.

21. Whilst methods are often good, a limited range of teaching styles is used in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, which prevents pupils who learn in different ways from making the progress of which they are capable. The improved results in science and the good work observed in science, ICT and music lessons reflect the more active approach which these pupils,

particularly the boys, respond to well. Teaching assistants were also deployed particularly effectively in these lessons. Whilst targets are set and there are examples of good practice in Year 6, assessment, overall, is not always used to plan different activities for pupils of all levels of attainment.

22. The school carefully assesses the needs of pupils with SEN, recognising and valuing their different starting points. Teachers' concerns led to the drawing up of a 'Record of Support'. Where appropriate, some of these are further developed into carefully crafted IEPs with specific targets. These are drawn from observations of behaviour, emotional interaction and speech and language difficulties. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided with suitably matched work; for example, storyboards or structured worksheets, or simpler ways of recording work. However, this match of work to the pupils' level of attainment is not uniformly effective. For example, the restricted range of structured worksheets in literacy does not meet the needs of a wide range of ability. The teaching of pupils with SEN in classes, and in small groups with support from teaching assistants, is of good quality. The teaching assistants are effective, sometimes very effective, helping pupils in lessons to be fully included. They liaise well with teachers. They provide, for pupils with SEN, good quality guidance in their learning.

23. The school has not identified pupils who might be gifted or talented. A co-ordinator was appointed in September but in-service training for staff has only just taken place. This is an area that needs considerable development if more able pupils are to reach their potential. The draft policy shows a way forward. This needs to be reviewed, linked to the school's belief that a wider range of teaching and learning styles is needed, and then implemented.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	2	15	7	3	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

**The curriculum**

The school provides a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum, with a secure level of continuity and progression and a good range of opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good progress made in improving the breadth and balance of the curriculum since the previous inspection.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- The school provides good support for learning outside the school day.
- The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory.

**Commentary**

24. The curriculum is now both broad and balanced, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when a key issue was to 'improve the leadership and management of the curriculum' and schemes of work were not in place for all areas of the curriculum. The school has now adopted national guidelines or published schemes of work for all curriculum subjects. These ensure breadth, balance and appropriate continuity and progression in key skills, as pupils move through the school, as well as providing the school's governance and management with a strategic overview of the whole-school curriculum.

25. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides satisfactorily for pupils' PSHE including, where appropriate, sex and drugs awareness education. The school's provision for PSHE is both formal, through assembly themes, and informal, by means of the positive relationships and day-to-day interactions between pupils and adults. There is, however, no overall plan for the subject. There is a good level of equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school states the importance of this very well in all its policies. However, due to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching from class to class, provision for equality of access and opportunity overall is only satisfactory. There are consistent whole-school approaches to teaching and applying literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, and there is evidence that the school's willingness to adopt new strategies and to seek and accept guidance on reformulating the curriculum has begun to have positive results, notably in ICT and science.

26. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The curriculum is well matched to their individual targets but it has not been as equally well adapted for the more able pupils.

27. Over the course of a school year, the school provides pupils with a good range and variety of interesting, relevant and well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities. An appropriate range of visitors work in the school during the year.

28. The school accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. One of the reasons for this judgement is that the accommodation for the Reception class does not include a sufficiently large, self-contained area for children's outdoor activities. The other is that the open-plan design of the school still requires adults and children to walk through classes to get to other areas of the school. Despite attempts by the school's senior management to alleviate the worst problems of high noise levels, this constant interruption is having a negative effect on the quality of learning. The quality and range of learning resources is satisfactory overall.

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

Pupils are well cared for and have good relationships with adults in the school. They are offered the support and advice that they need and are given clear objectives to help them progress. The school council enables pupils to raise their own issues and take an active part in the school's work. However, governors and staff have few formal ways of routinely checking that all health, safety and security measures are in place.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Care is taken to ensure pupils' health and safety in school and on visits away from school. However, staff and governors make no formal audit.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are good.
- Staff are developing sophisticated means of gauging pupils' views and acting on them.

### **Commentary**

29. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of its pupils are satisfactory. First aid provision is good and staff are able to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. Professional checks to equipment are regularly done. However, although governors and staff keep an eye on the grounds and premises, there is no formal auditing procedure to ensure that all aspects of the school are considered with respect to security, health and safety issues and that action is taken immediately when necessary. The hope of future site development has delayed action on some issues that the governors have identified as priorities.

30. Child protection procedures meet requirements and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. Meticulous confidential records are kept and there is good liaison with relevant agencies.

31. Induction arrangements are good. There are several school visits in the term before children join the Reception. These arrangements start the work of developing good and trusting relationships between children and staff. They give children the confidence to seek support and guidance when they have concerns about their work or personal problems, or when they want to share a success or news of something special. Pupils are well looked after at break times, although there is no secure separation between very young children and others. Some Year 6 pupils have the job of helping to look after younger pupils when it is raining and they are playing indoors.

32. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The support for pupils with SEN is good because of the good relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are aware of their targets and contribute to the discussion of what they need to learn next or to improve. The monitoring and recording for pupils with SEN is good and annual reviews effectively meet requirements.

33. The school council is a forum for elected pupils from each year group. They consult and feed back the outcome of their discussions to their class. This helps the school keep in touch with pupils' opinions. In addition, the school is pioneering ways in which detailed pupil perception studies can help staff know about pupils' views on all aspects of their school experiences, so that they might act on their views.

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

The school has established a good partnership with parents and there are plenty of opportunities for them to play a full part in their children's education. Links with the community are satisfactory, but more could be done to enrich the pupils' experience, interest and knowledge of the world on their doorstep and beyond. The school has good links with other primary schools and the local secondary schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are happy with what the school provides for their children, and the school offers parents many opportunities to become involved in its work.
- The Friends' Association works hard to support the school.
- There are good links with other schools.
- The pupils' aspirations would be stimulated by further links with the community.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents have positive views about the school and the education that it provides; the level of parental satisfaction in almost all areas of the school's work is good. Almost all parents say that their children like school, make good progress and behave well. They feel comfortable about approaching the school.

35. Parents receive information at the start of each term on the topics that are going to be covered, with suggestions as to how they may support their children's learning. They also receive other helpful written information and a regular newsletter. Parents say that teachers are always willing to make themselves available to answer questions, and staff are usually in the playground, at the start and end of the day, to talk to them. Parents have been consulted formally from time to time; the school is piloting a Hertfordshire questionnaire and plans to extend its use. Parents of pupils with SEN are fully informed about their children's progress. Opportunities are given for them to discuss their children's targets and take part, with teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo), in the review of their children's IEPs. An evaluation of SEN provision is included in the Governors' Annual Report to parents.



36. Pupils' annual reports are detailed, and show how well the teachers know their pupils. They inform parents well about their children's attitudes and the work they have completed. These reports also provide parents with guidance, especially in English, mathematics and science, as to what their children need to do to improve. The pupils write their own self-evaluation and this helps them also to focus on what they need to do to make progress. The reports do not, however, provide parents with sufficient information about the level of their children's work compared with national expectations. Parents support their children well at home by sharing books with them and helping them with their homework, making comments, if they wish, in the reading record or homework diaries. About a dozen parents come into school regularly to help in class. Parents are also welcome to attend class assemblies. In addition, once every half term there is a half hour 'sharing time' and this initiative attracts many parents. Parents have also been invited to curriculum evenings, to learn about how literacy, numeracy and science are taught in the school. A fathers' group was less well supported.

37. The 'Friends of Grange Community School' is run by a hardworking committee, with staff taking an active part. It has organised successful events for pupils and their families and raised funds to provide additional resources and learning opportunities for the school, such as books for the library. As a result, the newly refurbished library is well stocked and a pleasant and informative place to work in.

38. Newly enrolled children have several opportunities to visit the Reception class in the term before starting and their parents are invited to a curriculum evening. Links with other schools are good. The thriving partnership with many local primary schools provides useful training opportunities for staff and opportunities for constructive collaboration. The school has close links with secondary schools and pupils in Year 6 have been visited by secondary school teachers. There are good pastoral links with the main secondary school to which pupils go, and Year 6 pupils are given work in mathematics which is designed to continue into the secondary school and provide continuity.

39. Links with the community are satisfactory. The pupils visit local shops, the church, a home for the elderly and other local places of interest including the beach, a farm, a newspaper office, the Ipswich museum and Colchester castle. A local supermarket has sponsored events.

40. It is not easy to increase the number of visits to places of cultural or industrial interest in the locality. Many pupils have had relatively limited contact with the outside world and their aspirations are consequently restricted. However, the school intends to compensate for this in future, by bringing a richer cross-section of visitors and experiences into the school.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership demonstrates uncertain drive and inspiration from the top. Management is presently mainly concerned with 'holding the fort' during the headteacher's illness, thus key players are distracted from their prime roles. Governance is providing good support and direction, tempered with concern for a difficult situation. The governing body has a shared vision with the school and is now anxious to resolve what it recognises as a major issue, to enable the school to move on.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher lacks inspiration and drive.
- The deployment and workload of staff are unsatisfactory.
- The headteacher's vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations are weakened.
- The governors are providing effective support, whilst seeking to resolve this major issue.
- There is good financial management.
- The school improvement plan does not give sufficient focus to the raising of standards.

### Commentary

41. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher has been much affected by her recent illness, to the extent that governors felt obliged to support her. They reduced her workload and created a *de-facto* job share situation, with the deputy becoming acting head for one day per week. This arrangement is not working. The whole situation is unsatisfactory because the headteacher, a well-respected professional noted for her articulate promotion of her school and her gift of forging good relationships and providing warm emotional support for her staff, has at times, through absences, found it difficult to plan ahead. Her inspiration is weakened. Her vision is imponderable, and this is holding up school development, especially in respect of raising standards.

42. The deputy, who is regularly acting head on a planned or unplanned basis, is now a key player. He is very able, has been supported very well by the link advisor and has won the respect of his colleagues. Inevitably, his loyalty is stretched by these extra responsibilities. He is the co-ordinator for ICT, which he has developed most effectively, mathematics co-ordinator and the Year 6 teacher. In order to give him time to carry out his management responsibilities, supply teachers have taken his place in Year 6, with the consequent plummeting of standards. As mathematics co-ordinator, he found it impossible to arrange setting due to the demands on his time caused by the headteacher's absence.

43. On the other hand, the deputy head has been instrumental in raising standards in ICT above the national norm throughout the school. As acting head, the deputy has also encouraged governors to reorganise and enlarge the senior management team to give two members of staff extra responsibilities. The returning headteacher agreed these changes subsequently. This illustrates the main strength in the relationship between the headteacher and deputy; they work together well. However, only now are they examining the blurring of roles. An attempt to define areas of responsibility has been started, and the workload of the deputy has been sorted out. For example, one new member of the senior management team has already taken over his responsibility for performance management while the other is to become the Year 3 to 6 phase leader in his stead. The previous science co-ordinator, as a result of support from the LEA's advisory teacher, saw standards prior to last September rise to be in line with national expectations.

44. Middle management, including subject co-ordinators and phase leaders, is efficient and sometimes innovative. For example, the English co-ordinator has planning well under way for the school's contribution to the local 'Youth Speaks' event. This will give pupils opportunities to contribute and recite their own poems. However, co-ordinators are not always responsible for the subject for which they have greatest expertise, in spite of being relatively inexperienced. They have not, for example, identified through monitoring that class teachers do not always use assessment

satisfactorily. There remains much to do to establish an acceptable pattern of working. All roles and responsibilities need renegotiating, some re-allocation and a clear management structure put in place. This structure, with roles and responsibilities clearly identified needs to be made known to staff and parents, and rigorously monitored.

45. The school manages its provision for pupils with SEN well. Its policy is clear, helpful and up to date; it conforms to the national code of practice. There is good communication between the governor with responsibility for SEN, the school's acting SENCo, teaching assistants and outside agencies. The headteacher is the acting SENCo as no suitable appointment could be made. This situation is unsatisfactory. However, in view of her current workload difficulties, she has made a good management decision to buy in the support of the school's former SENCo to fulfil all administrative duties; thus, it is very well organised. Using devolved budgets, the school provides a good level of resources, including staffing, to support pupils with learning difficulties. The design of the buildings restricts the curriculum opportunities for all pupils, including those with particular needs, because of physical interruptions and the need for through access.

46. The governing body has a positive and supportive relationship with senior management, and the whole school. All statutory duties are fulfilled. Governors responded to the current difficulties by supporting the headteacher. The very capable chairman has firm ideas and good vision for the future. He has a clear understanding of the major issue affecting school leadership. Indeed, he and the chair of personnel now liaise regularly with the senior management team to ensure good governance for the school. There is therefore a close working relationship between governors and staff. The astute chair of finance brings a clear understanding of budgetary matters. He has worked well with the headteacher and with the acting headteacher. Governors have strengthened their links with the school by adopting subjects to shadow, and make regular visits, for example to support literacy, numeracy, ICT and SEN. They are therefore better able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it faces.

47. The school's development planning represents an attempt, led by the LEA Adviser and involving all staff, governors and non-teaching staff, to draw together all elements from the last inspection and to match them to new initiatives. However, there has been no effort to prioritise them, or to make the raising of standards in English and mathematics the main priority. A starting point could well be what the school does well: it is effective, for example, in analysing performance data and reviewing the patterns of attainment to guide future action, although this needs to be carried out better at the class teacher level. Inspection findings show standards of science to be in line with, and in ICT above, national expectations. The school should seek to raise standards similarly in English and mathematics.

48. Financial planning is effective in helping the school achieve its educational priorities. For example, careful financial management has supported the development of the ICT suite; it supports the number of teaching assistants. Pupils have therefore benefited from wisely targeted spending. The headteacher and governing body are well served by the bursar who prepares detailed financial reports. These show that the Friends Association helps the school financially and that after-school clubs produce support in kind, for example when parents help with gardening. Specific grants, such as those for pupils with SEN are effectively deployed; for example, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and has a beneficial impact on the progress they make and the standards they attain. The chair of finance and the school's bursar ensure that the school implements the principles of best value in its purchasing decisions, to further the opportunities open to pupils. The recommendations of the last auditors' report have been fully acted upon. The very capable clerical staff effectively and efficiently manage the day-to-day administration that assists the school to function smoothly. Taking into account the low attainment on entry, well below average standards in Year 6 in literacy and mathematics, the good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, the overall good teaching and the slightly above average cost per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	480,475
Total expenditure	517,218
Expenditure per pupil	2,922

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	78,436
Balance carried forward to the next	41,693

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

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

The school's provision for the Foundation Stage is **unsatisfactory**. Children attending the Reception class suffer from four significant disadvantages:

- 1) The LEA's system of 'staggered' entry to Reception means that children attend full-time in the term they are five. Because of this, children join the class at stages through the Reception year, initially part-time only, and a significant proportion (12 out of the 25 children in 2003-4) will only attend the Reception class full-time for one term (the summer term) before going into their Year 1 class.
- 2) The majority of children join the class with very low levels of attainment, particularly, but not exclusively, in their personal and social development and in their communication, language and literacy skills. They have a considerable amount of ground to cover before they reach the standards usually attained by children of this age.
- 3) The lack of any linked Nursery provision means that there is no Nursery year prior to starting the Reception class, no joint planning between a dedicated Nursery and the Reception class teacher and no smooth transition between any pre-school provision and the Reception class.
- 4) Poorly paced teaching in the Reception class means that slower than expected progress is made. The teacher's own assessments indicate that the majority of children will not have attained any of the expected Early Learning Goals for the end of the Reception year before joining their Year 1 class and many are, developmentally, a year or more behind typical children of that age.

49. The induction of children into school is managed satisfactorily, given the constraints, and involves parents appropriately. However, it is not feasible, whatever the quality of teaching and level of support, for children to progress sufficiently well to make up all this lost ground in one term. As a result, pupils are ill equipped socially, developmentally or experientially to work at the expected National Curriculum levels when they begin in Year 1, and thus begin their school career at a severe disadvantage.

50. Staff in the Reception class have a satisfactory knowledge of the learning needs of young children and devise an appropriate, but rather lacklustre and unimaginative, range of activities designed to encourage children to share, co-operate and develop their independence. Teaching is unsatisfactory, often because children are not given clear instructions and, as a result, the pace of learning is slow. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall, although there are well advanced plans to improve the outdoor accommodation for the Foundation Stage when the school opens the Nursery class. At the time of inspection, there was no self-contained outside play area for Reception children or any sizeable covered area to enable a wide range of outdoor activities to be planned for and to be freely available for the children during the day and throughout the year. Provision, in the four areas of learning inspected fully, is unsatisfactory. The Foundation Stage is not well managed.

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

51. Due to the weaknesses in the quality of teaching in the Reception class, progress in personal, social and emotional development is limited. As a result, a larger proportion than necessary of the current cohort of Reception children will not have attained the Early Learning Goals, set nationally for children of this age, in their personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. Children are frequently left too much to their own devices and, as a result of insufficiently well-established routines and the lack of really clear expectations as to what is expected of them, they sometimes drift around aimlessly from one activity to another. However, through playing and

working with other children, the majority are beginning to show developing levels of confidence and independence when they tackle new learning, and are learning to make choices and decisions about their work. Most children manage to work together as a group, without disagreements, and are developing an understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others, to take turns, and to share resources.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

52. Language skills for the majority of children are exceptionally poor when they start school, with the speaking and listening skills of a significant proportion of children much delayed. In lessons, communication, language and literacy activities, classroom routines for sharing books, listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are insufficiently well-established and are not reinforced regularly or consistently enough. Planning and assessment procedures, although satisfactory, are not always fully reflected in the actual lessons taught or activities planned. The teacher misses numerous opportunities to support and enhance children's ability to speak and listen through using skilled questioning techniques. She regularly fails to reinforce expectations, to encourage reticent children to speak or to encourage those that do offer answers to do so with more than one word. There is insufficient planning for the repeated reinforcement of vocabulary, phonics and routines by all staff. A small minority of children speak and listen satisfactorily. For example, one girl, when talking about changes to the role-play area, explained confidently, 'After it was The Three Bears' house, she (the teacher) turned it into a hairdressers.' However, many others remain silent when spoken to or when asked questions by the teacher. Others demonstrate significant delays in speech development; three having already been identified as having speech and language difficulties and in need of additional support. However, procedures and resources for developing a love of books and early reading skills are satisfactorily established; children have a reading bag in which they take two books home each day, a storybook and a book from the reading scheme, and an adult hears them read twice a week.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

53. Children's achievement in mathematical understanding is very low on entry to the Reception class. Although some progress is made, their understanding remains, at best, well below that typically found by children at this stage of their Reception year. Their progress is less than it should be because of the generally slow pace of teaching. This leads in some cases to misbehaviour which further slows the pace of teaching. The 'flat' teaching style and the lack of crystal clear explanations to ensure that the children know exactly what they are expected to do leads to a lack of enthusiasm for number work. Because of this slow start, these weaknesses, coupled with children's generally poor language skills, continue, in many cases, to have a negative effect on their progress throughout their time in the school. Most children demonstrate poor number skills and only a minority are able to count a small number of objects by pointing at each one as they count. Teaching is unsatisfactory in this area of learning.

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

54. This area of learning was sampled. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is very low and the class teacher's assessments undertaken for the Foundation Stage Profile indicate that only a bare minimum of children are likely to achieve most aspects of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. A scrutiny of photographs and samples of work undertaken during the current school year shows that a broadly satisfactory range of activities designed to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is provided.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

55. Children's attainment when they enter the school is well below expectations, particularly in the fine motor skills necessary for cutting, painting and writing. Their skills in handling pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools are well below nationally expected levels. In a hall gymnastics lesson most Reception children moved freely, with pleasure and confidence, adjusting speed and changing directions to avoid obstacles. A small minority of children moved and behaved with considerably less confidence, however, and had little or no contact or interaction with others. The lesson consisted largely of two extended games of 'tag', greatly enjoyed by the children, who ran enthusiastically around the hall, squealing with pleasure. During the lesson, however, the teacher was largely occupied with organising resources and managing behaviour and made very few actual teaching points. As a result, little progress was made in developing key skills or understanding. The low expectations and lack of clear instructions by the teacher limit children's learning.

56. Plans are at an advanced stage to develop a self-contained outdoor area for the Foundation Stage, which should enable an appropriately planned and resourced outdoor curriculum to be provided. However, this is not possible at the moment. There is also no covered area which can be used when the weather is inclement.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

57. This area of the curriculum was sampled. As in most areas of the curriculum, the children need a more than usual amount of help to learn basic key skills when they first start school and levels of attainment are well below those usually found. Although the majority of the Reception children are achieving some aspects of 'stepping stone 3' of the Early Learning Goals for creative development (the level expected of children in the Reception class), a significant proportion are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Part of a long music lesson was observed. The pace of the lesson was slow, children's interest was not always maintained and less progress was made than would have been possible if time had been used better.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

The provision for English and literacy is satisfactory. It has effectively sustained improvements in pupils' achievements, but not in standards, in all aspects of the curriculum. This report is on pupils' writing, where standards remain well below national expectations.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good co-ordination and management support the subject well.
- Analysis of test data and its subsequent use is good.
- Action planning for writing is ready to implement.
- Failure to prioritise writing in the time allotted to English is a missed opportunity.
- Presentation of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

#### Commentary

58. Standards of pupils' writing are the focus of this inspection. Judgements of standards have to take into account the above average numbers in each year group of pupils with SEN. Pupils' writing in Years 1 and 2 is well below expected standards, but their achievement is good, due to the overall strength in teaching. In Years 5 and 6, standards are still well below national expectations, in spite of good teaching. Standards of presentation are varied throughout the school.

59. Where teaching is good, the teacher's organisation and planning have a positive effect in focussing pupils' concentration on the text. For example, pupils in Year 5 are engrossed in the North American Indian myth, 'How butterflies came to be'. The teacher's skilled open and closed questioning sharpened their explanations of the different colours used by the Creator. Pupils notice the alliteration in 'fur and feather', and 'grass is green'. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the lesson lacks pace, is dull and fails to capture all of the pupils' interest. For example, in Year 6, pupils record connectives that they know are used in an argument, such as 'however' and 'on the contrary'. For a number of them, the slow pace leads them to play with their whiteboards. Support for pupils' writing is varied throughout the school. Some structured worksheets were in evidence; there were two levels in Years 2 and 5. There is, however, a wide range of ability in each class, so that structured worksheets of three or four levels, including texts where pupils need to insert missing words or phrases, would provide much more effective support. Teachers throughout the school teach handwriting explicitly and pupils respond positively. However, teachers do not expect the same standards of neatness across the curriculum. This problem is compounded by the school's failure to prioritise writing in the time allocated to English.

60. The subject co-ordinator encourages teachers to provide opportunities for pupils to write. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoy writing about dolphins, using words that sound the same. They make a good attempt to write about a 'wanted' character after reading a version of 'Cinderella', choosing features that would readily identify her. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy finding lively adjectives to complete sentences. A more able pupil in Year 6 demonstrates a lively and thoughtful approach to his writing after reading a version of 'The Pied Piper'. Even the least able venture to get started, using 'hiss' or 'slide' in 'The Snake Story'. Most pupils respond well to familiar texts: a more able pupil in Year 6 identifies the mood words in the poem 'Westminster Bridge', whilst pupils of average attainment use 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' as a basis for turning the play script into a story. Pupils consider how authors deal with the passing of time, the setting out of an adventure, or an argument. Overall, these varied opportunities have a positive effect on the rate of pupils' progress. Whilst standards remain low, there has been an improvement in Year 6 since January. Pupils have been better supported, and sometimes challenged, with better structure for their writing. Pupils have responded well to this new focus. However, an area that has not yet been addressed sufficiently is teachers' insistence on careful, neatly presented work. At present, writing skills develop haphazardly.



61. The subject co-ordinator has detailed knowledge of the current state of English as it is taught in the school and the Literacy Hour. She monitors both teachers' planning and their delivery of the subject. The school's analysis of the test data and its use in modifying provision is good. This rigorous process contributes to the recent, positive upswing in writing standards in Year 6. The co-ordinator has innovative ideas, for example, planning the local 'Youth Speaks', and providing opportunities for pupils to contribute poems to recite. Thus, inspection findings show some, but not enough, improvement in pupils' writing since the last inspection. Standards in writing, and especially in presentation, show significant weaknesses.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

62. There are good links with ICT, history and religious education.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The school's provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good leadership by the current subject co-ordinator.
- Good use is made of assessment to modify the curriculum and track individual pupils' progress.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is well below national expectations.

### **Commentary**

63. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 are well below national expectations. They have declined significantly since the last inspection when standards were described as being in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress and standards have begun to rise, due to the improved curriculum, assessment and teaching. Achievement at the end of Year 6, in relation to their previous (very low) attainment in Year 2, is satisfactory. However, there has clearly been some underachievement in previous years, particularly in the case of more able pupils. This is evident in the significant decline in standards and the currently very small percentage of pupils likely to achieve above expectations for their age at the end of Year 6. These very low standards are, to a significant extent, explained by the very low levels of attainment of the majority of pupils when they enter the school and the fluctuating, but generally very high, proportion of pupils with SEN in the school. In addition, for a large proportion of pupils, their poor language and literacy skills have a significant and continuing detrimental effect on their attainment in mathematics. 'Problem-solving', for example, remains a major source of difficulty for a significant proportion of pupils due to their frequently weak language skills and the resultant difficulty in 'decoding' mathematical problems presented in word form. However, this does not effectively explain the decline in standards, which is likely to be the result of the high level of teacher absences and 'cover' teaching in the last few years. The previous Year 6 class, for example, only enjoyed one year in the Juniors when they had the same teacher all year.

64. Teaching in mathematics ranges from very good to satisfactory, and is satisfactory overall throughout the school. In most instances, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have satisfactory classroom and behaviour management skills, allowing most lessons to progress at an appropriate pace. They match tasks well to the pupils' wide range of abilities and learning needs. This was demonstrated very effectively in a lesson with the lower set of Year 6 pupils. Here, the teacher provided skilfully levelled and appropriately challenging work because of very good minute-by-minute assessment and rapid adaptation of the planned lesson. Through very effective step-by-step teaching based on the teacher's very good subject knowledge, the pupils, many of whom are on the school's SEN register, maintained a good focus on their work throughout the lesson and

achieved well. Pupils with SEN are supported well by classroom assistants and make good progress.

65. The subject co-ordinator is providing very good leadership. Assessment systems in the subject are now very good. School test results are analysed in great detail and the co-ordinator provides class teachers with very detailed information about strengths and weaknesses for each pupil. In addition to the detailed analysis of test results and trends noted above, pupils' perceptions of mathematics are analysed. However, whole-school systems for putting this data to practical use are only in the early stages of development. Pupils in Year 6 are 'set' for mathematics lessons. Throughout the year, additional support via such activities as 'Springboard' or 'Booster' maths lessons is provided. There is good use of ICT in the subject and teachers employ 'numeracy strategy' software to motivate and engage pupils' interest. For example, a Year 5 lesson was observed where pupils became increasingly better motivated as the lesson progressed and they could see the results of their estimates of angles appear instantly in an animated form on the computer via the data-projector.

66. The use of assessment and the quality of subject leadership have improved significantly since the previous inspection and standards have now begun to rise again after a significant decline.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. Pupils make appropriate use of their mathematics skills in subjects such as science and design and technology.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards improved in 2003.
- Standards are average by Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Marking in Year 6 is very good.
- The investigative approach to the subject is very successful.
- Teaching is never less than good, and is sometimes excellent.

### **Commentary**

68. Standards at the last inspection were below the national average. In 2003, the teacher's assessment in Year 2 judged pupils to be below the national average, overall. However, a greater number than average reached the higher level. In this particular year group there is a greater number of more able pupils than in other classes in the school. National Curriculum test results in Year 6, in 2003, were in line with the national average. The percentage reaching the expected level was well above the national average, but the percentage reaching the higher level was below. During the previous three years standards were well below average. Standards improved in 2003.

69. Standards, based on inspection evidence, are below average in Year 2. Pupils' books show that work is planned at a level lower than expected for this age, as there are many pupils with SEN in this year. The needs of the more able are not always planned for, however. Standards are average by Year 6. The very good marking in Year 6 promotes all pupils' understanding very well, whatever their level of attainment. Marking demonstrates clearly what the pupils need to know to improve their understanding. In all lessons observed, including Year 2, an investigative approach is promoting pupils' interest and understanding very well. They thoroughly enjoy lessons, talk about what they are learning and work well with other pupils at investigations. Good progress was made in almost all lessons and pupils achieved well.

70. Teaching was never less than good and occasionally was excellent. Where it was excellent, short question and answer sessions throughout the lesson helped pupils with a short concentration span to succeed, as well as promoting the learning of the most able. Pupils enjoyed talking about what they had discovered, and explaining why and how they had carried out different tasks. The teacher then explained what they were to do and look for next. As a result of these regular 'coming together' sessions, much learning took place and pupils' interest was maintained. In a lesson in Year 2, very good use was made of the teaching assistant to support the more able pupils while the teacher taught the majority of the class, who worked at a slow pace. Much enjoyment again was experienced in learning about ice and developing scientific vocabulary through imaginative activities. For example, pupils investigated a rubber glove filled with ice which, when cut, produced an 'ice hand', and small toy animals frozen in water to make 'animal ice cubes'. Watching the ice melt, but leaving the solid animal behind added to these pupils' understanding of science. In Year 5, pupils tussled successfully with the basic ideas of condensation and evaporation, although the more able could have reached higher standards. In Year 6, the teacher provided work at different levels and used the help of a volunteer very well to alternate with him, so that he could teach both groups whilst the other group was supported. The teaching of science is a good example of how standards are being raised.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are many opportunities through the timetabling of the computer/ICT suite.
- There is strong leadership and management by the co-ordinator.
- There is a very good range of good quality resources.
- Well-trained teaching assistants give good support.
- Pupils should be better supported with computers in classrooms where they could practise the skills learned in the suite. Information and communication technology teaching would be improved by introducing interactive whiteboards.

### **Commentary**

71. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below those expected nationally throughout the school. Since then, there has been very good improvement so that standards now are above national expectations, both in Year 2 and Year 6. This is due to the focus on skills teaching through good opportunities in the computer/ICT suite. All pupils are given opportunities to gather information from a CD-Rom, most use the Internet for their research and many are designing and evaluating their own web pages.

72. The co-ordinator's strong leadership has a very good effect on the way ICT is taught and managed. Provision is enhanced by the timetabled use of the ICT suite. Planning is good, leading to competent teaching. Resources are very good and improving. The scheme of work, adapted from national guidance, matches the school's needs well and provides a good framework for the development of skills. The home/school agreement to monitor pupils' safe use of the Internet is good practice. Pupils' progress is assessed half-termly and provision is moderated as a result. Pupils also make self-assessments. This process is supported by the collection of a portfolio of levelled work.

73. Teaching of ICT is good and sometimes very good. The decision to train all staff, including teaching assistants, has increased the level of support available for pupils. This is having a positive effect on the progress pupils make. Support for pupils with SEN is good, for example, where paired with other pupils to design web pages in Year 6, or paired to give instructions to the floor turtle in

Year 2. All pupils enjoy working with computers. They are encouraged to experiment within well-structured lessons. For example, a more able pupil who is very advanced in her web design receives good teacher support. Hardware development through the purchase of interactive whiteboards is currently under discussion.

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

74. Information and communication technology is well used to support teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. In history, pupils in Year 4 make a 'PowerPoint' presentation of their work on World War II. Year 5 pupils, in geography, regularly check their e-mails for replies to their research on banana growing in the Caribbean. The Internet also provided them with pictures of shipping in the busy port of Felixstowe. The school library is now computerised, further developing pupils' ICT skills and their understanding of how computers can be used to support mundane jobs.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

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

- The subject has a high profile in the school.
- Monitoring of teaching needs strengthening.
- Religious education promotes moral values well.
- There is a need to extend visits and visitors.
- Good resources support the subject well.

#### **Commentary**

75. Religious education is promoted well throughout the school. Standards are in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus throughout the school, and pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils at the end of Year 2 learn about the life of Jesus. They learn about religious festivals, such as Shrove Tuesday, and make comparisons with other major faiths, such as Hinduism and Islam. In work on symbols and symbolism they make stained glass images in ICT.

76. By the end of Year 6, pupils compare Christian beliefs and customs with those of Muslim and Jewish traditions. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils recognised the importance of rules in a Christian community, helping your neighbour, and the difference between right and wrong. Moral values are therefore promoted well.

77. Visitors to school include the local vicar, who is also chair of the governors. The school wants to extend its visits to places of worship and visitors from other faiths. This would promote valuable first-hand experiences and add to the good resources that already support pupils' learning.

#### **History**

78. History was sampled during the inspection. The sample included one lesson and scrutiny of pupils' work, plus an interview with the co-ordinator. The subject is promoted well, as seen in the quality of displays around the school. Pupils in Year 2 use books, pictures and a video re-enactment to understand the difficulties faced by Florence Nightingale in the hospital at Scutari, and have begun to acquire chronological understanding through the study of toys old and new. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the changes in the Felixstowe area and can place them in the right century. Pupils study Victorian houses and buildings, and make appropriate fieldwork trips, such as the

Cotman Walk to see local examples. On the Tomline Walk, pupils make notes of the Martello Tower, a defence against Napoleon, and the development of the Felixstowe dock basin in 1881.

79. Co-ordination and management of history is good. The co-ordinator has checked pupils' work and teachers' planning and has monitored teaching. Assessment in history is at the end of units of work and is supported by a portfolio of levelled work. There are good resources, including CD-ROMs, and pupils make use of the Internet. Pupils have exceptional ICT skills, so that Year 4 made a 'PowerPoint' presentation of their work on World War II. Pupils with SEN are well supported in history with work which is suitably matched to their abilities.

## **Geography**

80. Geography was sampled during the inspection. The sample included one lesson and scrutiny of pupils' work, plus an interview with the co-ordinator. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to acquire geographical skills in fieldwork around the locality. In early work on places, pupils write their home address. They follow the adventures of Fred Bear in visiting places further afield. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good use of the Internet to download sailing schedules for the port of Felixstowe. Pupils in Year 5 learn the story of the banana, from growing to selling. They have contacts in the Caribbean and check their e-mails for replies to their requests for information. By the end of their time in school, pupils make comparisons with less economically developed countries; they compare cargo ships in the busy local port from Germany, Denmark and Poland. They have exceptional ICT skills, and download information on major rivers, or Chembakolli, a village in India.

81. The co-ordinator has checked pupils' work and teachers' planning, but monitoring the teaching of the subject needs strengthening. Resources are improving. Pupils with SEN are well supported in geography with work that is suitably matched to their levels of attainment. The subject is assessed at the end of each unit, supported by the portfolio of levelled work.

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

Two music lessons and two physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, but none in design and technology or art and design. As a result, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision for the latter two subjects.

### **Music**

Provision for music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have the subject knowledge needed to teach their age groups.
- Assessment is used very well in Year 2 to find out where pupils need further help and improve performance.
- Pupils pitched their singing accurately in Years 3 to 6.
- More able pupils could be challenged further with more frequent use of subject specific language.

### **Commentary**

82. Although music was sampled, two lessons were observed and the co-ordinator was interviewed. Based on this evidence, standards across the school are average. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. They enjoy demonstrating different ways of playing instruments and gain a sense of achievement and discovery from this. They listen well to music and almost all clap the pulse correctly. Through careful observation, the teacher assesses who needs help, and those who play inaccurately at first learn how to clap correctly. Very good strategies are used to manage pupils, with hand signals used very well to tell pupils when to pick up instruments or lay them down.

Boys and girls learn equally well, with particularly good improvement by girls when they play incorrectly at first. Assessment is used very well at the end of the lesson to find out what pupils enjoyed and found difficult. The lesson observed was very well constructed and was delivered well. Teaching was good.

83. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. They pitch their singing accurately, in tune to a glockenspiel. They learn to hold a note at a given pitch while others sing a different note. Considerable progress is made within a lesson on learning how to sing in parts. Boys have a particularly good sense of rhythm. Pupils learn to appreciate music, commenting on whether two notes played together sound 'nice'. Their ability to listen carefully is developed well. Pupils with SEN are supported well. Good progress is made within a lesson and good planning, which builds on previous learning, together with clear objectives, promotes learning well. More able pupils, however, could be better challenged in the second part of a lesson, as they learn quickly. Subject specific vocabulary is not built into planning and is not promoted as well as it could be.

84. The subject is well managed and there is a satisfactory range of resources, but there are few multi-cultural instruments or compact discs for listening purposes. The school has a dedicated music room. Instrumental lessons are available, and singing and recorder clubs take place. Pupils perform locally and Year 2 pupils take part in an inter-school singing day.

85. **Design and technology** – Very limited work was available for scrutiny due to the whole-school focus on an art and design topic in the previous term.

86. **Art and design** – The whole-school focus on 'textiles' during the previous term has resulted in some work of a good, and frequently very good, standard in both the Infant and Junior classes. However, few examples of other aspects of art and design were available for scrutiny. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have sketchbooks and these have recently been introduced to Year 2. The co-ordinator is planning necessary In-Service Training of Teachers (INSET) for staff on the best way to use these sketchbooks in the near future.

87. **Physical education** – From a scrutiny of planning and discussions with the subject co-ordinator and other teachers, it is clear that all strands of the subject, including outdoor activities, are regularly taught. The school continues to put an appropriate stress on the teaching of swimming, with Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils attending swimming lessons during the year. Attainment in gymnastics in the two lessons seen was satisfactory in Year 1, where pupils were selecting and linking skills and actions in short movement phrases with a clear beginning, middle and end. It was good in Year 4, where pupils were devising and performing sequences, including three balances, with good starting and finishing positions. Teachers demonstrate good subject skills, move lessons along at a good pace and give very clear instructions, with the result that pupils have a very good idea of what is expected of them, the amount of time they have to do it in and, if appropriate, what they need to do to achieve the targets.

88. Schemes of work for the creative arts, based on government-recommended schemes of work or on published schemes closely following government recommendations, have now been adopted; if taught as planned, they will provide secure continuity and progression in learning as pupils move through the school. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and keen to improve levels of attainment in their subjects – a significant improvement on the situation identified at the time of the last inspection. However, particularly in art and design and design and technology, some teachers are finding it difficult to devote the required amount of time to both subjects. This is the reason for the whole-school focus on one aspect of the art and design curriculum for much of the previous term and limited evidence of any design and technology work being undertaken in a number of classes. Most teachers, when asked for samples of design and technology work, were 'about to start' a design and technology unit of work at the time of the inspection. In order to ensure clear progression and continuity in key skills in both subjects it is essential that co-ordinators are empowered to ensure that all staff undertake the planned and agreed number of units of work in each year for each subject.

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

89. The school has only recently developed the management of PSHE. The co-ordinator, who took on the responsibility in September, has used the local authority's reviewing criteria to assess needs, and the local pyramid of schools is writing medium term plans. Plans specific to the school have not yet been written. There are few resources or books for the subject in the school. However, incidental teaching takes place throughout the school: drugs education is taught in Year 5, and sex education in Years 5 and 6. Aspects of citizenship are planned from national guidance and covered in lessons and assemblies, but the subject needs to be formalised. A good lesson, with very good features, was observed in Year 6. Current affairs were discussed maturely and knowledgeably, some of the pupils being particularly up-to-date with world news. The teacher led the discussion very well and shared with the pupils his clear long-term learning objectives. From discussing responsibilities in the classroom, pupils have been led on to learn about charities which serve people across the world. In the lesson observed, pupils considered how these classroom and global needs of people are reflected in their own local community and how they could contribute to them as good citizens. Examples of what pupils already do were shared, thoughtfully.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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