

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LUBBINS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Canvey Island, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114891

Headteacher: Mrs S Clare

Lead inspector: Mr P B McAlpine

Dates of inspection: 7-9 June 2004

Inspection number: 256794

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 3-11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 185

School address: May Avenue  
Canvey Island  
Essex

Postcode: SS8 7HF

Telephone number: 01268 697181

Fax number: 01268 515046

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr James Frost

Date of previous inspection: 13014 June 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located on the sea front at Canvey Island. It is smaller than other primary schools. There are 154 full-time pupils from the Reception year to Year 6. A further 31 part-time pupils attend a Nursery class. Traditionally, about a third of those in the Nursery transfer to Reception classes in other schools. Numbers on roll have declined by about 18 per cent since 2000. The pupils are organised into seven classes, including the Nursery. Two of the classes have mixed ages. Almost all of the pupils are from white British families. The backgrounds of the children are very mixed, with significant numbers experiencing social and economic disadvantage. Currently, four children are in public care and this is considerably more than typically found in schools of this type and size. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 27 per cent, is well above average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The significant needs include moderate learning, speech and communication, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The distribution of pupils with special educational needs is very uneven between classes. Attainment on entry is well below average, with a significant minority having very low attainment indeed. Pupil mobility is particularly high, affecting almost a quarter of the pupils during each academic year. Some pupils have a history of non-attendance.

The school was inspected in 2000 and placed in special measures. It was re-inspected in June 2002 by HMI and removed from special measures. The school has received intensive support from the local authority and is currently involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. The turnover of teachers since 2002 has been very high.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology English as an additional language
9588	Mr A West	Lay inspector	
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Physical education Special educational needs
14732	Mrs E Korn	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is satisfactory** with several good features but also a few significant aspects for improvement. The standards attained are below the national average but the achievement of the pupils is broadly satisfactory given their varied starting points and many with low attainment on entry do well. Attitudes to learning and the standard of behaviour are generally good. The teaching is satisfactory overall with several strong aspects. The substantial majority of pupils are learning at an appropriate pace, with some catching up quickly. Leadership and management have been through a turbulent period but effectiveness overall is satisfactory. The school has a budget deficit and struggling to meet commitments. Nevertheless, it is providing a satisfactory quality of education and, because of this, satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- almost all pupils make good progress in reading and achieve well in this aspect of English;
- the pupils work hard in lessons, behave well and complete tasks on time;
- there is a strong ethos of care and the school works hard to raise pupils' self-esteem;
- standards in English and mathematics are below the national average, and well below average in science, partly because too few pupils attain highly for their age;
- many pupils, particularly boys, have limited capacity for speaking and cannot articulate their thoughts clearly; this is constraining their capacity for learning in several subjects;
- attendance is well below the national average because a small but significant number of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly;
- a significant minority of parents are disaffected and frustrated by the school's performance and the school does not do enough to allay their fears.

There has not been enough improvement since the last inspection, when the school was removed from special measures, because of the very high turnover of teachers. This major constraint to raising achievement has been largely outside the control of the school. It has caused considerable frustration to pupils, parents, governors and senior management alike. It has been tackled effectively by the headteacher and governors and staffing has now stabilised. Neither this good achievement nor the daunting staffing difficulties have been communicated clearly enough to parents. Standards have improved but greater improvement is needed, particularly for the more able. Senior management and the governing body have been strengthened but their impact weakened by the many changes within the management team. Aspects of the curriculum have been enriched but more work is needed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement is satisfactory.** Almost all pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving broadly in line with their potential. Current standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are

well below average but this compares favourably with their very low attainment on entry. Standards in Year 2 have risen faster than the national trend over the last few years. Current standards in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Nevertheless, this is an improvement compared to their attainment on entry and, in English and mathematics, to the 2003 results shown in the table. However, the trend of improvement in Year 6 has not kept pace with the national trend. This is because of the high mobility of pupils and the increasing numbers with special educational and other needs admitted to the school. Those pupils who remain at the school for most of their educational career generally do well and make at least the nationally expected amount of progress. The large numbers of pupils joining the school at other than the usual time are settled but do not always achieve to their potential because of the disruption to their learning caused by moving. Many of these pupils stay at the school only a few months before moving yet again. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with learning difficulties, are well supported and their attainment reflects their capacity for learning. The high turnover of teachers has affected the progress of pupils in some classes and led to gaps in knowledge, which are now being filled. **The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development, is good.**

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory.** The quality and range of teaching is consistent with the majority of schools and many lessons are of good or very good quality. The pupils' work shows that the very high turnover of teachers has disrupted learning for some earlier in the school year. The current picture is much more settled and all pupils are learning at an appropriate pace, with many learning quickly and making up lost ground. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Much of the teaching is motivational in character, making children eager to learn. Children are attentive in lessons. High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved. The curriculum is well planned. It has the same breadth as most schools and meets all relevant statutory requirements. However, not enough time is given to improving speaking skills, particularly the ability of boys to articulate their thoughts effectively. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory but with aspects for improvement. Links with schools and colleges are good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The headteacher's leadership, together with that of the deputy headteacher and other key members of staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. Senior management and governors have acted in the best interests of pupils and held the school together during difficult times. Current managers, strengthened with recent appointments, have the capacity to improve the school.

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

The views of parents are mixed, reflecting their concerns about the high turnover of teachers. The pupils mostly like the school though the oldest express similar frustrations to their parents. The majority of parents approve of the school and appreciate its efforts on their behalf. A significant minority are frustrated by the changes in teachers and think that improvement has been too slow. Inspectors have some sympathy with this view. However, the inspectors find that the headteacher and governors have acted appropriately to remedy and minimise the situation, which is largely outside their control, and have been effective. Communication with parents could be better but some matters cannot be shared because of confidentiality.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- continue to raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science to at least the average for similar schools;
- raise the achievement and skills of boys in speaking and communicating;
- raise the rate of attendance to at least the national average;
- Improve links with parents.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

**Achievement is satisfactory.** Standards in the Foundation Stage are well below average in all of the nationally agreed areas of learning. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science but are an improvement on the 2003 test results.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The substantial majority of pupils are working to their potential and the problems caused by the high turnover of teachers have largely been remedied.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.9 (24.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	22.4 (23.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.1 (24.1)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The achievement of the substantial majority of pupils is consistent with their capacity for learning. Many pupils do well given their very varied backgrounds, particularly the less able and those of average ability. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress reflecting the good teaching they receive. The difficulties experienced in Year 1 because of changes in teacher were relatively short-lived and the class is back on track. Teaching in Year 2 has been consistently effective and challenging throughout the school year and these pupils are achieving as well as can be expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is mixed and their progress has been affected by changes in teacher. The concerns of parents are justified. However, because of appropriate recent appointments, normal teaching service has been resumed and pupils in Years 3 and 4 are responding to the good quality teaching. Achievement in Year 5 is good, reflecting consistent teaching, though two-thirds of the pupils have special educational needs, many of which are significant, and mostly attain well below the nationally expected levels for their age. Achievement in Year 6 has been affected by the turnover of teachers but these pupils currently enjoy good quality teaching and those who are more able are doing particularly well.
2. Results in the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 in 2003 were well below the national average in English and science, and in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally in mathematics and were low when compared to similar schools. Boys' results in 2003 were significantly weaker than those of girls in English, somewhat weaker in

mathematics, but only slightly weaker in science. Inspection evidence shows that girls generally do better than boys in all year groups. This largely reflects their much better language and communication skills on entry to school. Boys are too frequently reticent and unwilling to explain their answers and often have difficulty putting thoughts into words. This lack of skill when speaking is constraining their learning. The teaching is not giving enough priority to developing speaking skills.

3. Over the last five years, results in English and mathematics in Year 6 have consistently been well below national averages. In the case of science, there has been a steady improvement, although results have remained below the national average. The results in 2003 in both English and mathematics were a long way below the school's targets, reflecting the impact of pupil mobility which made the targets out of date and unrealistic.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.5 (11.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.0 (13.3)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.1 (15.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 21 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Results in Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and were poor compared to similar schools. Over the last five years, pupils' results in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. There has been considerable variation from year to year. This is because the year groups are small and the presence or absence of particularly gifted pupils or those with significant special educational needs can have a disproportionate impact compared to the much bigger national picture.
5. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that typically found. In past years, barely 10 per cent of children in the Reception year have typical attainment for their age. Achievement in the Nursery and in Reception is satisfactory. Current standards in these age groups have improved since entry but are still below average. Standards in the present Year 2 are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Even so, between half and three quarters of the pupils, depending on the subject, attain the nationally expected level for their age and this is a big improvement compared to the percentage on entry. In Year 6, current standards are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science.
6. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as other pupils because of the work of their learning support assistants and their teachers who provide tasks and activities that are matched satisfactorily to their levels of attainment. The achievement of the more able pupils is satisfactory.
7. In information and communication technology, pupils' standards at Years 2 and 6 are below average, but their achievement is satisfactory. In the case of religious education, the attainment of Year 6 pupils is well below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, though their achievement is again satisfactory. In Year 2, standards in religious education are average and achievement is good. As to other subjects, only in art and

design and in history was there sufficient evidence to judge standards and in both cases standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.

8. Pupil mobility has a significant impact on the achievement of the pupils and the standards attained. Between a third and half of the pupils in each year group have joined the school after the Reception year. This statistic masks the true scale of mobility because a large proportion of pupils, amounting to about half of each year group, join after the Reception year and then leave before the end of Year 6 including some pupils who join and leave the school several times. Those pupils who attend the school from Reception to Year 6 generally make good progress and achieve well, particularly in literacy. Those who leave after starting in the Reception year are mostly among the more able. They leave, in the main, because their families move out of the district. Those who join the school are well received, assessed soon after entry, and given good support. Many who join have learning difficulties and attain levels well below those expected for their age and, if they stay long enough to settle, achieve to their potential.

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

The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are **good**. The school has maintained the good standards of behaviour and the positive attitudes identified in the previous inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now **good** overall but with a few shortcomings in cultural development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's behaviour management systems are effective and significantly contribute to the good behaviour found in lessons.
- Playing with the older pupils at break times diminishes the Reception children's confidence.
- Pupils' attendance is lower than the national average and is in the lowest 10 per cent. Unauthorised absence is higher than the national average.
- The school's efforts in monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Commentary**

9. From the Nursery upwards, pupils come confidently and happily into school. Many attend the popular after school clubs. Within lessons, pupils are attentive and well behaved, demonstrating good attitudes to their work. They are particularly keen to participate in practical activities and they sustain their concentration when working in groups away from the class teacher. Pupils show considerable respect for their teachers and each other, listening politely, sharing equipment and taking turns. The school operates an effective behaviour policy and there have been no exclusions.
10. The school has very recently established a school council, with representatives from Reception to Year 6. The school council has taken the initiative and carried out a survey of the attitudes of all pupils towards aspects of school life. This survey shows that pupils' attitudes are mostly positive. However, in Year 6, where pupils have been disrupted by changes in teachers, the pupils' attitudes are not as positive. Minutes of the council's meetings identify that pupils consider there to be low level bullying in the playground and show that the school has responded appropriately. No incidents of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection. Petty arguments that arise are dealt with quickly by adults. However, pupils of Reception age have their break at the same time as other pupils and they are overawed by the situation; this provision is inappropriate. There have been no exclusions during the reporting period.

11. Assemblies support pupils' spiritual and moral development satisfactorily by incorporating moral messages and a reflective element. During the inspection the Year 6 pupils took responsibility for preparing a class assembly. They presented this in a mature and confident manner and included a PowerPoint program entitled 'Food for Africa' that showed their awareness of the difficult conditions on that continent for many of its inhabitants. The opportunities for spiritual development have been improved and are now good. Pupils show respect for other religions and cultures and demonstrate a good understanding of right from wrong. Personal, social and health education provision has been effectively introduced since the previous inspection. Pupils' social development is good and they show respect for the views of others. The school ethos generates a good feeling of community and pupils learn to act as a member of a society. Pupils' cultural development is restricted through a lack of visits to the theatre, museums, art galleries and places of worship, due to a lack of funds. Reception year children work amicably alongside each other but do not play or work collaboratively and the majority of them are not achieving all the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development.
12. Although pupil attendance during the reporting period was well below average, during the past year the school has made a significant effort and records show that attendance has improved slightly. Staff monitor attendance well and receive good support from the education welfare service. Children with poor attendance are identified and the school works hard to ensure that they attend school more regularly, including making first day calls home when they do not arrive. The school has also introduced reward systems for good attendance and is encouraging pupils to monitor their own attendance and punctuality. A minority of pupils are regularly late for morning registration.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (per cent)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	1.0
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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The bulk of lessons are effective and meeting the learning needs of all pupils.
- About half the classes have experienced several changes of teacher during the course of the school year and this has led to inconsistency in learning. Action to remedy or minimise this has been effective and staffing has settled down.
- Not enough priority is given to developing pupils' speaking skills.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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0	3	15	9	0	0	0
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*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

13. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better in quality, with two-thirds that is good or better, including about one in ten lessons being high quality. This is similar to the quality of teaching in the majority of schools of this type nationally and the same as found at the time of the previous inspection. Given the high turnover of teachers, the present satisfactory quality is an achievement. All pupils are learning at an acceptable pace and many are learning quickly, making up lost ground. However, the pupils' work shows that the current positive picture has only recently been achieved and that there have been inconsistencies in learning over the course of the school year, reflecting the changes in teachers experienced by some classes. Pupils spoken to about the changes in teachers expressed frustration and concern. They said that what they had been taught had, on occasions, been repeated by different teachers. The pupils' books confirm this repetition.
  
14. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught well. This finding reflects the work of teachers presently employed, some of whom have been at the school only a short while. No conclusions can be reached about the work of teachers who have left the school because their work has not been seen and none should be inferred. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and pupils are mostly learning quickly. The quality of teaching in these subjects is effective throughout the school though the methods vary between teachers, particularly in English. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well. The teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is satisfactory. In all lessons in these subjects, the teaching is effective in motivating pupils and encouraging them to try hard. Explanations are clear and tasks are mostly well-matched to different ability levels and varying learning needs. Learning is frequently active in nature with pupils learning by doing. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in some classes for learning to rely too much on teacher explanation and demonstration and too little on pupils explaining their answers and developing their reasoning skills through talk. In all subjects throughout the school, the priority given to encouraging pupils to explain their answers and what they are doing in greater detail is insufficient given the very low levels of linguistic ability among a majority of pupils, particularly boys.
  
15. Teachers are taking satisfactory account of the learning of pupils with special educational needs by matching tasks to pupils' prior levels of attainment. Learning support assistants know pupils' individual education plans and support pupils with special educational needs accordingly. Where teaching is good, pupils with special educational needs are provided with specialised help, either when other pupils are working on set tasks or by withdrawal from the classroom for intensive support.
  
16. The constructiveness and use of assessment are satisfactory. The assessment systems have been a priority for development over the past year. Action taken so far has been effective. Marking is helping pupils to know how well they are doing. Curricular targets are being set, though these are still somewhat general in nature and could be tailored more closely to national expectations and the next steps in learning. Progress is being tracked at an individual level and this is helping teachers identify pupils whose progress has slowed.

## **The curriculum**

The school offers a **satisfactory** breadth of curricular opportunities but there are aspects for improvement. Curriculum enrichment opportunities are limited and unsatisfactory. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for.
- The length of the teaching week does not reach the recommended minimum.
- Aspects of science and information and communication technology are not taught in sufficient depth.
- Curriculum enrichment is unsatisfactory.
- Resources in mathematics, science and information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

17. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced. All National Curriculum subjects plus religious education are taught and all relevant statutory requirements are met. All lessons are interesting and motivating. The school makes good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and satisfactory use of the National Literacy Strategy. The science curriculum meets requirements but experimental and investigative science is lacking in depth and this aspect has not improved enough since the previous inspection. The control elements of information and communication technology are not being taught rigorously enough because of shortages of appropriate equipment and programs and this leaves gaps in the pupils' knowledge. The curriculum for other National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory and appropriate use is made of nationally prepared schemes. Discussion is taking place about more cross-curricular approaches to planning and teaching but this development is proceeding more slowly than expected because of the changes in teachers. The length of the teaching week, both in Years 1 and 2, and also from Year 3 to Year 6, is less than the recommended minima for these age groups and should be increased given the low attainment of many pupils.
18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They experience the full curriculum and are taught alongside other pupils. There is some withdrawal from the classroom for specialised work, for instance additional literacy support, and this is effective. In classrooms, learning support assistants provide for these pupils effectively. The pupils have individual education plans which are satisfactorily written by the teacher or by the special educational needs coordinator and are kept up to date. Individual education plans are set out according to the local education authority guidelines and include short-term curriculum objectives and also behavioural objectives where necessary. Good use is made of these plans by all members of staff. Where necessary, there is effective liaison with external agencies, including the special educational needs and psychology service.
19. The school makes good preparations for the transition from the Reception year to Year 1. Similarly, preparation for the transition to secondary school is effectively handled. Pupils have taster days, pay organised visits to secondary schools and have an induction day.
20. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are unsatisfactory overall. The school is currently organising only a small number of extra-curricular clubs. There has been no residential visit organised for Year 6 pupils in the present year. Some of the visits, for example to the

beach environment and to the Dutch cottage, are effectively related to their learning but other visits are not sufficiently relevant to the curriculum. The programme of visitors to the school includes the police and fire service but the number of other visitors is more limited than in most schools. However, there is a multi-cultural arts week organised through links with a local secondary school and this has good potential for providing insights into other cultures.

21. There is a satisfactory match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. This has been achieved through the hard work of the senior management and governors over the course of the present school year. School accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is aware of its curricular shortcomings caused by accommodation constraints and is acting appropriately to remedy them. The planned information and communication technology suite, with funds allocated, contractors appointed and due to start in summer 2004, will represent an improvement to facilities. The indoor and outdoor space for the Nursery is satisfactory but access to the outdoor space for Reception children is inadequate. This is on target to be remedied in the summer 2004. Resource levels are unsatisfactory in mathematics. There is insufficient software for some information and communication technology applications and insufficient equipment for the teaching of some aspects of science.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The induction<sup>1</sup> arrangements for pupils in the Reception year are good.
- Adults know pupils well and provide good levels of care for their wellbeing; child protection arrangements are good.
- The school provides good advice and guidance based on its monitoring systems.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is good.

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<sup>1</sup> Induction refers to the arrangements to receive pupils who are new to the school, help them settle and make friends.

## Commentary

22. The school has satisfactory health and safety procedures in place. All members of staff, including the new members of staff, are providing appropriate levels of care. Governors and staff make regular health and safety checks and the school complies with local authority requirements. Risk assessments are completed but no assessments are recorded for subjects such as physical education. Regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment and, as a result, remedial works are planned to improve outside play areas and windows and doorways. There are hazards not appropriately labelled on the site. The Reception age children do not have access to a secure, segregated play area, though the school is aware of this and working to remedy the situation.
23. Child protection arrangements are good. The opportunities manager and the headteacher are the nominated persons for child protection. They, and other members of staff, have been appropriately trained. All members of staff are kept aware of the need to inform the responsible persons should they have any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell are good although there is no dedicated first aid room.
24. Adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models. Discussions with pupils show that they feel safe and secure. The school council, the buddy system, their own monitoring of punctuality and attendance are examples of the encouragement given to pupils to accept responsibility. Parents confirmed that pupils are encouraged to undertake some research and take responsibility for their own learning.
25. There are good induction arrangements for pupils when they start at the school. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' achievement on a day-to-day basis. These systems are used well to provide support and guidance for the pupils. Annual reports on pupils' progress show that they have targets for improvement and are encouraged to comment on their own reports and identify what they need to do to improve their work; this is good practice.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **satisfactory** but with aspects for improvement. Links with other schools are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have mixed views of the school and a significant number feel disaffected.
- Good links with other local schools provide benefits for pupils.
- Arrangements for the transfer of pupils are good.
- Written reports on pupils' progress are good and show parents clearly how well their children are progressing.
- For parents of children with special educational needs, links with the school are good.

## Commentary

26. Parents and carers have mixed views of the school. The majority are supportive but a significant minority have concerns about the turnover of teachers and the perceived slow



pace of change. The school tries to work well with parents but is not always successful. A key member of staff has been appointed to oversee relationships with parents and to try and improve them. The school encourages parents to support the school through the friends' association and to help at home through its development of homework clubs, which show promising early success. The school has tried to keep parents informed about the many changes in members of staff but these letters have not always been in good time or sufficiently clear. Where the school has had to act in the interest of pupils without notice to parents, which it has the right to do, it has not always followed up these actions with prompt explanations to parents. The expectations of some parents are unreasonable, however, as the school is constrained in what it can communicate because of confidentiality.

27. The school provides useful information about events at school but parents have complained that this is often not sent out soon enough. The information for the parents of children in the Foundation Stage and those transferring to secondary schools is clear and effective. Parents have found the homework clubs supportive and the clubs are popular with parents and pupils alike. The provision of homework, however, is not always consistent and this is largely reflective of the changes in teachers. The school is aware of this lack of consistency and is acting to improve the situation with the newly appointed teachers. There are three opportunities per year for parents to meet the staff to discuss pupils' progress and this good practice exceeds statutory requirements. It is the policy of the school to enable parents to meet teachers on request to discuss any problems or concerns. This good practice is confirmed by parental comments at meetings and in correspondence. Written annual reports on pupils' progress are good. They clearly inform parents about what their children, know, understand and can do, and all include targets for improvement and areas for development. Parents are able to reply to the report and space for pupils' contributions is also included. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved as partners in reviewing progress and making decisions about the nature of the support provided.
28. Links with other schools are good. The headteacher and members of the staff meet those from other schools regularly. The school works well with secondary schools and colleges. Parents confirm that pupils transfer into and out of the school smoothly because of the strong links between the schools. The school has been actively involved with secondary schools on a small number of curriculum enrichment and on literacy projects and joins in local area sports and performance events with other schools, though this does not fully compensate for the lack of enrichment in other areas. Students from secondary schools visit the school on work experience and students on teacher training courses are welcomed.
29. The school has satisfactory links with the local community, including strong links with local clergy. The school enjoys good links with the caring, support and emergency services. Few visits are made into either the local or the wider community as part of any curriculum enrichment. A few visitors come into school to enrich the curriculum including theatre groups, musicians and artists, though the frequency of visits is less than in other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and the governance of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of other members of staff with

management responsibility is satisfactory overall. The effectiveness of management is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective action by senior management and governors has kept the school together during challenging times.
- The school is fully aware of its strengths and weakness and taking relevant action to improve.

### **Commentary**

30. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. She has been through a very difficult time and under considerable pressure from events over which she has had little control. She is acting in the best interests of the pupils and has kept the school on an even keel. While the overall pace of improvement has been slow, the achievement of the pupils has risen and standards now are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The senior management and the rest of the management team, following recent appointments, have the capacity between them to improve the school and raise achievement.
31. The leadership and management of the school have been constrained by the high turnover of teachers. Apart from the headteacher and two senior teachers, there has been too little consistency of leadership from other key members of staff over the past two years because they have not stayed or not been at the school long enough. This has resulted in a slow pace to developments and in inefficiency. For example, action to improve the performance of the school through the provision of extra training for teachers has sometimes been wasted because teachers leave the school after the training. The training has to be repeated for the new teachers, adding to costs, or cannot be repeated because money is not available. In these challenging circumstances, the senior management has succeeded in holding the school together and preventing matters being significantly worse. There have been three deputy headteachers over the past four years. The present deputy headteacher has been in post just over a year and is providing good quality support for the headteacher and is leading very effectively by example. The few long standing members of staff with management responsibility are providing good support. Leadership has been strengthened following recent appointments and the school now has sufficient subject and middle managers to move the school forward.
32. Recruitment and retention of teachers has been a major focus of attention for the headteacher and governors and they have acted effectively. Teachers have left the school for reasons such as promotion to better paid posts in other schools or because they have moved to other parts of the country. Such departures are outside the control of senior management. Efforts to maintain continuity of learning through temporary appointments have not always been successful but senior management has acted sensibly to minimise such problems by redeploying experienced teachers to different classes. Incentive payments to retain teachers are no longer possible because of a deficit budget. Incentive payments were made in the past but this strategy led to financial difficulties and redundancies when falling numbers of pupils reduced the school budget.
33. School self-evaluation is satisfactory and being used to identify relevant priorities for improvement. The procedures for monitoring the performance of teachers and of the

school are satisfactory. Teachers are observed during the course of the school year. Pupils' work is sampled. Actions to raise standards have included achieving consistency in teaching methods and there are signs of success in the most recent focal points for action; for example, the use of modelling and demonstration in mathematics.

34. Financial management is an issue for the school and it is operating a deficit budget. Expenditure per pupil is broadly average. The deficit is a consequence of falling rolls and high staffing costs. A recovery plan has been agreed with the local authority and because of this willingness to work with the local authority the school is receiving the highest level of support. Following advice from the local authority, the governors initiated a programme of staff reduction and redundancy and eight members of staff, including teaching and non-teaching members, had left the school by the end of the previous school year. The school is presently on track to recover its position within five years. Financial management is consistent with requirements and the principles of best value are applied to all financial decisions.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	480,974
Total expenditure	513,414
Expenditure per pupil (179 pupils)	2,868

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-18,880
Balance carried forward to the next	-51,320

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35. Provision in the Foundation Stage is in a Nursery class and a Reception class and is **good** overall. The quality has been sustained since the previous inspection. The management of the Foundation Stage is good and the coordinator leads well by example. Nursery children achieve well due to the good teaching they receive. They can join the Nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday and many attend for more than one year before they enter the Reception year or transfer to other schools. Transfer to the Reception class is at the start of each term. These admission arrangements put summer born children at a disadvantage. Younger children with summer birthdays only have one term of full-time education in the Reception year before transferring to Year 1 and none of them are on course to achieve the national goals for early learning before the end of the Reception year.
36. The accommodation for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Both classrooms are decorated brightly with children's work and there are a satisfactory range and quantity of resources. Both classes use the school hall well and the two classes are soon to be adjacent to each other once building work is completed in September 2004. The Nursery opens onto a good, secure, outdoor site that is well resourced. Reception children sometimes make use of this good space but its use currently is insufficient for their needs. At breaks and at lunch times, Reception children play with the older children of the school in a very large playground and this lack of a secure and suitable play space limits the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum. In both classes, the members of the support staff make a good contribution to teaching and learning, in particular by supporting children who have special educational needs.
37. Children enter the Nursery with overall standards very low compared to those typically found. In particular, language skills are poor. Children benefit from good teaching during their time in the Nursery and they achieve well. By the time they enter the Reception year, the majority of children have made sufficient progress to have skills appropriate for their age in all areas of learning except for spoken language. Children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception year but their rate of progress slows because activities are not always well matched to learning needs. Children who have attended the Reception class for two or more academic terms are on course to attain average standards in knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development. Children do not achieve all the national goals for early learning in personal, social and emotional development. Around half the children are on course to achieve the national goals for mathematical development but only one quarter achieves all the goals for language, literacy and communication. These are mainly the oldest children, who have been in the Reception class for a full year.
38. The coordinator has created a cohesive team and she provides a model good of practice. The activities in the Nursery take good account of how young children learn and as a consequence, the children in the Nursery achieve well. The process of monitoring, teaching and learning is undertaken but this has not been followed through, because of staffing changes, to maximise its impact on standards. The assessment information is not sufficiently well maintained; nor is it easily accessed or used with sufficient precision

to help manage the changes in staff during the year and the three term intake into the Reception year.

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

Provision for children's personal social and emotional development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attainment on entry is often well below typical levels.
- Children achieve well but most of them are unlikely to attain all the relevant early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception year.
- There are good induction arrangements into the Nursery and into the Reception year, which support children's social development well.

### **Commentary**

39. The induction procedures provide children with a good start when they enter the Nursery and the children make very good progress and they achieve well. Teaching is good, with a consistent approach by all members of staff. There are good relationships between adults and children throughout the Foundation Stage and this helps the children to become confident. Rules and routines are consistently reinforced and children try hard to conform. Adults encourage children to listen attentively, to share, to consider the needs of others and to take turns. Nursery children are starting to make choices and older children confidently select their own equipment and express their own needs as they play together. Although children are introduced sensitively into the Reception year, they play in the large school playground with the rest of the school's pupils and this slows the pace at which they develop confidence. Reception children work well alongside each other but they find it difficult to collaborate as they work, a skill the more advanced Nursery children demonstrate. In the Reception year, members of staff do not place sufficient emphasis on children developing the skills of independence and self-confidence to enable them to make choices and to plan their work. There is good support provided for the children identified with special educational needs, to help them with their concentration, social skills and attitudes to learning.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for language literacy and communication is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with poor speaking skills and they achieve well due to the priority placed upon this aspect of their learning and the good teaching they receive.
- Older children recognise the sounds of letters and the spellings of many key words before they leave the Reception year and they achieve well in this aspect of their learning.
- Standards of most children are below the expectations for their age when they leave the Reception year. Writing standards are well below those expected for the children's age.

### **Commentary**

40. When children enter the Nursery their play contains very little language or communication compared to the amount typically found. Older Nursery children frequently play together in an imaginative manner but their language is restricted to short sentences and phrases. Developing children's spoken language is treated as a priority and adults provide a

constant role model to enrich children's linguistic experience. The very good teaching of the Nursery teacher develops children's spoken language very well and children quickly respond to questions and they identify with characters in books. In the Reception year, where the teaching is good, children are introduced to language for thinking and a richness of descriptive language from literature. Conversation conventions of turn taking are developed well but the questions used tend to restrict responses to single word answers. Children achieve well in both year groups.

41. There is a good emphasis on traditional children's literature in both year groups and enjoyment of literature is developed well by the good teaching provided. In the Nursery, children become very animated, join in the refrains and comment on the characters. Most Nursery children recognise their name in print and older, higher ability children write their own names. The Reception children's daily practise of letter sounds and spellings is effective. Parents support this system well. Children recognise words in their books but they are not ready to start the reading scheme. Records show only one child is exceeding the early learning goals for reading. Most Reception children have a satisfactory control of a pencil but only one quarter of the children are securely meeting the early learning goals for writing.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with standards well below expectations for their age.
- Achievement is satisfactory but standards are below those expected for their age when children leave the Reception class

### **Commentary**

42. In the Nursery, children are introduced to counting, sorting, numerals, and to number rhymes. They learn about capacity as they fill buckets with sand and also to order objects by size. By the time they leave the Nursery they have been introduced to numbers up to 10. In the Reception year, where the teaching is satisfactory, children count to 30 with the class teacher and they also count in 5s and 10s. They are introduced to addition and to concepts such as heavier and lighter. In this year, not all of the teaching is as precisely matched to the children's ability as it should be and as a consequence their progress and achievement, although satisfactory, are reduced. Around half of the children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year and this is considerably fewer than typically found.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with standards below expectations, receive very good support in the Nursery and good support in the Reception year and achieve well.

### **Commentary**

43. Good learning experiences are provided in both the Nursery and the Reception classes and this helps the children to achieve well. Children have the opportunity to observe materials such as water and sand and to use a wide range of construction toys. In the Nursery, where the teaching is very good, children observe the smell and the temperature of the mixture, as well as the texture and colour. Children are developing a sense of place. In the Nursery they have an imaginative play area that depicts a beach with a cave and in the Reception year they search for a 'monster' in the Nursery grounds. In both year groups, adults teach children how to control a computer mouse and to create marks on the monitor. Overall, while good progress is made, the proportion of children on course to attain the national goals for early learning is well below average.



## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The provision for children's creative development is **good** and children achieve well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enter with levels well below those expected for their age.
- Teachers in both year groups use literature well to stimulate children's imagination.

### **Commentary**

44. Children in both the Nursery and the Reception year have opportunities to select and use paint and a range of materials for collage. Teaching in the Reception year is good and children apply paint confidently, showing appropriate standards as they paint monsters related to their story of the week. In the Nursery, through good teaching, children participate in group singing, and they learn the names of many instruments and explore ways of playing them. In both year groups, teachers encourage and stimulate children's imaginative development by enacting the story of the week with the children. In the Nursery, children also participate independently in imaginative play but in the Reception class there are few of these opportunities. Although a majority of children are on course to attain or exceed the national goals for early learning in this area, the proportion is much smaller than typically found in other schools.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are provided with a wide range of activities and they achieve well.

### **Commentary**

45. In many activities within the Nursery and the Reception classes, children are presented with opportunities to manipulate small objects, pencils and tools and most develop sufficient precision, over time, to attain the early learning goals. In the Nursery, children have outdoor provision that includes opportunities to climb and to develop their balance and their ability to pedal a tricycle. There are good opportunities to use gymnastics apparatus in the hall. Teaching of the Nursery children is very good and they achieve well, developing a satisfactory sense of space and an ability to control their bodies as they carefully enact the 'Bear Hunt'. Overall, however, the proportion of children likely to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception year is well below average.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Teaching is good overall but with a few aspects for improvement. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, but are not yet sufficiently aimed at raising pupils' standards.
- Many lessons have good pace, are lively and interesting, and lead to effective learning.
- There is little use of computers to support learning in English.

### **Commentary**

46. Pupils' achievement in English is satisfactory overall but is uneven. The pupils do well in reading and their progress is often good. Pupils with low ability are well supported and sometimes make surprising improvements in this aspect of the subject. Achievement in speaking and listening is mixed and sometimes unsatisfactory. A large number of pupils, particularly boys, are insufficiently articulate in their contributions to lessons and at other times. This has a direct impact on their capacities in writing. Their achievement in handwriting, spelling, punctuation and sentence construction improves during their school years and is satisfactory but the content of pupils' writing is often unsatisfactory in that their thinking is not sufficiently logical or well structured for their age.
47. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 6, results in 2003 were well below average and very low in comparison with similar schools nationally. Girls' attainment was slightly better than that of boys, but not significantly so. In the last five years, results have consistently been well below the national average. In Year 2, pupils' results in 2003 in reading and in writing were well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, reading results were also well below average, and writing results were very low. In reading, girls' attainment was slightly better than that of boys, but not significantly so. In writing, however, boys' attainment was markedly weaker than that of the girls. Over the last five years, Year 2 results have been variable but have always been well below the national average.
48. Achievement in reading improves during pupils' time in school and is better overall than in speaking and in writing. By Year 6, pupils of all attainment levels read fluently and with confidence, and show that they can understand the underlying meaning of what they are reading, so that their achievement is good. The achievement of Year 2 pupils in reading, however, is no more than satisfactory. Only a minority of pupils reaches the expected level of fluency and accuracy. Others have gaps in their reading skills and in word recognition although they are learning to correct themselves successfully.
49. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the majority of lessons, planning is good; teachers define the purpose of lessons well and prepare their resources for learning very well. In a few cases, less effective planning does not clarify lesson objectives sufficiently. Effective teaching is characterised by good pace and use of time, and by a lively approach and judicious use of praise to encourage pupils. In the best lessons, teachers model good quality work for pupils. The teacher of the mixed Year 4 and Year 5 class, for instance, invited her pupils to join in quietly when she read aloud. She later also provided pupils with a good example of how to tackle the writing task which she had set. Teachers do not, however, question pupils in ways which encourage them to produce more explicit

contributions to lessons. Similarly, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to talk to each other in order to elicit more detailed thinking and more extended answers. When they set writing tasks for pupils, they do not always match these sufficiently to pupils' previous attainment.

50. Too little use is made of computers. Instances occur when the use of computers is good, for example when a teacher used the classroom information and communication technology facilities effectively with some lower-attaining pupils. Learning support assistants provide effectively for pupils with special educational needs; for example, when the learning support assistant in the mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class took control of the main activities so that the teacher could work extensively with a group of less able pupils. There is a good working atmosphere in all classes. Pupils show positive attitudes, behave well, and apply themselves well. Teachers are marking pupils' work regularly and often in detail. However, the marking is not sufficiently focused on the next steps pupils must take in order to raise their attainment.
51. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator checks the quality of planning and of teaching as well as pupils' work. As a result, she has a realistic overview of pupils' standards. However, checking is not yet sufficiently effective in raising standards of attainment. Target-setting arrangements for individual pupils are not effective. In some instances, too many targets are being set, and in others, targets are not being regularly reviewed. The amount of detail in action plans for improvement means that in practice priorities are not sufficiently clear.

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

52. Planned and purposeful use of language and literacy across the curriculum to develop English skills through other subjects is still in its infancy. There are exceptions to this finding. Examples where seen where teachers used the opportunities in history to promote language and vocabulary development and to extend knowledge of factual writing. In science, a good feature of the teaching is the emphasis on subject vocabulary and use of correct terminology.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory given the very low starting points of many children. Standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Improvement since the previous inspection is broadly satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good and all pupils are learning quickly.
- Most pupils are achieving in line with their capacity for learning but a few of the more able could do better.
- Limited speaking skills are constraining the pupils' capacity for learning.

### **Commentary**

53. The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory compared to their attainment on entry. Throughout the school the substantial majority of the pupils are achieving roughly in line with their potential. The less able pupils, who form the bulk of the school population, are

doing well in the main and the achievement of nearly all of them is good given their learning difficulties. The current teaching is challenging the more able pupils well but their achievement in the long-term has not always been as good as it could be and a few pupils with potential for high attainment are underachieving. Some of this is a consequence of the turnover of teachers but much of it reflects the high mobility of a significant number of pupils whose learning is disrupted by changing schools and who are already underachieving when they join.

54. About three-quarters of the pupils in Year 2 are attaining the nationally expected level for their age, a proportion that is smaller than in the majority of schools, and no pupil exceeds national expectations. When the present Year 2 left the Reception year, barely one in ten were attaining typical levels and none had high attainment. Progress since then has been good, reflecting effective teaching. The Year 2 pupils are adding and subtracting numbers mentally and on paper consistent with expectations and they are beginning to know multiplication facts for the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. However, many of them find difficulty explaining how they solve number problems because of weak speaking and listening skills, particularly among the boys, and this constraint on achievement is preventing them from attaining higher levels. Standards in Year 1 are currently above average, with about 80 per cent attaining or exceeding the nationally expected levels, including a third with high attainment for their age. This year group has not been significantly affected by pupil mobility. Their attainment on entry was broadly average in mathematics and although their teacher has changed this year, the current teaching in Year 1 is effective and highly motivating and this is why standards are good.
55. In Year 6, standards are below average. Even so, about 60 per cent of the pupils in this year group are attaining the nationally expected level for their age including about 15 per cent with high attainment. This is better than in 2003 and shows continued improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' work in Year 6 shows that progress over the course of the school year has been variable and is currently rapid. The more able pupils are catching up because their teaching is challenging but a few of them are not attaining the higher levels of which they are capable. The majority of pupils in Year 6 handle numbers adequately for their age using mental and recorded methods for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Their ability to apply this knowledge, however, is limited because of weak speaking skills which prevent them exploring the reasoning behind solutions to problems.
56. Standards in Year 5 are particularly low. Nearly two-thirds of the pupils in Year 5 are on the special educational needs list. The vast majority of the year group have joined the school after the Reception year. Their teaching has been consistent during the current school year and they are achieving to their potential. Standards in Years 3 and 4 are well below average. Achievement for these pupils is mixed and they have been taught by several teachers during the course of the year. They are currently well taught and making good progress but have gaps in their knowledge. For example, they were unsure when counting in 5s, particularly backwards, struggled when doubling, and hesitated over identifying tens and units in two-digit numbers, all of which should have been familiar to them.
57. The teaching is leading to the substantial majority of pupils learning efficiently. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teaching was highly motivating, clear and to the point, and used problem solving purposefully to make the learning come alive. Throughout the school, pupils are interested and work hard. The older pupils know how well they are

doing and what they should do to improve, reflecting growing effectiveness in the use of assessment and target setting. Action during the current school year to raise standards by improving teaching methods has been successful. The subject is currently managed by a Leading Mathematics Teacher who has the ability to set a positive example for all teachers. This is a very recent appointment. During the earlier part of the school year the subject was well led by the deputy headteacher. There have been several changes in leadership since the previous inspection and these have slowed the long-term pace of development. In particular, the monitoring of teaching is inconsistent and resources have not been improved enough, the latter being insufficient for all learning needs.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

58. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is limited and not as well developed as in the majority of other schools. This reflects the frequent changes in leadership, which has had, by necessity, to concentrate on the induction of new teachers rather than wider curricular innovation.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below the national average in Year 2 and Year 6.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school there is an emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry skills, which was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection. These skills are not yet taught systematically. There is an over-emphasis upon predicting and insufficient development of pupils' ability to devise a fair test and to draw conclusions.

## Commentary

59. Standards in Year 6 have been gradually rising since 2001, although they remain well below the national average and the average of other, similar schools. The Year 6 pupils have had a disrupted year with several teachers and although their achievement is satisfactory, there are gaps in their knowledge. The achievement of the pupils in Year 5 is good in relation to their starting point when they joined the school and most of them are attaining standards that are close to those expected for their age, which is a significant achievement given that two-thirds have special educational needs. The achievement of the pupils in Year 2 is good. Standards in Year 2 are nevertheless well below the average overall because too few pupils are exceeding the nationally expected level.
60. The teaching and learning in Year 1 and Year 2 are good. The quality of teaching and of pupils' books show that they make a good start in Year 1, where they achieve well due to the good teaching they receive. In a very good lesson in Year 1, pupils were developing their observational skills and their scientific reasoning as they observed a range of toys; identifying the direction of the force and its impact upon movement. In Year 2, pupils are familiar with a range of materials and their properties. They have undertaken many practical activities using the materials provided and can make simple predictions and provide a reason for these.
61. The work of the Year 6 pupils shows that greater emphasis was given to developing their scientific enquiry skills in the first half of the year than later in the year and this reflects changes in teacher. Early in the year, pupils were starting to record their work scientifically. No teaching was seen in this year group. In discussion, pupils show that they have a satisfactory understanding of the need to keep some variables the same in order to carry out a fair test. The higher ability pupils can confidently describe the method to be used to carry out an investigation, such as separating a mixture of salt and sand.
62. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils' scientific skills of enquiry are not developed as systematically as they should be, nor is there clear continuity and progression from one year group to the next. There is insufficient emphasis within the teaching upon helping pupils to understand cause and effect within their practical work. In lessons with Years 3, 4, and 5 pupils, there were insufficient resources and this severely restricted the learning of some pupils. Pupils in Year 3 showed sufficient skill to construct simple circuits but for many there was little new learning. Observation of pupils' books in Years 3 and 4 shows that there has been insufficient new learning throughout the year.
63. The teaching is good but with a few aspects for improvement. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and the pupils work hard, concentrating well on their tasks. Teachers of the younger pupils make the work very interesting and relevant. In Years 3 to 6, there is sometimes little difference in the tasks provided for the differing ability levels within the classes and this restricts the higher ability pupils. Lessons are not always planned to allow all pupils to have the practical equipment that they need and in one lesson, six pupils could only watch their peers work. All teachers model the use of scientific vocabulary and they expect their pupils to use scientific terminology; this is good practice. Speaking and listening skills are planned into the lessons. In the one very good lesson observed, the planning was very precise, the pace of learning was brisk and the teachers' aspirations were high, and as a consequence, these pupils achieved very well.

64. There has been little rigour within the developments since the previous inspection. Standards have risen but the co-ordinator does not have a secure grasp of the standards within the school or of the targets that are set. There are some unnecessary repetitions in the curriculum, and, at times, pupils start from too low a level with new work. A unified approach to recording scientifically has been introduced and this is starting to become the normal practice within Years 3 to 6. Systems for assessing pupils' scientific enquiry skills are about to be introduced.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory** but with aspects for improvement. The achievement of the pupils is broadly satisfactory. Standards are below average throughout the school. Progress since the previous inspection has been too slow because of the turnover of teachers and resource limitations.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils have good knowledge of word processing, presentation and graphics programs but their knowledge of control technology is constrained by a lack of resources.

### **Commentary**

65. The substantial majority of pupils in Year 6 are competent users of word processing and presentation programs such as PowerPoint. They have good keyboard skills and can enter, edit, and modify text quickly and skilfully for their age. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils have some knowledge of the internet and use it to gain access to research information. Year 2 pupils have satisfactory keyboard and mouse control skills for their age and enjoy using graphics programs to draw pictures and create images. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to use graphics programs but their skills are relatively limited. Most pupils have gaps in their knowledge of control technology because the school lacks the resources to teach this aspect of the programme of study in any great depth.
66. The teaching is satisfactory but constrained by resource limitations. The teaching is based on individual and small group work and this is inefficient and is not giving pupils enough opportunity for practical experience in some classes. The school does not have a computer suite, though one is planned for summer 2004. At present, the computers are located in twos and threes in classrooms, with a portable set of 16 laptops. The laptops have technical problems with their batteries that prevent them being used with large groups, the original purpose behind their acquisition, and cannot be repaired because of lack of funds. The school has very recently acquired a data projector and interactive whiteboard but these are not yet being used for whole class demonstration. The headteacher leads this subject temporarily because the previous incumbent left. Subject management is well aware of the shortcomings and acting effectively to remedy them. A computer suite is planned and should be operational by the start of the school year 2004-2005.

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

67. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is underdeveloped. The subject is mostly used to support writing in English, art work, and research in subjects such as geography and history. Very little is done in science, though

there is an electronic microscope recently acquired, because electronic sensors do not have the software to make them work. More needs to be done to develop the use of information and communication technology systematically across the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

68. No lessons in **geography** were seen and the amount of completed work was too little to form views about standards. Work in **history** was sampled and two lessons seen. The standards in **history** are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory given their very mixed starting points. The quality of teaching in the history lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons clearly and organise activities logically. They maintain pupils' interest through enthusiasm, with the result that pupils' attention is good. The quality of discussion is not consistent. One teacher engaged pupils successfully through an adventurous use of language and effective work between pairs of pupils. Learning support assistants played positive roles. For example, one assistant effectively discussed a wall display with pupils in groups, and later explored some related internet resources with them.

### Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**. Achievement is satisfactory but the provision over the course of the school year has been mixed for some pupils and this has disrupted their learning. Standards are broadly average in Year 2 but well below average in Year 6.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect and develop spiritual awareness.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development and their respect for the views of others.

### Commentary

69. Standards in Year 6 are well below those expected in the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus. These pupils have a very confused idea of the three main religions that they have studied. This reflects the disjointed teaching they have received during their time at the school, due to a large number of supply teachers. Standards in the other classes within the school are appropriate for the age of the pupils and these pupils achieve well, from their low starting point when they entered the school.
70. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about the importance of religion to members of faith groups and how religion influences the way members of faith groups organise their lives. In Year 6, pupils consider the importance of understanding faith groups but they lack a clear understanding of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions and they cannot identify the main aspects of each. In Year 5, pupils experience the attributes of stillness and solitude as they reflect using a candle flame to focus their thoughts. For many pupils this is an intense experience, helping them to understand the impact these qualities have on members of the Christian faith. Pupils also learn to respect the views and practices of others, as was apparent in the mixed-age class containing pupils from Years 3 and 4, where they learned about the Jewish Sabbath and the work that is not allowed on this day



of rest. Pupils learn right from wrong and the necessity of rules to govern their own lives, as they study the Ten Commandments and write their own set of rules. In Years 1 and 2, pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of celebrations, special people and of special occasions.

71. In the two lessons seen, the teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. Both teachers captured the pupils' interest well and the pupils responded in a mature manner. In the good lesson, the pupils had a first hand experience and a worthwhile recording exercise. In the satisfactory lesson, although the discussion stimulated the pupils and extended their learning, their follow up tasks were too simple.
72. The leadership of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has maintained the standards identified at the previous inspection. There has been regular monitoring of the work and assessment procedures are newly implemented. Resources are barely satisfactory and there are insufficient visits to places of worship or visitors to support the range of religions taught. Information and communication technology is insufficiently used.

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

73. No teaching was seen in **music**. The evidence in **art and design** is limited and insufficient to make judgements about provision. The achievement of the pupils in the two lessons seen, one in Year 6 and the other in Year 1, was satisfactory. The pupils' competence in painting, collage, printing and drawing is consistent with national expectations and standards are about average, based on this limited evidence and the displays of work around the school. In a good lesson in Year 6, the pupils quickly learnt about perspective and creating the impression of distance in watercolour paintings by using thin washes in the background and gradually increasing the density of paint and tone to represent middle and foreground. The pupils were enthusiastic learners and demonstrated appropriate skills when using the techniques and when representing objects and images. In a good lesson in Year 1, the pupils learnt about repeat patterns and applied their knowledge effectively.
74. The evidence in **design and technology** is very limited and the subject was not a focus of the inspection. A small number of artefacts were on display around the school. These had been finished to an appropriate standard and quality. In other respects, the evidence is so limited that no judgements can be made.
75. The standards of Year 4 and Year 5 pupils in **physical education** are average. In a rounders match, a minority of the pupils, mainly boys, showed precision, fluency and good control in striking a ball, fielding and running. Other pupils demonstrate only limited coordination by comparison. The achievement of pupils is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher provides a good overview of intended activities before the lesson begins, and good relationships are evident between class and teacher during the game. The warm-up session is too brief to be fully effective, and the pace is somewhat slow, although the teacher maintains good control throughout the activity. However, pupils show considerable enthusiasm for the game. The teacher gives effective praise and provides positive comments on pupils' performance.

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

76. The organisation and planning for this aspect are typical of most schools and satisfactory. Good priority is given to helping pupil develop as mature, well balanced citizens and this percolates the general ethos of the school very well. As commented elsewhere, provision such as the school council is helping pupils learn to live in a community and appreciate the systems that enable them to contribute. This theme is picked up and developed through dedicated lessons and incidental opportunities in other subjects.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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	5
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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