

INSPECTION REPORT

**GREAT TEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Tey, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115079

Headteacher: Miss Lynne Coleman

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 26 – 27 April 2004

Inspection number: 256263

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 61

School address: Chrismund Way
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Colchester
Essex
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mary Williamson

Date of previous inspection: June 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary controlled primary school that is smaller than primary schools nationally. Numbers have fallen since the last inspection, when there were 73 pupils on roll. Currently, there are 61 pupils, aged 4 to 11, who come from the village of Great Tey and the surrounding rural area. Numbers in each year vary considerably: in the Reception year there are only three children, in Year 3 there are 13. All pupils are of white British heritage, and there are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. Of these, six are at school action, two are at school action plus for specific learning difficulties, and one has a statement of special educational need for autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The area is relatively advantaged but a number of higher-attaining children from the village go to private schools. Analysis of assessment at the end of the Foundation Stage in 2003 shows that when pupils entered the current Year 1 their attainment was below average, with well below average attainment by boys. The small numbers mean, however, that there is fluctuation in attainment on entry from year to year. Taking account of such variation, pupils' prior attainment on entry is broadly average.

The school has Investor in People status. It is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools, and is subject to the Small Schools Fund.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was found to have serious weaknesses. Since that time, it has experienced staffing difficulties in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3, whereby three teachers in succession have required excessive amounts of support. The local education authority has now provided an 'expert teacher' for this class, pending the appointment of a permanent teacher for pupils in Years 2 and 3.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8-12
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12-17
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17-18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19-31
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Standards have begun to rise and are broadly average by Year 6. The school has suffered from staffing difficulties in Years 2 and 3, which have impacted adversely on pupils' progress, but these have been resolved recently. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, with good achievement in some areas. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and a fair proportion of teaching is good. The headteacher provides good leadership and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6 but results are likely to be closer to the national average in 2004.
- Pupils achieve well in most subjects in Year 1, in ICT throughout the school and in science in Year 6; although improving, there are still weaknesses in writing and in religious education.
- The school makes no special provision for gifted and talented pupils and work is not always matched sufficiently to the range of ages and pupils' prior attainment; in particular, higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough.
- The provision of homework is inadequate in Years 4 to 6 and pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.
- Good partnership with parents has been sustained; parents are kept very well informed, and links with the community and other schools are good.
- Good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and for their care, ensures that they have positive attitudes to learning and behave well.
- The effective leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school's work is clearly focused on raising standards.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected, in June 2002. There has been satisfactory improvement in most of the areas identified as key issues, notably in curriculum development and assessment. Standards in writing remain a relative weakness and provision is still not as good as it should be in religious education. Standards are rising but some of the many initiatives introduced to raise standards have taken longer than they should have done to take effect because the school has had serious staffing difficulties in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3. This situation has been remedied recently and the school is now in a better position to improve.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	D	A
mathematics	A	E	D	A
science	A	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' achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily and most are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals¹. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average in 2003 and in the bottom five percent compared with similar schools based on free school meals. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are currently below average, but pupils in Year 1 are making good progress. The achievement of pupils in Years 2 and 3 has been adversely affected by staffing difficulties which have only recently been resolved; their progress is now satisfactory overall.

National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were below the national average in English and mathematics and overall, and average in science. This was a substantial improvement on the previous year's results. Compared with similar schools based on pupils' prior attainment, the school's results were well above average and in the top five per cent for science. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is currently satisfactory overall, with good progress in English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6 and in science in Year 6. In information and communication technology (ICT), younger pupils are working above national expectations and pupils achieve well. Standards in religious education are below average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have good attitudes to school, behave well and attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and a significant amount of teaching during the inspection was good. The curriculum is satisfactory and extra-curricular opportunities are good. Pupils are well cared for, and partnership with parents, the community and other schools is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and others in posts of responsibility provide good leadership. Management is satisfactory. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge to the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the education the school provides. Pupils also show a good level of satisfaction with what the school has to offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and in religious education.
- Ensure that teachers consistently match work to the range of prior attainment and ages within their classes and that higher-attaining pupils are challenged sufficiently.
- Develop a programme to stimulate the learning and development of gifted and talented pupils.
- Increase opportunities for independent learning and ensure that homework is set regularly, especially in Years 4 to 6.

¹ These are the goals children are expected to reach by the end of their time in the reception year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily and most are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. Standards in Years 1, 2 and 3 are below average overall. The achievement of pupils in Year 1 is good, and pupils in Years 2 and 3 are making satisfactory progress now, following a period when their achievement was adversely affected by staffing difficulties. Standards are broadly average by Year 6. The achievement of pupils in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory, with good progress by average and lower-attaining pupils in English and mathematics and in science in Year 6. Girls out-perform boys in Year 2 and Year 6 tests.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From a position where National Curriculum test results in 2003 were well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6, assessment data shows that results should be closer to the national average in 2004, reflecting a general rise in standards.
- Pupils achieve well in most subjects in Year 1 in response to good teaching and a well-planned curriculum.
- In ICT, they do well throughout the school and standards in most years are above average.
- Pupils are making good progress in science in Year 6 because the headteacher is working with this group of pupils to improve their performance.
- Although there has been some improvement in literacy, there are still weaknesses in pupils' writing skills which reduce their overall achievement.
- Pupils achieve at least satisfactorily in learning about religion but they make unsatisfactory progress in learning from religion because this aspect of the curriculum is not covered well enough.
- The school makes no special provision for gifted and talented pupils, and work is not always matched to the full range of needs and ages in a class; higher-attaining pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they could.
- Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress but the one pupil with a statement of special educational need is not achieving well enough because the school is not able to meet his learning needs.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily overall and well in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. They are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.2 (12.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.7 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average overall and in reading and writing; they were below average in mathematics. Teacher assessments showed that pupils were working well below average in science. Overall results were in the bottom five per cent nationally when compared with similar schools based on free

school meals. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's results has been above the national trend, which reflects a slight improvement in results in the last two years, but Year 2 test results remain lower than they should be. A fluctuation in standards from year to year is, however, partly an inevitable outcome of the small number of pupils in each year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (23.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.1 (24.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.8 (24.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were below the national average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Compared with similar schools based on pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2 in 1999, the school's results were well above average and in the top five per cent for science. This showed that pupils made very good progress in Years 3 to 6, even though this was from a low base. The school did not meet its target in English at Level 4 but exceeded it at Level 5. It met its target in mathematics at Level 4 but fell short of it at Level 5. The trend in the school's results was below the national trend – largely because results dropped significantly from 2001 to 2002, but this masks a substantial improvement in results in 2003.
4. In end of Year 2 tests over the last three years, girls out-performed boys. Girls also out-performed boys over the last three years in Year 6 tests, with a particularly marked difference in English. The 2003 results were skewed particularly in the favour of girls because of a relatively high incidence of special educational needs amongst the boys in that particular year group. Inspection findings show that boys tend to have less positive attitudes to learning than girls, but that most pupils with special educational needs within the school are boys. Both factors are likely to be affecting differences in performance between boys and girls.
5. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although many pupils are beginning to make good progress and most parents are of the opinion that their children are now achieving well. Overall standards are below average in Years 1 and 2 partly because the Year 1 group of pupils came into school with low prior attainment and entered Year 1 with below average standards, although they are making good progress. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are making satisfactory progress – with good progress in some lessons - but their work has suffered in the past through staffing difficulties. The provision by the local education authority of an 'expert teacher' - and the fact that the school is poised to make a permanent appointment from a strong field of applicants for the teaching post in Years 2 and 3 – means that the progress of these pupils is likely to be more secure than it has been in recent years. The school's assessment data suggests that there should be a marked improvement in 2004 on recent Year 2 test results. The greatest improvement is likely to be seen in reading and mathematics; the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in writing remains below average.
6. Standards in Year 3 are generally below average, again as a result of the history of staffing difficulties. In Years 4 to 6, standards are broadly average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall, with good progress in Years 4 to 6 in English and mathematics. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science, except for those in Year 6 who are taught as a separate group for science and achieve well. Pupils are making satisfactory progress this year towards the school's statutory targets, and assessment records suggest that National Curriculum test results in Year 6 in 2004 should show an improvement on those of 2003. The school's analysis of data, using a national programme for tracking pupils' progress, shows that pupils are increasingly achieving at least the expected amount of progress from Years 2 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.

7. Achievement in ICT is good throughout the school. Standards in Year 6 are average, but inspection evidence indicates that the standards of pupils coming up through the rest of the school are higher than this. By the time pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 reach Year 6, they are likely to be working above national expectations. Standards in Year 6 are lower than those in the rest of the school because these pupils had insufficient experience of working with computers earlier in their school careers. The limited number of computers and cramped accommodation for the ICT suite continue to place some limits on the use of computers in learning across the curriculum.
8. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory in learning about religion, and older pupils have an above average knowledge of the Bible stories, but unsatisfactory in learning from religion because teachers place insufficient emphasis on this part of the subject. Additionally, pupils' knowledge of world faiths other than Christianity is more limited than it should be.
9. Since the last inspection, the school has received regular support from the local education authority, especially in literacy and numeracy. This has led to an improvement in pupils' literacy skills, but past weaknesses mean that pupils' writing skills are still not as well developed as they need to be. Despite a range of strategies – including improving the teaching and assessment of writing, improved planning for and marking of writing, identified opportunities for writing across the curriculum, the reduced use of worksheets, and regular handwriting sessions with an agreed style – a significant number of pupils find it difficult to communicate their ideas clearly in writing, especially when they are required to work on open-ended tasks. Insufficient provision for homework in Years 4 to 6, and a general weakness in pupils' independent learning skills, mean that they are not practising their writing as frequently – or in as much depth – as they should do. The school's implementation of an initiative for raising standards in reading is, however, making a major impact on standards and reading in Year 1. There are already signs that this is likely, simultaneously, to raise standards in writing through improving pupils' understanding of spelling and increasing their confidence.
10. In some lessons, higher-attaining pupils make good progress, but their overall achievement is not as good as it should be because work is not always matched sufficiently to the diverse needs within the classes, especially given the mixed age as well as mixed ability nature of the groupings. Higher-attaining pupils could be challenged more in English and science. The school makes no special provision for gifted and talented pupils, apart from identifying those pupils in Year 6 who are most likely to reach Level 5 in National Curriculum tests.
11. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and benefit from a good level of support in class. The school has done its best to provide for a pupil with a statement of special educational need but the requirements set out in his statement are not being met satisfactorily and he is making limited academic progress. Despite a high level of one-to-one support from learning support assistants and the engagement of specialist external advice, the school's records show that attempts to provide greater challenge have put staff and other pupils physically at risk. This situation is unsatisfactory: it is not in the best interests of the pupil concerned and is at odds with the school's otherwise good efforts to provide for pupils with special educational needs.
12. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to raise standards. Recent assessment data shows that standards are rising and the school anticipates a significant improvement in its test results this year. Although staffing difficulties in Years 2 and 3 have reduced the effectiveness of some of the strategies the school has employed to raise standards, it should be entering a more stable period. The headteacher is rightly continuing to give priority to raising achievement throughout the school and making use of a range of strategies to achieve this.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in lessons and participate well in out-of-class activities.
- The school promotes good behaviour well and pupils respond positively.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils are very good.
- Pupils are very capable of distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Pupils have a sense of ownership in the school community.
- There is insufficient exploration of other religions, beliefs and values.
- Attendance is above the national average.

Commentary

13. Pupils have good attitudes to school and they almost invariably behave well in class. Girls concentrate rather better on their work than boys, but boys form the majority of pupils with special educational needs within the school. Pupils show interest and curiosity, and are keen to contribute their ideas. They exhibit slight restlessness only when the pace of teaching is relatively slow. They willingly accept responsibility, for example in assisting in assemblies, clearing litter or acting as representatives on the school council. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion and there were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection. Pupils play well together in happy groups. Relationships are very good and there is little aggressive behaviour, although parents and pupils confirm that there is occasional bullying which staff deal with well when they are made aware of it. Pupils are confident and talk politely to visiting adults.
14. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies contribute to pupils' spiritual awareness and they acquire self-knowledge as a consequence of the school's positive ethos, which ensures that they are valued and listened to. Most pupils show considerable respect for the feelings of others; a very small minority show occasional insensitivity towards others' beliefs. Religious education provides limited coverage of other faiths and concentrates too much on pupils' learning about religion rather than learning from it. As a result, some important opportunities are lost for pupils to apply their factual learning to their own lives as a means of increasing their spiritual awareness.
15. Pupils develop good social skills. They are very contented in the school community and play their part in maintaining the social fabric of the school. They understand the need for rules and help in a number of ways to maintain their environment. They also support the local community and wider charitable causes. Moral development is good. Pupils learn to live in harmony with others in a positive atmosphere and appreciate the importance of behaving well.
16. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of their own cultural background and traditions and are exposed to other cultures in some curriculum areas. Pupils' multicultural understanding is constrained somewhat by limited exposure to non-western cultures, but the school celebrates a range of world festivals and has had visitors talk to the pupils about the traditions of other cultures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

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

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

17. The rate of attendance is higher than the national average. Parents support the school's expectation that pupils will attend regularly and pupils show their eagerness by coming to school on time, even early.
18. Since the previous inspection, the school has sustained its good performance in this area and pupils' spiritual and cultural development is no longer unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. Pupils are well cared for, and the school enjoys a good partnership with parents, the community and other educational establishments.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is often good in Year 1 and in Years 4 to 6; some good teaching was seen in Years 2 and 3 during the inspection, but there have been significant weaknesses in teaching in this class.
- Work is generally planned for upper, average and lower-attaining pupils, but this does not fully meet the needs of mixed age classes.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils, who usually behave well.
- Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage, teachers share learning objectives with pupils throughout the school, and marking is often good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	-	7	4	1	-	-

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

19. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, and unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2, with over a quarter of the teaching ranging from unsatisfactory to very poor. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and, although there is scope to improve teaching and learning further, there has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Teaching has improved because teachers have undertaken significant training, they have had intensive literacy consultant support, support from advanced skills teachers, as well as regular monitoring and feedback on aspects of teaching and learning.

20. Over half the lessons seen during this inspection were good. Pupils' books show that teaching is often good in Year 1, in English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6 – both classes where teaching is stable – and it is good in science in Year 6. The school has suffered serious staffing difficulties in Class 2 - the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3 – and this has had an adverse impact on these pupils' learning. Pupils' work shows that teaching in Class 2 began to improve at the beginning of last term. The very recent provision of a new, experienced temporary teacher for pupils in Years 2 and 3 and the imminent appointment of a permanent teacher for this class augur well for teaching and learning in the future.
21. The mixed age classes, necessitated by the small number of pupils, mean that teachers face an unusual degree of challenge in matching work to pupils' learning needs. In Class 1, teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, whereas that for pupils in Year 1 is predominantly good, largely because the younger children are in a small minority and receive less of the teacher's time. Class 2 combines pupils from Year 2 and Year 3, spanning quite a wide range of prior attainment. Class 3 presents a particular challenge, because it caters for three years groups – Years 4 to 6 – as well as spanning a wide ability range. Since the last inspection, attention has been given to curriculum planning so that teachers now draw on coherent schemes of work when planning their lessons. A different task is usually planned for upper, average and lower-attaining pupils but tasks given to different groups are sometimes too similar. This was the case in an English lesson in Years 4 to 6 and is particularly evident in the written work of pupils in Years 2 and 3, where average and lower-attaining pupils have completed almost identical work. The schools' own pupil survey showed that a third of pupils felt that work was sometimes too easy. Higher-attaining pupils are usually expected to show a greater level of independence, but tasks are not always challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils or for the oldest pupils in the class. Good practice was seen in this respect in science, where the headteacher separates Year 6 pupils from those in Years 4 and 5 to provide them with greater challenge in readiness for National Curriculum tests. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in response to good support by learning support assistants, whose encouragement and explanations help to make tasks accessible to them.
22. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and usually manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to contribute their ideas. They make considerable effort in the introduction to lessons, when new concepts are introduced and think carefully in response to teachers' often skilled questioning. In Years 2 and 3, pupils are not always as well behaved as those in other classes because they have been adversely affected by a number of changes in staff and by some unsatisfactory teaching in the past. The 'expert teacher' who is now working with this class is placing appropriate emphasis on improving their behaviour and conveys suitably high expectations. In a physical education lesson in Years 2 and 3, a group of boys paid insufficient attention to instructions and the class learnt less than they should have done as a result, but in other lessons, pupils in this class responded well to the new, higher expectations. Girls generally apply themselves better than boys, which helps to explain why girls' test results have been better than those of boys. There is scope at times for teachers to deal more firmly with boys when they do not concentrate as well as they should.
23. Pupils enjoy working in groups and taking part in discussions, both of which they do relatively well. They are distinctly less keen on working individually, especially where written work is involved, and their independent learning skills are under-developed in Years 2 to 6. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have little understanding of what is expected of them when they are asked to record their ideas in writing, tending to chat to one another about the work rather than getting on with writing. The teacher newly appointed in Class 2 has rightly identified this as a weakness in their learning and is targeting it as an area for improvement. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 record with reasonable confidence, but they have insufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills because they are too frequently asked to work collaboratively. Furthermore, pupils in Class 3 do not have nearly enough homework: a weakness identified at the last inspection and raised as a concern by parents at the pre-inspection meeting.

24. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the school's assessment systems, although this remains an area where the school intends to refine its practice. Assessment procedures are comprehensive in the Foundation Stage, and the school analyses National Curriculum and non-statutory test results much more closely than at the time of the last inspection. This enables teachers to identify where pupils have fallen down in their answers, and the school has begun to make good use of a computer software package provided nationally for tracking pupils' progress. Regular review of pupils' progress means that staff are able increasingly to identify and tackle underachievement. More work is being undertaken to strengthen teachers' understanding of National Curriculum levels and the school is at a fairly early stage in developing portfolios of work at the different levels of attainment. Targets are set for groups in literacy and numeracy, and targets are being introduced in science. Pupils are aware of their targets and teachers provide them with very good written information about what they are expected to learn from each piece of work, but it is not yet clear that pupils are using this to prompt their self-evaluation. Marking was criticised at the last inspection but it is now good overall with some particularly good marking in English and mathematics, that makes clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The school collects a good amount of assessment information that shows what pupils know, understand and can do; teachers now need to use this to match work more closely to the needs of different pupils when planning lessons and conveying expectations.

The curriculum

A satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation, learning resources and staffing are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement since the last inspection means that comprehensive schemes of work are now in place and that National Curriculum requirements are met.
- Further work is needed to bring religious education fully in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus and with national guidance for the subject.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to join in with extra-curricular activities and take-up is good.
- Provision for most pupils with special educational needs is good; that for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

25. The last inspection judged the curriculum to be unsatisfactory. It found that the National Curriculum was not covered properly in several subjects, the school day was shorter than recommended in Years 3 to 6 so that some subjects were given insufficient time, the school lacked schemes of work, and religious education did not meet requirements.
26. The school has made good progress in its development of the curriculum since the last inspection and now meets curricular requirements except that learning from religion receives insufficient attention within religious education and limited attention is given to faiths other than Christianity. Coherent schemes of work have been established, drawing on national guidance, and are organised so that topics are covered in a two- or three-year cycle, according to the ages in each class. This means that teachers base their lesson planning on comprehensive long and medium-term planning, established to ensure that pupils' learning is systematic as they move through the school. The length of the school day is now appropriate and subjects receive sufficient time, although more work needs to be done to ensure that personal, social and health education is included as fully as it should be. Inconsistency in pupil numbers results in changes in class and curriculum organisation, which continues to present the school with a high level of challenge but this is managed satisfactorily.
27. Parents and pupils appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities provided and the fact that clubs are open to all. Regular activities include singing, craft, country dancing, chess,

football, rounders and recorders. Additionally, pupils are given good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, with guitar being particularly popular. A satisfactory range of trips enriches the curriculum; the school has rightly identified that more visits by enthusiasts or experts would further enhance the curriculum.

28. With the exception of the school's current difficulties in meeting the needs of a pupil with a statement of special educational need, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. This is largely because of the favourable pupil to adult ratio, whereby pupils receive a good level of attention. Individual education plans include specific and measurable targets, and the school provides a generally good level of support in class for pupils with special educational needs. The school has rightly identified the need for individual education plan targets to be used more actively in planning, and for learning support assistants to raise their awareness of pupils' individual education plans. The use of individual education plans is satisfactory at present. In contrast, provision for gifted and talented provision is unsatisfactory because no specific learning opportunities are provided for these pupils.
29. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall, the school's grounds support pupils' learning well. A quiet wildlife garden has been developed to enhance the curriculum, as well as providing an opportunity for quiet reflection. New climbing and balancing equipment has been purchased, and having a swimming pool of its own ensures that most pupils swim competently by the end of Year 6. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 1 enjoy good access to outdoor play. The indoor accommodation is less well suited to curricular needs. Class 3 is located in a mobile classroom, which places some restrictions on learning. The school is exploring the possibility of improved accommodation for pupils in Years 4 to 6 to increase opportunities for independent learning and creativity. However, in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 classroom, that for pupils in Years 2 and 3, and the ICT area which is between these two rooms, learning is sometimes disrupted by the necessary noise that comes from teaching and learning in the adjoining class. Parents at the meeting expressed concern about lack of partition walls between these different learning areas and the inspection found that their views were well founded. The space allocated to ICT is inadequate for the purpose, which makes the further development of ICT across the curriculum problematic.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides good support, advice and guidance, especially with regard to personal development. Steps taken by the school to obtain pupils' views and involve them in the life of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff display a high level of concern for pupils' well-being.
- Pupils receive good support and guidance, which greatly enhance their personal development.
- The school council has been re-established and the school is committed to expanding pupils' influence in its development.
- Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are good.

Commentary

30. The school gives high priority to pupils' health, safety and welfare and provision. There are appropriate arrangements for child protection.
31. Parents and pupils expressed the opinion that there is strong trust between the staff and pupils. All pupils spoken to confirmed that they would be happy to approach adults with concerns or problems. Pupils receive strong support for their personal development, and good or responsible behaviour is rewarded. The staff are good role models for socially appropriate behaviour. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory, marking and progress reports being particularly good features. Pupils are satisfied with the help they receive.

32. The school intends to extend the role of pupils in its life and development. It is too early to judge the impact of this but the school intends to give pupils more influence. It has used its own survey to gather pupils' views and the overall level of satisfaction evident in the pupil survey was higher than usual. The main positive points were: that children are friendly, teachers are fair, they listen to ideas and trust pupils to work independently, adults are approachable, pupils find out new things in lessons, and teachers help them to improve. Almost half the pupils think that sometimes pupils do not behave well and a significant number feel that work is sometimes too easy. About a quarter think that they do not get help when they are stuck and roughly the same number do not find lessons interesting or fun. A significant minority of pupils said that they could work harder.
33. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained a good level of care for its pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys good and productive links with parents, other schools and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil progress reports are comprehensive and facilitate parental involvement.
- There are good opportunities for parental consultation.
- Parents have very positive and supportive attitudes towards the school.
- The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) provides strong support.
- The school has established extensive and useful links with other schools.
- Homework arrangements in Class 3 do not support pupils' learning sufficiently.

Commentary

33. Links with parents are good and, for the most part, effective. Parents' views are sought regularly in a variety of ways, for example, through surveys, consultation evenings, sessions for parents on a given theme and through the school's genuine 'open door' policy.
34. Parents receive good general information and the school intends to augment this with termly newsletters, which will communicate details of what is to be taught in each class. Reports on pupils' progress are very good, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics. All reports show performance levels achieved and a good review of the pupil's capabilities, while most contain a diagnosis of weaker areas, frequently with suggestions of how to improve. There are improvement targets generated separately by teachers and pupils, though in some cases these focus too much on activities and too little on expected outcomes.
35. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the parents' meeting held prior to the inspection, parents were highly positive and supportive of almost every aspect of school life. The only concern of any note in the questionnaire related to a view that there is some bullying, but parents are confident that any incidents of bullying which come to the attention of staff are dealt with well. Parents at the meeting criticised the limited amount of homework set for pupils in Class 3, suggesting that more homework is set for younger pupils than for those in Years 4 to 6. They are concerned that this is not preparing pupils sufficiently for transfer to secondary school, when much more homework will be expected. Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed, though they found that teaching and learning were satisfactory overall rather than good. They did not see any bullying or aggressive behaviour. The inspection team came to the conclusion that pupils work and play in a culture that is generally free from bullying or harassment. Inspectors confirm parents' views on homework.
36. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 3, as a result of the good links, reports, several consultation evenings and meaningful homework. Although the same opportunities exist for consultation, and reports are

equally good, parents of older pupils do not have the same opportunities to contribute because homework arrangements are inadequate. It is clear that the school has not been following national guidance on the amount of homework set in Years 4 to 6, and some opportunities for pupils to continue work at home were missed during the inspection. All parents make a good contribution to school life, via the PTA and by supporting visits and after-school clubs.

37. The school has a good relationship with the local community. Occasional visitors enhance the curriculum, the local vicar regularly takes assembly, the school makes extensive use of the local church, and pupils visit local amenities as part of their topic work. The school also has links with a local Friendship Club for elderly people. All these enhance pupils' personal development.
38. There is good liaison with other schools. Links with the local pre-school contribute to good induction into the school. The school is an active member of several associations at primary and cluster level. There are good transfer arrangements to the two main receiving secondary schools. A more informal example of good liaison is the arrangement by which Great Tey and its neighbouring, even smaller, school collaborate to enter teams in sporting competitions, thus ensuring that pupils are included in external events.
39. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its good practice in this area; reports have improved but parents of older pupils are still justifiably critical of homework, where insufficient progress has been made.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher and others in posts of responsibility provide good leadership. Management is satisfactory. Governors provide a good level of support and challenge to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school's work is clearly focused on raising standards.
- Subject co-ordinators lead their subjects well in English, science and ICT and there has been good improvement in the leadership of mathematics; monitoring by co-ordinators needs further development.
- The role of the governing body has developed well since the last inspection and governors have a good understanding of the school's work.

Commentary

40. The effectiveness of the headteacher's leadership has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. The headteacher ensures that the school's work is clearly focused on raising standards and, through close work with the local education authority, has sustained those strengths found in the last inspection and introduced a range of initiatives that have begun to raise standards. Parents remained confident in the headteacher's ability following the last inspection and are satisfied with the way she runs the school. Strong teamwork has been established amongst staff, who have worked hard over the last two years to create and sustain improvement and shown a willingness to undertake training. Staff morale is high and the school is now better placed than it has been in recent years to move forward.
41. The headteacher has developed her monitoring skills and now provides clear and direct feedback to staff following lesson observations. She undertakes regular scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, but does not always identify sufficiently how well different groups of pupils are learning. Small cohorts make analysis and comparisons difficult, but the headteacher meets termly with each class teacher to discuss pupils' progress and ensures that

performance data is analysed to identify ways in which the school needs to improve. This has had a good effect in some areas of the school's work but continued staffing difficulties in Class 2 have diluted the impact of the headteacher's leadership. Time taken to assess unsatisfactory teaching and to follow this through with action has taken attention away from some of the necessary developments identified in the last inspection. The school improvement plan provides a clear statement of intent and identifies an appropriate range of priorities capable of moving the school forward.

42. The small number of teachers means that each must necessarily take on multiple responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators lead their subjects well in English, science and ICT and there has been good improvement in the leadership of mathematics, following the appointment of a new co-ordinator at the beginning of this academic year. Leadership is good in the Foundation Stage. Most co-ordinators undertake a reasonable amount of monitoring and analyse assessment data, but they do not observe teaching as much as they should. Further work is needed to develop this aspect of their role, with a particular emphasis on the learning of different groups of pupils. The school has identified as a priority the development of co-ordination in non-core subjects.
43. The role of the governing body has developed well since the last inspection and governors have a good understanding of the school's work. Each governor has been responsible for evaluating the school's improvement against a key issue from the last inspection. Monitoring includes classroom visits and governors document their findings. Governors' knowledge and skills have increased through local education authority training, and they are now confident about how to challenge the school where necessary. Subject co-ordinators have begun to make presentations to the governing body, and more reporting directly to governors is planned. The special educational needs governor liaises with the headteacher - who is the special educational needs co-ordinator - but governors do not yet have a clear strategy for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Governors have some understanding of how to compare the school's performance with other schools. They pay good attention to other aspects of good value, and systems for financial management are good.
44. The school enables pupils to achieve satisfactorily and there is good achievement in some areas. Standards have begun to rise and pupils make good progress in their personal development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The school cares well for its pupils and enjoys a close relationship with parents. Being a small school, the cost per pupil is relatively high but money is spent appropriately. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	256,770.75	Balance from previous year	34,714.15
Total expenditure	258,903.60	Balance carried forward to the next	32,581.30
Expenditure per pupil	3,334.74		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Children in the Foundation Stage are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception, and their achievement is satisfactory overall. The co-ordination of provision is good but Foundation Stage children are slightly disadvantaged by being in a mixed age class where pupils in Year 1 predominate. The number of Foundation Stage children fluctuates substantially from year to year, and there are currently only three children in the reception year. The teacher matches work to the Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils effectively when both years work together in whole-class activities, but Year 1 pupils tend to receive more of the teacher's attention when they move off to group work – partly because they form the majority.
46. Teaching and learning are good in personal, social and emotional development and very good in the development of children's literacy skills within the reading initiative that the school has adopted. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is otherwise satisfactory, as it is in mathematical development and in the other areas of learning. Children sometimes make less progress than they might when they work in the outside area with the learning support assistant following the introduction to literacy and numeracy sessions. This is because they are given free choice from too many options instead of focusing on an activity that is closely linked to their individual targets. The wide range of activities from which children are allowed to choose in these sessions makes it difficult for the learning support assistant to focus her attention before they finally settle on something of their choice; sometimes, they ignore the option that would move their learning on the most.
47. Planning reflects the Foundation Stage curriculum appropriately but the school has rightly identified the need to revise schemes of work, because planning for Foundation Stage children has not been fully resolved in the context of their being in such a minority within the class. As a result, their achievement is currently satisfactory overall, despite a number of strengths in leadership and management. The co-ordinator is self-questioning and makes thorough use of monitoring information to improve her teaching. A range of very good assessment procedures is in place; target setting is good and involves parents and children appropriately. The accommodation and resources support provision well. There is good early identification and support for children with special educational needs. Close partnership with parents provides every opportunity for them to become involved in their children's learning and the work that children do at home supports their overall achievement. The school has sustained and built on some of the strengths identified at the last inspection: provision for personal, social and emotional development is now good instead of satisfactory; provision for creative development is satisfactory, rather than unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond well to the routines and their behaviour is good.
- They are developing good social skills and relate well with one another and with adults.

Commentary

48. Children are happy and secure, and achieve well in this area. They develop a good range of personal and social skills and in their personal development they benefit from working with pupils in Year 1. They play with equal confidence when they are with Year 1 pupils as they do with one another, and readily wait for their turn.

49. Children clearly enjoy good, trusting relationship with the adults who work with them, and their confidence is fostered effectively by the close links the school has with parents. There are clear routines and children are encouraged to develop independence and to take some responsibility, for instance by helping to clear things away. They behave well, try to succeed at the tasks they are given and concentrate in class.
50. There are good opportunities for social and moral development. Staff model caring attitudes, and their teaching promotes children's self-esteem. They have opportunities to talk about their experiences and ideas, especially when they work with the learning support assistant. They enjoy an unusual amount of individual attention, because there are so few children in the Foundation Stage this year, and interaction with adults supports their development in this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making very good progress in their knowledge of letters, letter sounds and good progress in reading.
- Most children need more regular practice in forming their letters; limited handwriting skills make it difficult for them to record their emerging ideas.

Commentary

51. In communication, language and literacy, children achieve well overall. There are satisfactory opportunities for them to develop their communication and language skills. They tend to be rather less vocal than Year 1 pupils in whole-class work, but have good opportunities to engage in conversation with the learning support assistant when they work as a discrete group. Higher-attaining children are reasonably vocal when they play with others – for instance, negotiating when decisions need to be made – but average and lower-attaining children are less talkative.
52. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and show an interest in books. They are making very good progress in gaining an understanding of letters and letter sounds through whole-class sessions. In developing independent reading skills, they are working at least in line with national expectations and should reach the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of communication, language and literacy by the end of reception. They are able to retell a story and use cards to sequence events.
53. Higher-attaining children use their knowledge of phonics to write simple regular words and short captions under their drawings, showing some understanding of capital letters and full stops. All the children have clear ideas about what they want to write but difficulties in letter formation are holding average and lower-attaining children back. They draw pictures that have meaning, but many of their letters are not properly formed; only some are legible. They need more regular practice in letter formation than they are given, and sometimes opportunities to extend writing skills are missed when the class moves into groups after the introduction to literacy. This was the case during the inspection: although children made satisfactory progress in developing their language through role play on the story they had heard and could answer some questions about the sequence of events, there was no opportunity for them to write about what they knew. Provision in the Foundation Stage is not, therefore, supporting the whole-school push to raise standards in writing as much as it could do.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from whole-class activities with Year 1 pupils, especially in gaining an understanding of numbers.
- When they work outside with the learning support assistant, there is sometimes too wide a choice of activities.

Commentary

54. Children achieve satisfactorily in mathematical development and are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The highest attaining child was able to count just beyond a hundred during the inspection, with some prompting. Other children count beyond ten, and all can order numbers to at least ten. Children are able to count on using their fingers and know how to find the correct number of objects to match a given number. They produce repeating patterns and sequence colours. They add two groups of objects (expressed as dots or shapes) and write the total, and can find one less than a given number. They draw the correct number of objects to match a given digit up to at least five, and they know the vocabulary of comparison – as in ‘longer’ and ‘shorter’, ‘heavier’ and ‘lighter’ – and positional and directional language. Children’s work shows that they have fairly limited opportunities to write numbers and that they would benefit from more individual work on shape.
55. In a lesson during the inspection where children went outside after the whole-class introduction, they made only satisfactory progress because they were given choice from too many activities. Learning was mainly through investigation and quite fragmented until they finally settled to the activity that appealed to them most from a large number of choices. The learning support assistant asked appropriate questions and tried hard to focus their thinking on addition and, where possible, on the use of ‘+’ and ‘=’ signs. A higher-attaining child was able to add on effectively using his fingers; another tended to guess what the answer might be.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

56. This area of learning was not inspected in depth but evidence suggests that provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is at least satisfactory. Children find out about features of the local environment and during the inspection, they learnt about the seaside in a lesson that made very good use of a range of resources to bring the topic to life. They know that ICT can be used to present information and data. In religious education, they hear stories from world religions and they have celebrated festivals, such as Diwali, the Japanese Flower Festival and Chinese New Year. In science, they use their senses to explore materials and their properties, and learn about living things by planting seeds and watching them grow. They have opportunities to make models out of junk materials, for instance, on a project about rockets and in their study of houses. As part of their role-play of a Roman banquet, they wore togas and did some cooking.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

57. Provision in physical development was not inspected in depth. Evidence suggests that provision is satisfactory. Children take part in a satisfactory range of activities, including balancing, climbing, running and jumping. They have regular access to the outdoor area, which includes wheeled toys. The fact that the school has its own swimming pool supports their development of skills and confidence in the water.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

58. Provision in creative development was not inspected in depth. Evidence suggests that provision is satisfactory, which is an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.
59. Staff encourage children's imaginative play by entering into the spirit of what they are doing and provide a good deal of freedom for children to use objects symbolically in their play. Their imaginative role-play is aided particularly by the setting up of an area of the classroom (as well as in the outside area) to reflect the theme at any given time. On the pre-inspection visit, a corner of the classroom was set up to suggest an estate agency, as part of the topic on 'houses', together with appropriate props to encourage writing and communicating for a purpose. During the inspection, the focus had moved on to the theme of 'the seaside', and this was echoed by the props in the role-play area and the provision of a 'seaside café' and 'beach hut' outside.
60. There are satisfactory opportunities for children to develop an appreciation of music and to sing familiar songs. They explore different ways of making sounds and in part of a lesson during the inspection they made good progress working alongside Year 1 pupils in playing percussion instruments. They have satisfactory opportunities to develop skills and make things through organised art sessions, but opportunities to engage in spontaneous painting and creativity are limited – as they were at the last inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 1 and in Years 4 to 6 achieve well overall as a result of teaching that is generally good.
- Year 1 pupils are making particularly good progress as a result of the school's involvement in a project aimed at improving their reading.
- Standards throughout the school are rising but there is more work to do to improve pupils' learning skills, especially in Years 2 and 3, where pupils' have previously underachieved.
- A range of initiatives has begun to raise standards in writing, but pupils' independent writing skills remain relatively weak throughout the school.
- The subject is led well and there is a clear commitment to developing provision further.

Commentary

61. Pupils in Year 1 achieve well in response to good teaching. They are making particularly good progress in their understanding of phonics, as a result of the school's use of a national reading programme. This is likely to have a positive effect on the writing – as well as reading – skills of these pupils and should contribute to raising standards as pupils move up through the school.
62. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are now achieving satisfactorily, although they are working at a standard that is below the national average. Over time, their achievement has been unsatisfactory. In recent months, pupils have produced a more satisfactory body of work and they made good progress in the lesson seen during the inspection. Teacher assessments suggest that results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 should be a distinct improvement on those in 2003, but with better performance in reading than writing. Too few pupils are likely to gain higher levels in writing and pupils' books confirm that standards in writing are lower than those in reading, speaking and listening. From a low

starting point, pupils in Years 4 to 6 are making good progress and the school anticipates broadly average results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6.

63. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to speak confidently about familiar topics, to answer and pose questions. They have at least average listening skills and respond quickly. When prompted, pupils know that a capital letter is required at the beginning of a sentence and a full-stop at the end, although some pupils in Year 2 – and, indeed, higher up the school – use capital letters inappropriately in the middle of sentences in their independent writing. When they are given tasks that involve working individually on a piece of writing, even higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 3 have little concept of what it means to work on their own. This is clearly a result of weak teaching in the past – where pupils have had limited opportunities to engage in open-ended writing – but also reflects the school's general need to strengthen pupils' independent learning skills, especially where writing is concerned. Only one or two higher-attaining pupils record quickly and confidently by the end of Year 2, which has implications for their capacity to show what they know in a test situation. All other pupils are held back by their slowness in recording and their apparent inability to concentrate fully on what they are meant to be writing. Pupils are gaining fluency when reading fiction books, and are able to use their knowledge of traditional stories in their own writing. They have average knowledge of how non-fiction books are organised.
64. By the end of Year 6, the best writing is produced when pupils work within a tight structure, for instance, answering a series of questions or arranging their ideas within a writing frame. The most imaginative and precise writing has been produced in poetry written to a given format or in response to images captured with a digital camera. Pupils increasingly use spider diagrams and flow charts to organise their ideas. When they are required to structure a piece of extended writing, the highest attaining pupils produce lively, imaginative work. Most pupils make use of a number of simple punctuation devices and their handwriting is generally legible. The writing of lower-attaining pupils is brief, with weaknesses in spelling and grammatical structure. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to analyse pieces of text to see how the author has organised ideas. Higher and average-attaining pupils express some opinions about what they have read and understand the main points. They are able to select the key points from a piece of text but find it more difficult to make inferences from what they have read.
65. Teaching is satisfactory overall but much of the teaching was good during the inspection, and pupils' work shows that teaching is good overall in Year 1 and in Years 4 to 6. Teachers share learning intentions with pupils, so that they know what they will be doing. Where teaching is good, skilled questioning gets pupils thinking and eager to contribute their ideas. In a lesson in Years 2 and 3, expectations were high and the teacher made particularly good use of the introduction to model the task for pupils, using the board to record their ideas. She paid careful attention to the vocabulary they might need to use in their own writing, checked that they all understood and provided effective evaluative feedback once they began their own writing tasks.
66. Lessons are prepared fully and learning support assistants are used effectively. Pupils have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and lessons provide a fair range of activities. There is some variation in the work expected from higher, average and lower-attaining pupils, and where teaching is at its best, pupils are given distinctly different tasks according to their prior attainment and / or age. At times, as in a lesson in Years 4 to 6, pupils of differing ages and abilities complete the same basic task, the level of support or the use of writing frames being the main difference in the work set for different groups. This does not ensure that challenge is sufficiently matched to all pupils' needs; average attaining pupils gain the most benefit from it. Pupils' work in Year 2 shows that higher and lower-attaining pupils have been set tasks in the past that were either too difficult or too easy for them, and higher, average and lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 are frequently given the same work to do. Getting pupils to work in collaboration with several others when they could easily complete the set task more thoughtfully on their own also serves to stunt the amount of effort and thinking undertaken by some pupils.

67. Pupils have writing targets in the front of their books, based on National Curriculum levels, and they are involved in identifying some targets of their own. Marking in English is generally good throughout the school so that pupils know what to do to improve, and teachers give them very helpful lists of criteria for use when evaluating their own work. Teachers do not, however, celebrate pupils' written work as much as they could in display, and pupils have limited opportunities to use ICT for drafting and redrafting their work. Making a film about healthy living, however, provided a good opportunity for pupils' to increase their understanding of the words that are used to connect parts of a sentence.
68. The leadership of English is good: the co-ordinator has worked closely with the local education authority's literacy consultant to raise standards and teachers have been on at least one writing course each in the last year. The co-ordinator works with class teachers to identify pupils who are capable of achieving more and the school provides booster classes. These initiatives have begun to have an impact on standards. Management is satisfactory: some monitoring is undertaken but there is scope to develop this much more, to include regular lesson observation.
69. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Development in the subject has been purposeful and overall improvement has been held back mainly by staffing difficulties in Class 2 – which have recently been resolved. Overall achievement is now satisfactory. There has been underachievement by pupils in Years 2 and 3 since the last inspection, but their achievement is now satisfactory. Writing remains an area where more work needs to be done but the development of pupils' writing skills is no longer depressed by the overuse of worksheets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Opportunities for pupils to develop their language and literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has a literacy policy, which it recognises may need to be updated to place greater emphasis on the role of different subjects in developing pupils' literacy skills. It intends to develop a scheme of work for writing across the curriculum. There are some good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in various subjects, but weaknesses in sentence structure, spelling and in explaining their ideas limit their recording in science and in religious education. Pupils' reading skills, and their speaking and listening, generally support their learning effectively.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics results in the 2003 Year 2 tests were below the national average and well below those of similar schools.
- The 2003 Year 6 results in national tests were average and high in comparison with similar schools.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 3 and that of average and lower-attaining pupils is good in Years 4 to 6.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged as much as they should be.

Commentary

71. The low results in Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 were mainly due to serious staffing difficulties in the class for pupils in Years 2 and 3. Lessons seen and pupils' work show that in Years 1 and 2 standards are below the national average, although achievement is now satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils develop an understanding of number satisfactorily and solve simple addition and subtraction problems. They can add 10 more to a given number,

indicating a developing knowledge of the ten times table. Pupils also recognise simple fractions, and higher attainers identify equivalent fractions for a half and a third. Lower-attaining pupils are able to draw a half of a shape accurately. Pupils recognise familiar two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to measure length accurately in standard units. They are developing an appropriate understanding of different ways to record data, for example, by drawing pictograms and using tally charts.

72. In the 2003 tests, standards in Year 6 were in line with the national average and well above average compared with similar schools based on prior attainment. From lessons seen and pupils' work, the achievement of pupils at Level 4 in Years 3 to 6 is good given their prior attainment. However, the achievement of higher-attaining pupils is satisfactory because a slightly lower proportion of pupils than expected nationally are working at Level 5. This was also confirmed in the analysis of statutory targets in 2003: the school met its targets for Level 4 but fell well short of its target for Level 5. Overall achievement in Years 3 to 6 is, therefore, satisfactory. Girls regularly outperform boys, but this is partly because more boys than girls have special educational needs. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, although higher attainers could achieve more. By Year 6, pupils use their knowledge of tables accurately for multiplication and division, convert decimals into fractions and percentages, and understand place value. They also identify the properties of flat and solid shapes, and record and interpret data accurately in line graphs, pie charts and bar graphs.
73. Pupils' work indicates that the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and has led to satisfactory achievement. However, in a lesson seen in Years 4 to 6 teaching was good and pupils' work indicates recent improvement, with greater use of ICT to promote learning and achievement. Lessons are generally well paced and teachers have good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are well motivated to learn and try their best. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively, partly as a result of good training and support provided by the local education authority.
74. The co-ordinator, who has held the responsibility since September, has made a good start in developing the subject. More systematic analysis of assessment information has led to improvements in teaching. For example, information from the 2003 national tests highlighted weaknesses in problem solving and data handling. The co-ordinator also identified the need to develop more opportunities for considering shape and measures at the start of each lesson. Teachers have now begun to address these issues, which should lead to higher achievement in the future. The co-ordinator now rightly intends to monitor pupils' work, teaching and learning and develop the use of number across the curriculum.
75. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall, with some good achievement by lower and average attaining pupils in Years 4 to 6. The quality of teaching has improved and recent improvement in staffing means that there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. There is, however, still too little challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Greater use is made of monitoring performance data than at the last inspection and leadership and management of the subject have improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. There are appropriate opportunities to develop numeracy in other subjects, although this is not yet systematically planned for. For example, in geography pupils use co-ordinates to read maps and in history they develop a greater understanding of place value using time lines. In science, pupils record results in standard measurements satisfactorily.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Year 6 are good and, in particular, the focus on developing skills of independent learning; hence, these pupils are achieving well.
- Standards by Year 2, though improving, remain below average.
- There are good opportunities for experimental and investigative work.
- Opportunities for pupils to work at a pace and level suited to their individual needs are limited.
- There has been accelerated improvement in the quality of pupils' work across the school over the last term.

Commentary

77. Standards of work are below average by the end of Year 2 but broadly average by the end of Year 6. In 2003, the results of National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were in line with the national average. Based on their prior attainment, these results were very high compared with those of similar schools. However, this masks the earlier underachievement of the 2003 cohort of Year 6 pupils. Though higher-attaining pupils performed well, the proportion reaching at least the expected level – Level 4 – was below average.
78. Inspection evidence indicates that almost all of the small number of pupils currently in Year 6 are working at least at Level 4 and between a quarter and a third are at the higher level, Level 5. Pupils currently in Years 3 to 5 demonstrate satisfactory achievement overall, though the achievement of Year 6 pupils is good. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of scientific facts and ideas. For example, they were able to make appropriate comparisons between a butterfly and a moth. Across Years 4 to 6, though pupils pose relevant questions for investigation, and the highest attaining pupils provide plausible reasons for the predictions they make, the conclusions drawn from results and observations often lack depth.
79. The results of teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2003 were well below average. Hence, current standards, though remaining low, are an improvement on this. Inspection findings indicate that most pupils reach the expected level, Level 2, but few are attaining the higher level, Level 3. Achievement across Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and this is an improvement on the time of the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Pupils acquire factual information satisfactorily and answer simple questions well. However, they are not always secure in their use of technical vocabulary and are hesitant about providing sufficiently detailed explanations.
80. Throughout the school, there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of pupils' work over the last term. The written work of pupils in Year 2 in particular shows a dramatic improvement from, for example, pictures and single word responses to attempts at extended written commentary. Though there are good opportunities now for independent writing, younger pupils are hampered at times by weaknesses in spelling, grammar and sentence structure. The range and variety of writing in Year 6 are good.
81. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in Year 6 because expectations are high and pupils are challenged to think for themselves. Very well structured work helps them to become independent learners. In the Year 6 lesson seen, the teacher gave pupils useful information and worksheets to enable them to extract relevant information about microbes, share it with the rest of the class and make detailed and accurate notes on their own.

82. Across the school, work is rarely different for different ability groups or age groups. This particularly affects younger or less able pupils who produce less detailed work and a smaller volume than older or higher-attaining pupils, rather than working at a more appropriate level. Marking has improved considerably in Years 2 to 3 over the last term where it provides pupils with very good information on how to improve their work. It is of a similar standard in Year 6 but not in other year groups.
83. Work in books indicates that there are good opportunities for experimental and investigative work and this has helped pupils to achieve improved knowledge and understanding of scientific processes and principles. Good use is made of numeracy and ICT to make measurements and present information graphically.
84. Leadership and management by the headteacher are good. There is a very clear direction for development, and action taken since the last inspection has helped to improve standards of work. There is good monitoring and evaluation of provision.
85. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with good improvement in Year 6. Teaching is now satisfactory overall. Curriculum planning and the leadership and management of the subject have improved significantly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good because expectations of pupils are high.
- Standards of work are above average by Year 2 and achievement across the school is good.
- Good leadership is helping to drive up standards but monitoring and evaluation of provision are too informal.
- The computer suite is small and the number of computers in it is limited; these factors make it difficult to use the suite for whole-class work.
- There is scope for more regular use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

86. Standards in the current Year 6 are average. However, inspection evidence indicates that the standards of pupils coming up through the rest of the school are higher. For example, by the time pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 reach Year 6, their standards are likely to be above average. Those in Year 6 are not as high as in the rest of the school due to the lack of ICT experience for this year group earlier in their school careers.
87. Achievement is good throughout the school. By Year 2, pupils have good skills in using computers. They are confident about finding information using the Internet, and write simple procedures accurately and well in order to control events and make things happen. Pupils in Years 1 to 2 present and interpret graphical information well by using the computer to plot data they have collected on appropriate graphs or charts. By Year 6, pupils have sound knowledge of word processors and spreadsheets. For example, they know how to add simple formulas into a spreadsheet to make relevant calculations.
88. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and use it well to plan suitable activities and tasks to help promote pupils' progress. Expectations are high and pupils are challenged well. There is good encouragement for independent work though, where appropriate, teaching assistants are used well to support pupils. In the class for pupils in Years 4 to 6, they were encouraged effectively to develop their problem-solving skills. As a result, they worked out an accurate procedure to control a traffic light sequence.

89. The curriculum now covers the requirements of the National Curriculum well, especially those relating to the areas identified as weak in the previous inspection report. However, limited resources restrict the extent to which teachers can make use of ICT and pose difficulties for whole-class teaching in the computer suite. Though teachers manage the situation well, too many pupils have to share a computer at the same time or take turns. The co-ordinator is examining a range of viable solutions to this problem, including purchasing laptop computers to augment existing resources.
90. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and ICT has been a clear focus for the school leadership development programme. Management is satisfactory. Though there is informal monitoring of the use of ICT, it now needs to be more rigorous. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because standards are now much better and achievement is good across all age groups.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Pupils' skills in using ICT in subjects are good. Computers are used well in mathematics, science and design and technology. There is evidence of the use of ICT to search for information in history and geography but more limited use of computers to draft and re-draft writing in English. Overall, there is scope for wider use of ICT in subject teaching, but limited availability of computers hampers use.

HUMANITIES

92. No overall judgement can be made about provision, standards and teaching in geography and history, because these subjects were not inspected in detail.

Geography

93. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Year 2 pupils' work and display show that they are deepening their understanding of the environment. For, example, they explored how to improve the school grounds as a result of a survey which they carried out. They also compared buildings in the locality and recognised that some houses in Great Tey are made from timber frames, whereas others are made from brick. In a good lesson seen, pupils identified key features of the seaside environment at Clacton-on-Sea, from a multi-media presentation. The teacher's good use of ICT ensured that pupils were well focused and engaged in their learning. As a result, they identified Clacton on the map and understood that seaside environments have a variety of shops. Pupils' work shows that by Year 6, they know the effects of erosion on coastlines. They know that the action of waves in the sea produces stacks and they are developing an understanding of geographical vocabulary such as 'headland', 'groynes' and 'deposition'. Good use is made of the local area, such as visits to the seaside to enhance learning.

History

94. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Pupils' work and display show that by Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of past and present times. For example, they compare Great Tey as it is today with Roman times and understand that Romans used horses for travelling whereas people now use cars or buses. They compare the different lifestyles of Roman soldiers and slaves. By Year 6, pupils deepen their knowledge of history through their study of the Romans and the Celts. They know that Boudicca was the leader of the Iceni and she sacked Colchester as an act of revenge against the Romans. They compare life in Victorian times with modern day life through, for example, topics on families and work patterns. There are good opportunities to extend pupils' learning through focused visits in the local area, and resources such as ICT, videos and artefacts are used well to promote achievement.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient attention is given to providing pupils with the necessary skills to apply the teachings of religion to their own lives and to the world around them.
- The coverage of faiths other than Christianity is limited.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have above average knowledge of some aspects of the Bible and biblical stories.
- Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills limit the capacity of some pupils to express their ideas in writing, although the subject provides good opportunities for them to practise these skills.

Commentary

95. Pupils' knowledge of factual information about religions is at least average and in Years 4 to 6 it is above average in relation to Christianity, but their learning from religions is below average because teachers do not place enough emphasis on this aspect of the subject. As a result, standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
96. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learnt about special places, key figures in Christianity, the Easter story, the rituals associated with Harvest Festival, and touched briefly upon aspects of other world religions. They have had some opportunities to write prayers, although even the prayers written by higher-attaining pupils are very basic. In Years 2 and 3, average and lower-attaining pupils have produced very little written work, instead, communicating their understanding through illustrations, although there has been an improvement in the amount of work recorded since January of this year. These pupils clearly made unsatisfactory progress prior to that. Pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily, though standards in learning from religion are below the expectation of the Local Agreed Syllabus. In part of a lesson in Years 2 and 3, pupils were rather restless as the teacher introduced work on the Panchantra, as part of the study of stories with a moral, but soon concentrated when she began to read the story and were able to answer questions effectively when she had finished.
97. In a lesson in Years 4 to 6, pupils revealed an above average knowledge of characters from the Old Testament and a good developing knowledge of the books of the Bible. Their written work shows that standards are average in learning about religion, with good knowledge evident in some topics, but well below average in learning from religion. For example, when pupils were asked to write a diary entry about an important journey, they wrote about inconsequential everyday journeys and even pupils in Year 6 were not able to link this in any way to what they had studied about spiritual journeys. Pupils are able to put themselves in the position of a biblical character and write about a series of events, but they are not able to apply religious meaning effectively to events in their own lives or to their own feelings and experiences. In this respect, they are working below the expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus and below standards found in schools nationally.
98. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory overall. Work in the lesson seen in Years 4 to 6 was matched well to the different needs and prior attainment within the class through three distinct tasks. The task also provided good opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their literacy skills. The teacher had good subject knowledge and provided pupils with clear explanations. In response, the work that pupils produced showed that they had limited understanding of how God might speak to people in the modern world because their thinking was superficial. Those who had been asked to write a poem had difficulty finding the words to express their ideas. Teachers provide pupils with good information about what is expected of them, in the form of written learning objectives that are stuck into their books. The study of Christianity is supported by visits to the local church, with whom the school has strong links

and there are appropriate links between religious education and some other subjects. The school has sufficient resources to support its teaching of Hinduism and Judaism but pupils have not visited religious buildings as part of their study of these religions.

99. In the last inspection, religious education was a key issue: the subject was not covered in sufficient depth and was taught mainly through assemblies. Although overall provision remains unsatisfactory, a significant amount of development has taken place. The subject is now allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time and follows a planned curriculum. Improvement has been satisfactory from a very low base; more work needs to be done to ensure that pupils gain what they should from the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

100. Insufficient evidence was collected to form an overall judgement about provision, achievement or teaching in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education. It was only possible to scrutinise work on display for art and design and design and technology, to see part of two lessons in music, one whole lesson in physical education, and to look at teachers' planning.

Art and design

101. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Work on display by pupils in Year 1 is broadly average and suggests that they have opportunities to work with a fair range of media. They combined materials imaginatively in making 'magic boxes' and have produced prints based on patterns in nature. Drawings of buildings in Years 2 and 3 are also broadly in line with national expectations in terms of composition and recording from observation. The standard of the best watercolour paintings on the theme of 'the seashore', by pupils in Year 3, is also in line with national expectations but some other painting is below average. Effective relief tiles – made possible by the school having a kiln - are at least in line with expectations. In the craft club, pupils have experimented with wax resist and ink wash to produce images that include some interesting use of colour. Work by pupils in Years 4 to 6, inspired by the fabric and wallpaper designs of William Morris, is the best currently on display. This makes good use of links between art and history – it was completed as part of pupils' study of the Victorians – and they clearly made good progress in their knowledge and technical skill through the close study of Morris's designs. Otherwise, art on display suggests that teachers do not use the work of other artists as much as they could do to promote pupils' understanding or as a basis for teaching practical techniques.

Design and technology

102. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements are met. Pupils in Year 1 have made musical instruments from junk materials, vehicles with axles, sock and string puppets, and made dumplings as part of their work on the Japanese Flower Festival. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 combined junk materials to make models as part of the project on recycling waste. They explored how air pressure can be used to produce and control movement, and applied this knowledge to design their own moving toys. In a project on structure, older pupils looked at the local play park, identified materials the equipment was made from and how parts were joined. They then made a model of a piece of playground equipment. Pupils produced a list of materials and a plan of how to make their models. They joined the wooden structures using a glue gun and Sellotape, making satisfactory use of the designs they had produced from their first-hand research. In evaluating their work, they were able to say what they felt about the outcome and what they would do to improve it.

Music

103. In a lesson in the class for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and in an assembly, pupils demonstrated average singing skills. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were good. In a lesson

in Years 4 to 6, the teacher had very good relationships with the pupils and was knowledgeable about the subject. Pupils were enthusiastic and made good progress in the lesson. They could keep time without music. The pace of the lesson was good. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils played percussion instruments effectively in unison, and showed awareness of the need to keep in time. The teacher's subject knowledge was good and she explained subject vocabulary clearly.

104. The school provides pupils with good opportunities for instrumental tuition. Currently, pupils are given individual, or small group, lessons in guitar, keyboard and clarinet. Parents' comments at the meeting held before the inspection indicated that a good number of pupils are learning to play an instrument. Guitar lessons are particularly popular. In addition, there are after-school clubs for singing and recorders. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements for music are met.

Physical education

105. Physical education was not inspected in depth but was sampled. Only one lesson was observed, and this was the class for pupils in Years 2 to 3. Hence, no overall judgements can be made on standards, achievement, teaching and learning.
106. The school has its own swimming pool and, by Year 6, pupils reach the required standard in swimming. The one lesson observed was not particularly successful. Lack of concentration and some poor behaviour, mostly by boys, resulted in insufficient progress being made in the development of throwing and catching skills. The teacher did not manage behaviour effectively enough and some instructions given were inappropriate.
107. The school provides after-school sporting activities such as rounders and football. Through collaboration with another small local school, pupils are given opportunities to take part in competitive sporting activities with other schools. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements for physical education are met.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

108. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about achievement or teaching in personal, social and health education. The subject was co-ordinated by a part-time teacher who left at Christmas and the school has not yet allocated the leadership of the subject to another member of staff. A policy has been developed and a scheme of work is partly in place but has not yet been completed. Personal, social and health education is identified within curriculum planning for other subjects but more work needs to be done to ensure that all aspects of personal, social and health education are taught. Pupils experience some 'circle time'. The statutory aspects of personal, social and health education – for example, for sex education and health education – are met, and the school makes effective use of the school nurse, who comes in to talk to pupils about healthy eating, nutrition and exercise. The school ethos and assemblies contribute positively to pupils' development as effective citizens as well as to their personal and social education. Overall provision is broadly satisfactory, although more work needs to be done without undue delay to develop the curriculum further.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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