

INSPECTION REPORT

MILTON HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Westcliff-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend

Unique reference number: 115313

Headteacher: Mrs M Haynes

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 15-18 March 2004

Inspection number: 256922

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	466
School address:	Salisbury Avenue Westcliff-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS0 7AU
Telephone number:	01702 330758
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Lowes
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Milton Hall Primary School draws its pupils from the Westcliff-on-Sea district of Southend. At the time of the inspection, there were 466 pupils on roll; the school is much bigger than most primary schools. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are well below average. The majority of the children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is very low, although there are children with more developed skills due to their pre-school experiences. The school has a high proportion of pupils from a wide range of different minority ethnic backgrounds, and some are at a very early stage in learning English. This has more than doubled since the last inspection. A number of these pupils are refugees from countries such as Kosovo or Zimbabwe. The school also has a small number of pupils in public care or from Traveller backgrounds. The mobility of pupils leaving and joining the school is very high, well over 50 per cent by Year 6, although this is partly due to the intake of Year 3 pupils from another local infant school. There are 76 pupils identified for special educational needs support. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs, 10 pupils are identified for school action plus support and 67 pupils for school action support. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs, 16 per cent, is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology English as an additional language
9132	Mr J Godfrey	Lay inspector	
23453	Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Music
15011	Mrs M Wallace	Team inspector	Religious education Physical education Personal, social and health education Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	19
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	22
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is an effective school, which enables its pupils to make good progress and achieve very well by Year 6, given their attainment on entry to the school. The school's inclusiveness¹ is excellent. Standards attained remain below average overall, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, when compared with schools nationally but they are improving, and the leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is very good although standards are below average overall, especially in English.
- Standards in religious education are above those expected.
- The headteacher has a very good commitment to raising standards and a clear vision for the school.
- The school is very well managed and the chair of governors offers a very good level of support and challenge.
- The quality of the teaching is good, and very good teaching is found throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' attainment is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English is very good and they make very good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are very good.
- Attendance is well below average.

There has been good improvement overall since the last inspection. The main issues raised have been largely addressed. Important staff changes involving the headteacher, senior management and the governing body have meant that progress has been more rapid recently and this is enabling the school to raise standards. For example, in information and communication technology, the resources have improved since the last inspection. The provision and support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have improved and are now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The attainment on entry to the Nursery of a significant proportion of the children is very low. The children make good progress but their attainment is still well below average in the Reception classes, and few children will attain the expected early learning goals. By the time they start Year 1, pupils are still below average.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils come from similar backgrounds.*

The above table shows attainment in the national tests in 2003 to have been below average in Year 6 in English and mathematics, and well below average in science when compared with all schools nationally. However, when they are compared with school with pupils from similar backgrounds results are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. This is a truer reflection of the progress made by the pupils given their backgrounds. The results show attainment

¹ Inclusiveness refers to the arrangements made to meet the needs of all pupils whatever their gender, ability, or background.

to be well below average when compared to schools that scored similarly at the end of Year 2. However, analysis of the progress made by those pupils who have been in the school throughout Years 3 to 6, shows that three-quarters achieve at least in line with the level expected and many do better than that. This shows that the picture of low achievement overall is largely due to the high level of mobility and children moving from other schools. Current standards are below average at the end of Year 2, and well below average in reading and writing. However, standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected for the ages of the pupils. In Year 6, standards are above average in religious education and broadly average in information and communication technology, mathematics and science. Standards in English are still below average. Even so, the pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve well. The more able pupils achieve well.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. This results in good attitudes and mostly good behaviour in and out of classes. The majority of the pupils are enthusiastic, especially where the teaching encourages a practical and creative approach to learning. Attendance is well below average, largely due to a minority of parents. Too many pupils are regularly late for school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of the teaching is good overall, and in over a fifth of lessons it is very good or excellent. The work of learning support assistants has a positive impact on the pupils' learning in all classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those at an early stage of learning English, is very good. Those identified receive very good support and this is reflected in the good progress they make during their time at the school. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and adapted well from national guidance for the pupils. They are cared for and given good support. The links with parents are good and the information provided for them is very good. The links with the local community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very effective in improving provision and raising standards. The commitment to inclusion is excellent and has a very positive impact on the progress made by the pupils. The governing body has had a number of changes recently and, although their work is broadly satisfactory, they are very well led by an effective and dynamic chairman. The leadership of subjects is good and the leadership of the provision for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents and pupils are largely happy with the work of the school, although there are some concerns about pupils' behaviour. Although there are some very challenging children in the school, the members of staff work hard to ensure that this does not have a significant impact on pupils' learning or on the positive ethos found in the school. Pupils like their teachers and feel safe and secure in the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English throughout the school, and in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Raise the quality of all of the teaching to that of the best by improving the consistency of provision, ensuring the spread of best practice and planning lessons that are appropriately matched to the needs of all the pupils.
- Seek out and implement ways to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and by the end of Year 6, although standards are below average. Achievement is good throughout Years 1 and 2. This is true for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who are at an early stage of learning English and those who come from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are below average overall, especially in English, but are now rising again.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection in information and communication technology and religious education.
- Children achieve very well in the Nursery and there is good achievement in the Reception classes. Even so, most do not reach all of the expected early learning goals by the time they start Year 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs or those who have English as an additional language achieve very well by Year 6.

Commentary

1. On entry to the school, many of the children have poorly developed basic skills and do not have mature learning habits. Their pre-school experiences are very mixed and some have very poor communication, and personal and social skills. In the Nursery, the very good achievement is due to the very good provision, teaching and care provided for the children. This is largely maintained in the Reception classes and children continue to achieve well. Even so, by the time they are ready to start Year 1, most children will not achieve the nationally expected levels in any area of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.4 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.1 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.3 (16.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results in the 2003 national tests fell sharply in Year 2 compared to previous years. The standards attained were very well below the national average in reading and writing. Standards were very low in mathematics and this puts the result in the bottom five per cent nationally. However, this group of pupils has a higher than normal proportion with special educational needs and other difficulties, including a high level of mobility. The school has recognised this and now that they are in Year 3, these pupils are receiving additional support with their learning and are making good progress. When the results in Year 2 are compared with the results of schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds, standards in 2003 were average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics.
3. The picture of current standards in Years 1 and 2, as provided by the inspection evidence, is that standards in English are still well below average, in mathematics they are below average and in information and communication technology and science they are broadly average. In

religious education there was not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about standards attained in Years 1 and 2 but the overall provision for this subject is very good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.7 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.2 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 76 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The results in the 2003 national tests in Year 6 were maintained at broadly the level achieved over the last three years. This represents a halt to the decline that was becoming evident in this age group and the evidence from the inspection is that current standards are improving sharply and will continue to rise. When compared with all primary schools nationally, standards in science were well below average, while in English and mathematics they were below average. However, when compared with the results of schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were average in science and above average in English and mathematics. This represents very good achievement overall, given the pupils' attainment on entry, the number with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. The more able pupils achieve well and a larger percentage of pupils exceed national expectations than do so in similar school. This is the result of the good teaching and pupils being provided with appropriately challenging tasks.
5. In addition, the level of mobility is very high and this has a negative impact on the standards. For example, by analysing the results of the Year 6 pupils who have attended the school for a significant period, it is clear that they make at least good, and often very good progress given their results at the end of Year 2. This is true in English, mathematics and science. In addition, the analysis shows that many of the pupils with a home language other than English also make at least the expected levels of progress and many do better than that.
6. The inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 6 are still below average in English, but are now in line with the average in mathematics and science. In information and communication technology, standards are also broadly in line with those expected, while in religious education, they are above average and many pupils do better than expected. Too little work was observed in other subjects to make secure overall judgements about standards.
7. Pupils with a mother tongue other than English achieve very well overall, due to the support offered by the school through teaching assistants, resources, and special events such as intercultural weeks. They make good progress in learning English and those pupils who also have special educational needs achieve well when they receive extra support. This is supported by analysis of the progress made through Years 3 to 6 by those pupils who took the national tests in 2003. The pupils with different ethnic backgrounds all made progress at least in line with that expected and many did better than that. The progress made in a minority of lessons is hindered, however, when there is insufficient thought given to their needs and the teaching is aimed at the whole class.
8. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress overall as they move through the school. They make good progress because the curriculum planned for them is very good and this is enriched by very good quality teaching and learning. The good climate for learning that is evident within the school contributes to pupils' achievement especially for pupils who have a behavioural component to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator and support assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and pupils are given very good support in

class and in withdrawal groups. The school uses a range of school based and national tests to determine pupils' needs. All individual education plans contain clear targets identifying areas for improvement. Weekly targets are identified and linked to class work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school life and they behave well. Their cultural and spiritual development is good and moral and social development is very good. All of these aspects of school life have improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to all aspects of school.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and consequently pupils behave well.
- Very good racial harmony contributes significantly to the positive relationships in school.
- Older pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and community.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- Attendance is well below average. Punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

9. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school. When the teaching is good or better pupils demonstrate good levels of involvement. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils were very involved in discussing how Mary felt when she saw her son Jesus persecuted; they eagerly ask questions about events following the crucifixion. Such involvement has a positive impact on achievement.
10. The very good quality of provision for those with special educational needs helps pupils acquire positive attitudes to their work and to maintain their concentration. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are integrated very well into the life of the school. During assemblies, pupils are very attentive, respectful and they are encouraged to consider the feelings of others. Pupils act as friendship buddies and the friendship stop in the playground is well used. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and harassment as there are positive strategies in place to make such behaviour rare. As a result, relationships are satisfactory and constructive throughout the school.
11. The school works successfully to ensure that the wide range of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom come from challenging and much disrupted backgrounds, are accepted and feel at home. The high mobility of pupils entering and leaving the school makes the tracking of their personal development difficult but teachers know the pupils and their backgrounds well. Most of the pupils have good attitudes towards school and are happy there. Pupils with special educational needs are happy and secure within their class groups and they relate very well to their classmates and adults. These good relationships give pupils the confidence to join in with all school activities. Pupils work well in the classroom. They work with good levels of concentration and are keen to learn.
12. Personal development is promoted by the responsibility roles given to older pupils who enjoy their work with younger pupils such as book buddies. Pupils have good opportunities to become spiritually aware through assemblies and the very good provision for religious education and personal development. Their study of world faiths in religious education enables them to compare and contrast different religions and beliefs. Very good initiatives such as the 'thinking' book enable pupils to articulate their feelings. The 'Stand up a good one' assembly provides very good opportunities to celebrate and acknowledge personal qualities. Adults are good role models and moral development is consistently emphasised so that all pupils know right from wrong and have a well-developed respect for the feelings of others. This strong sense of the need to support each other in the school community is nurtured in the school council. Social development is enhanced with 'friend of the week' certificates. Cultural

development is enhanced by many school activities such as celebrations for St David's and St Patrick's Day. The whole school celebrates an inter-cultural week with opportunities for Irish, Indian and Israeli dance. A wide range of visits and visitors including visits from Muslim and Jewish leaders enhance the provision.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	1.8
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.

13. Attendance is poor despite the range of measures used by the school to encourage good attendance. Unauthorised absence is well above the national figure. Poor attendance has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning and in Year 6 is associated with lower attainment. Attendance of pupils in the Reception year and Year 1 is poor and usually attributed to illness. Holidays taken during term time have a significant impact on attendance figures. The school has recently adopted an electronic recording system to improve the tracking of attendance. Analysis of the reasons for absence has not yet been carried out to target areas for improvement. There is good support from the educational welfare service to improve attendance. A few parents are insufficiently motivated to ensure the good attendance of their children.
14. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. A number of pupils arrive late for school each morning. Procedures for registering late arrivals are good. The school regularly reminds parents of the need for good punctuality.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	273	11	0
Black or Black British – African	31	2	0

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

15. Behaviour is generally good in lessons. The school's approach to discipline is effective. Adults apply the rules fairly and consistently and as a result, pupils are sure of what is expected of them. Behaviour on the playground is energetic but good overall. When exclusions have been necessary they have been carried out appropriately and the correct procedures followed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the quality of teaching is good. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good, and very good in the Nursery.
- There is some very good teaching throughout the school.
- Teaching assistants provide teachers and pupils with a very good level of help and support.
- The assessment of pupils' progress provides teachers with very good information on targets and progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3%)	11 (18%)	27 (44%)	17 (28%)	4 (6%)	0	0

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

16. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, with some very good teaching in the Nursery. Teachers and learning support assistants work as teams to provide a secure and stimulating environment for the children. Planning is linked closely to the expected early learning goals and ensures children experience a range of activities in all areas of learning. It is initially a shared activity between all Foundation Stage staff and based on a two-year cycle of topics. Questioning is used effectively to develop children's language and extend their vocabulary. All adults use every opportunity to talk to children and encourage speaking. "Talk time" in the Nursery and discussion times in the Reception classes provide children with the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. The very good relationships in the Foundation Stage give children a feeling of security and gradually the confidence to respond to questions. A warm welcome helps them to settle more quickly.
17. Throughout the rest of the school, the teaching is largely good, although there are times when the teaching is barely satisfactory and not sufficiently effective to raise standards to the required level. This occurs when the teaching is unexciting, relies too heavily on worksheets or copying from books, and when the teacher's subject knowledge is insecure. However, the headteacher and senior staff have a good system for monitoring teaching and there have been a number of improvements to practice in the last two years. The main remaining weakness is that too many lessons consist of all pupils addressing the same work, with insufficient thought being given to providing work based on pupils' prior attainment. This means that in some lessons the more able pupils find the work too easy while for some of the less able it can be too difficult.
18. Different teaching and learning styles, methods, groupings, and activities are planned and in most lessons these are successful in gaining pupils' interest and ensuring that the needs of both boys and girls and those pupils who learn at different rates are met. This has a positive impact on pupils' eagerness to learn and their behaviour and attitudes. Considerable effort goes into ensuring that all pupils receive the support they need to access the curriculum. Teaching assistants are deployed prudently to ensure that those pupils whose needs are the greatest receive the most support. This support is very effective and this is partly due to the good communication between teachers and their assistants, and the use of the assistants for assessing, observing and recording pupils' learning. Through its recruitment policy the school ensures there are positive role models for all pupils.

19. The school has a number of classes taken by two teachers on different days of the week. This system works well and the communication between the teachers is strong. The school also benefits by having a wider range of staff with skills and knowledge that are more diverse. Assessment has been a focus of the school's work recently, and the co-ordinator has introduced an effective system for tracking pupils' progress and predicting likely levels of achievement on a regular basis. This system has been introduced in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The other subjects are in the process of devising and introducing appropriate and useful assessment systems. The marking of pupils' work varies and is not sufficiently consistent to provide all pupils with a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.
20. The teaching of the pupils with English as an additional language is good. Those at an early stage of learning the language are well supported by the learning support assistants and, where appropriate, by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the information and communication technology co-ordinator. This works well in weekly early morning sessions for Years 3 to 6 where children have a focused session using software designed to improve their language skills. For example, in one good lesson where Year 3 pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds worked at activities designed to aid their recognition of initial sounds. Where there is very good practice, teachers use pupils' home languages for calling the register, or invite parents in to share aspects of their cultures on specific days or in intercultural weeks. A termly writing assessment is made and kept as a record to show pupils' progress. However, a minority of teachers make insufficient allowance in their planning for providing work that is matched to the pupils' prior skills or in line with their literacy skills.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall, with some that is excellent. In the excellent sessions, learning is reinforced in a variety of ways through song, role play and poetry. Pupils benefit from the excellent challenge and pace. Good relationships give these pupils confidence to develop their communication skills. In one session, two pupils gained confidence in their speaking skills because they used a tape recorder to record their questions and responses. They were encouraged to ask more supplementary questions and consequently self-esteem and confidence were developed. There are very good support structures in place to support pupils with special educational needs. All teachers and members of support staff provide a very good level of support that effectively contributes to pupils' achievement. Pupils are withdrawn for support and teaching assistants work alongside pupils with special needs in most class situations. Adults know the pupils well and they have a good relationship with all pupils. Pupils work towards their targets within the classroom, alongside their peers and in withdrawal support groups. Pupils are well supported and all individual education plans contain small achievable targets that are regularly monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The assessment and tracking procedures are well developed. The co-ordinator works with pupils with behavioural difficulties, encouraging them to engage in role play to develop their communication skills. This session provides very good opportunities to discuss a range of issues. The work is well matched to the needs of the pupils and this helps them make very good progress.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good**. The provision of opportunities of enrichment is good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Strengths and weaknesses

- An interesting, motivating and worthwhile range of learning experiences is provided across the school.
- The schools' provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- The well planned visits add interest to pupils' learning.
- The provision for special educational needs is very good.
- Out of school activities are satisfactory but there insufficient sporting activities.

Commentary

22. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, and the curriculum is well balanced and broad. There are agreed policies for health, sex and drugs education and time is made available within lessons to develop these areas in ways which are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils. In general, the school is using nationally recommended schemes of work to plan the teaching and learning. These are adapted well to meet the particular needs of the pupils in order to overcome the many barriers to learning.
23. The school places considerable emphasis on meeting the needs of individual pupils. It is sensitive to the turbulent backgrounds of some of the school population and thoughtfully plans the teaching and learning to minimise disruptions and promote confidence and self-esteem in all its pupils. There is a very clear commitment to inclusion, and this is obvious in the thoughtful way the school is organised, such as through the ability grouping in Years 4 to 6, and the successful way personal, social, and health education is promoted. The school has an appropriate anti-racism policy.
24. Links with other subjects add interest and enrichment to pupils' learning. For example, pupils' literacy, information and communication technology and design and technology skills were deepened as they used word processing skills to write instructions on how to make sandwich. An exceptionally good range of visits and visitors play an important part in developing positive attitudes to learning. Visits are carefully planned and used very effectively to enhance pupils understanding of Saxon, Tudor and Victorian England, while visits to local churches, mosques and synagogues widen their knowledge of other religions.
25. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has been improved considerably since the last inspection. Every opportunity is used to develop language skills and extend vocabulary. The resources for pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory. The new library is planned to include a range of dual language books. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils identified with special educational needs. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and a range of learning opportunities. The provision for sport and the arts is good. Resources for special educational needs are good and are easily accessible.
26. A good range of clubs enriches the statutory curriculum and enhances personal and social skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in sporting activities to enhance their physical education. The accommodation and resources are good overall and create an attractive and stimulating environment for teaching and learning. Teaching and support staff work particularly well together for the benefit of the pupils and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils who learn at a slower rate.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement are good. The school takes good account of pupils' views in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- Induction arrangements for all new children and pupils, at whatever stage they arrive in school, are good and particularly effective in Year 3.
- Academic progress and personal development are well tracked and pupils appreciate the support they receive from staff.
- Pupils feel their views are valued. The school council is effective in involving pupils in the school's work.

Commentary

27. Arrangements for dealing with child protection issues are very good. All members of staff have received basic first aid training and are trained to recognise signs of child abuse. Members of staff take good care of pupils' safety. Appropriate risk assessments are made for outside visits. Supervision of pupils at break times is good. The school is very well maintained and regularly checked for safety. It is unsatisfactory that emergency exits are not properly signed and that emergency evacuation procedures are not clearly displayed in all rooms. The school is addressing this. Internet provision is safe and secure.
28. Members of staff know pupils well and give good support, advice and guidance based on thorough monitoring of pupils' academic and personal developments. Induction arrangements are good and children settle well at whatever age they join the school. Very good links with a feeder infant school ensure that pupils joining from this school settle very well. Pupils are keen to befriend new entrants. Academic and personal development from starting school through to leaving is tracked well through individual pupil profiles and social folders. Pupils feel happy and secure in school and know there is always an adult they can ask for help. All pupils have personal and academic targets that are regularly reviewed so they are constantly aware of how they can improve. Older pupils are involved in setting their own targets. Preparation for transfer to secondary education is satisfactory.
29. The school values pupils' views. Pupils are positive about the school and know they will be listened to seriously. The school responds well to pupils' comments in the complaints and friendship boxes. Members of the school council meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the school. They canvas the views of other pupils and have contributed significantly to harmonious relationships through the introduction of 'Playground Friends'. They are currently investigating the viability of a school tuck shop.
30. The teachers' records of the academic and personal development of pupils from different ethnic groups are good and provide a useful start for further planning and provision. The members of staff are good at recognising where pupils need help due to their special needs, or where they need encouragement and support to overcome language problems but are more than capable of attaining high levels. For example, in one Year 4 class, all of the pupils from different ethnic backgrounds had been carefully assessed and were recognised as being in the top two ability groups.
31. The school keeps very good records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs and all class teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs. This ensures they are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter and ensures they receive the appropriate support and guidance. Pupils have their own individual targets that are reviewed regularly. This all contributes to the good care pupils receive. There are good opportunities in lessons for pupils to respond to questions and to share their work; this contributes to their growing confidence. The assessment and tracking procedures are good and the school makes good use of them to provide additional support for pupils identified. Individual education plans are good and identify clear targets that are explicit and achievable. There are regular reviews to assess progress and examine the appropriateness of the current support. There are very good links with the local support services and the school works closely with them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good partnerships with parents and other schools to help pupils' learning. Very good links with the community enhance achievement and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have mainly positive views on the school's work.

- Parents particularly like the teaching and high expectations that result in their children making good progress at school.
- The school provides very good information about the school and about pupils' standards and progress.
- Very good links with the community enhance learning and personal development.
- Good links with other schools and colleges support learning and help pupils settle well when they start, especially in Year 3.

Commentary

32. Links with parents are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the school. They think teaching is good and that high expectations help their children to make good progress. Most are comfortable in approaching the school and appreciate the information they receive from the school. They are happy with the arrangements to settle their children when they started at school. A small but significant number of parents are concerned about poor behaviour and bullying. Although there is some unsatisfactory behaviour, it is generally good and the school has good procedures for dealing with bullying should it occur.
33. The school provides very good information to parents about the school and pupils' standards and progress. Parental attendance at termly consultation evenings is variable, but the school makes every effort to follow up parents who do not attend. The school encourages parents to support their children's learning by running useful workshops, for example on drugs education, and to help parents whose first language is not English. The school surveys parents' views regularly but there was only a 20 per cent response to a recent questionnaire. Parental response to school initiatives such as 'Stepping Out' has been disappointing, but they enjoy concerts and assemblies. The good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs helps raise their achievement. Pupils have regular homework and the reading diary is used effectively to communicate with parents. The school finds it difficult to enlist parents' involvement, but there is now a full complement of parent governors. A small parents' association has been formed and contributes positively to the financial and social life of the school. They also run a nearly-new uniform shop. A small number of parents are currently being trained to listen to readers.
34. Very good links with the local and wider community enhance pupils' learning and have a very good impact on their personal development. Visits to the local library, museums, Colchester Castle, churches and parks enrich the curriculum and aid learning. There is a very good range of community visitors, such as a theatre company, a storyteller, community policeman, a folk group and local clergy. A local business sponsors rewards for good attendance and punctuality. The South East Essex Business Partnership provides adult reading partners for Year 6 pupils and held a useful 'Construction Day' for Year 2 pupils. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is raised effectively through support for charities such as MENCAP.
35. The school has good links with other schools to support learning. Links with an infant school help pupils from this school settle very well in Year 3. A range of sporting fixtures against other schools enhances sporting achievement and social development. Membership of an excellence cluster of schools supports development well. Good links with a local secondary school enhance the science curriculum. Pupils go on to a number of different secondary schools and transfer arrangements are satisfactory. Work experience students and trainee teachers add to pupils' learning experiences.
36. The school is looking to translate more of its documents and information into different languages to aid inclusion and support parents of pupils at an early stage of speaking English still further. The school has also worked with a local college to promote language classes for parents held at the school.

37. The school has established good partnership links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. The school values parental support and parents are involved in regular reviews concerning the pupils' progress. All parents are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and the school maintains good links with parents who are often involved in target setting. There are good opportunities for parents and pupils to be involved in producing the individual education plan.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and is well supported by the effective leadership of the senior management team. The governance of the school is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met. Very good management and efficient organisation ensure that the school runs smoothly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is committed to raising standards.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, governors have no formal programme for visiting the school.
- The monitoring role of subject leaders is now well defined, but this has had insufficient time to impact on standards.
- The school is very well managed and the budget has been effectively used to improve accommodation and resources since the last inspection.
- An effective and inclusive improvement planning process provides the school with clear priorities for the future.
- The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language are very good.

Commentary

38. The governing body is well organised and manages its work efficiently through relevant committees and delegated responsibilities. All statutory requirements are met. The governors understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school but have limited involvement in the strategic development through planning. They are beginning to act as a "critical friend" but as yet have no protocol for visiting the classrooms. This has already been highlighted as an area for development so they can have clearer first-hand information of the school's curriculum provision. The governing body was criticised in the previous inspection. It is presently being developed through the strong leadership of the chair, who is very aware of the training needs of the newly appointed governors. Once completed the governors have the potential to become more fully involved in the life of the school.
39. The headteacher leads the school very well and all staff are appropriately focused on raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school has a good understanding that more needs to be done to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum and pupils' skills in solving mathematical word problems. However, the monitoring role of other subject leaders is underdeveloped; their subjects have not been a priority for development. The clear leadership has resulted in a careful analysis of the relevant assessment information and setting appropriate priorities. Good action plans are gradually having a positive effect on raising standards. The school's vision for the future is shared by everyone and all have similar expectations. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good and this has a significant impact on the progress made by the youngest children.
40. The headteacher is in the process of creating a team of teachers who are committed to evaluating and improving their work. Members of the senior management team are also department managers. They are beginning to have a positive impact on the running of the

school and in raising standards. The non-teaching deputy headteacher, also a member of the senior management team, has the responsibility for pastoral care and this is having a considerable effect on behaviour and social development. All subject leaders are expected to devise action plans and to follow them through. The creation of a positive climate for learning ensures that all pupils have good opportunities for learning, whether they are boys or girls, have special educational needs or are learning English for the first time.

41. The school has very good strategies for self-evaluation. The headteacher regularly observes teachers working with pupils, as do members of the senior management team and targets are set for the necessary improvements. Performance management is linked to a programme of observing teachers and other members of staff and is very effective. All members of staff are committed to continuing professional development that is strongly linked to the school's priorities. Although there have been many changes of staff recently, the positive ethos of the school and the opportunities for staff to be involved in developing the school's priorities are helping all to be more committed to the school. The school has been successful in recruiting new staff and is aware of the need to retain its effective members of staff.
42. The leadership demonstrated by the co-ordinator for provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The provision is well managed and she has a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve provision further. In particular, she has encouraged the development of a range of cultural events such as intercultural weeks and special festival or saints' days, providing staff with ideas, suggestions and resources.
43. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are very good. The school has successfully implemented the new Code of Practice and there are clear systems and good involvement of outside agencies. There is a clear action plan for the development of special educational needs. The co-ordinator is new to the responsibility but has a very good grasp of the situation and has produced a detailed action plan; members of staff are well deployed to support pupils in lessons according to their needs. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator are committed to providing the best possible support for all pupils with special educational needs. The school has no up-to-date register for gifted and talented pupils; there are currently no individual education plans for these pupils and work is not specifically planned to match their needs. The school is aware of this and has appropriate plans to improve provision.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,430,975	Balance from previous year	101,766
Total expenditure	1,340,335	Balance carried forward to the next	192,407
Expenditure per pupil	2,623		

44. The school has recently had a large balance to carry forward. This has been due to planned building and resourcing needs, such as for the new library. In addition, the governors are planning for the predicted future falling rolls and the staffing costs resulting from these. The expenditure per pupil is below average for primary schools and when all factors are taken into account the school gives very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children are admitted to the Nursery in the September before their fourth birthday and into the Reception classes the following September. Attainment on entry is very low as both language and mathematical understanding are underdeveloped. This is partly because of the number of children from minority ethnic backgrounds who have English as an additional language. Most of these enter school with little or no English. Attainment on entry has been falling over the last few years but the very good teaching in the Nursery provides the children with a very good start to their schooling. By the end of their Reception year the majority of children are unlikely to achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning. This is due partly to the high mobility amongst the children that is having an adverse affect on standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**. This is reflected in the way children begin to learn how to respect each other, take turns and play together.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and provides the children with many opportunities to learn how to relate to each other.
- Very good relationships ensure children are happy, secure and settled.

Commentary

45. Few children will achieve the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of their Reception year. Most children soon conform to the high expectations of good behaviour set by the staff. Children know the routines well and settle quickly to their tasks. However, a few children in the Reception classes find this difficult, although teachers have strategies for managing this and most children respond positively to their requests. Children in both the Nursery and Reception classes are learning to take turns and to wait patiently without calling out. The very good relationships between the staff set a good role model for cooperation for the children and children are beginning to appreciate the need to help each other. However, few children play together; many just play alongside each other.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in this area of learning is **good** and despite entering school with poor language skills children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is used to develop language skills, extend vocabulary and to encourage a love of books.
- Children are provided with a range of activities to develop writing skills.

Commentary

46. By the end of the Reception year, children's communication skills are well below those expected. Despite a very good start in the Nursery, the high mobility amongst the children means that a proportion of them enter the Reception without Nursery and often pre-school experiences. Some of these children have English as an additional language. When children

enter the Nursery many say very little but “talk time” is planned every day and gradually children gain confidence and begin to communicate. This is continued in the Reception classes through discussion times. Children are expected to talk in a sentence and many find this difficult because they lack confidence and often the vocabulary to respond. Books are handled with care and children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. In the Reception classes children are fascinated by the story of Noah’s Ark and are keen to answer questions. Reading skills are developing slowly. Higher attaining children recognise a few familiar words but the others cannot do this and rely on the pictures to tell the story. Because of limited language skills they have difficulty answering questions about their books correctly. Children find sounding out words difficult and some do not have sufficient knowledge to say the sound of the letters. A few children in the Nursery can recognise their names. Throughout the Nursery and the Reception classes, children are given many opportunities to practise writing. Gradually they begin to realise that mark making can communicate meaning. Higher attainers in the Reception classes clearly demonstrate their developing skills of early writing as letters and simple words become more easily recognisable. However, the majority of the other children are mark making rather than forming letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good so children make good progress and achieve well.
- Every opportunity is used to develop children’s counting skills including the use of number rhymes and songs.
- A wide range of activities are planned to support learning so children become confident with numbers.

Commentary

47. Despite the very good teaching in the Nursery, children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning. This can be explained by the high number of children who enter the Reception classes without having been in the Nursery. Children in the Nursery struggle to count, but those in the Reception classes can count successfully to 10, and some of the higher attainers up to 20. However, although counting is secure children find it difficult to recognise and match numbers. For example, they may count six butterflies but few hold up six fingers to represent this number. A small group enjoyed the challenge of using a programmable robot, to move from one picture to another by telling it how many moves to make. This is very good use of information and communication technology within a mathematics session.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many relevant visits and visitors help to enhance the children’s understanding of the world around them.

Commentary

48. Although no specific teaching was observed in this area, talking to staff, looking at long term planning and photographs show a wide variety of relevant experiences offered to the children to enhance their understanding of the world around them. They explore the local area visiting

shops, the car park to get a parking ticket and the beach collecting whatever they can find. Visits further afield include a farm and Sealife. Visitors include the school cook, talking about food, the vicar, community policeman and firemen. Computers are always on and children are encouraged to develop their computer skills. They enjoy this but few have good mouse control and find moving the cursor difficult.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**, especially the use of the outdoor areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures children make good progress towards the early learning goals and achieve well.
- The outdoor areas are used very effectively not just for physical development but as an extension of the classroom.

Commentary

49. Although few children will achieve the early learning goals in this area of development, their gross motors skills (body control and spatial awareness) are close to the expected levels. They move round the hall and most avoid each other. Most can stop quickly when told to. They are confident using wheeled toys. Children find forming letters difficult because their pencil control is underdeveloped, so many activities are provided to help children develop these skills. Other opportunities encourage children to cut out or colour carefully and to use a variety of tools to roll out and make patterns in the play dough.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Children have many opportunities to explore different media.
- Role play is an important part of this area of learning, helping children to develop their personal and social skills and extend language.

Commentary

50. Although no direct teaching was observed in this area photographs and displays provide evidence of the range of experiences children enjoy. Various techniques including marbling, bubble painting, using fingers to print, screen printing and many others are explored. Paint, crayon, printing with shapes, using air drying clay are just a few media children use. No lessons specifically planned for creative development were seen during the inspection but there were always activities available. Although there is an emphasis on role-play, children are reluctant to use the delegated areas. Adults often lead role-play to encourage children to react to each other. Children enjoy rhymes and action songs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are close to the national average and most pupils achieve well.
- Standards in Year 2 are well below average.
- Teaching is good in Year 6 but inconsistent in other years.
- Pupils use a wide range of different forms of writing well in other subjects.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted appropriately but there is room for improvement.

Commentary

51. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well and reach standards that, although they are just below the national average, are much better than those found in schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading, and higher attainers and average attainers are eager, fluent readers of a wide range of texts. They are very good at reading in order to obtain information and competently extract information using a range of skills and strategies. Pupils who learn at a slower rate still need considerable support to enable them to read independently. However, the choice of reading material is carefully selected enabling all pupils to be successful and to enjoy reading. In Year 2, achievement is satisfactory overall and although standards are well below the national average, they compare favourably with similar schools.
52. The school creates an interesting and stimulating environment to promote reading and writing. Books are of a good quality and chosen well to engage young readers. Visits from professional storytellers and the celebration of a book week promote a love of books and reading for pleasure. Writing is linked well to all areas of the curriculum and pupils of all attainment levels often write imaginative, thoughtful and sensitive stories, poems and factual accounts of aspects of their lives. Writing competitions on interesting topics are used effectively to encourage pupils to become independent and competent writers.
53. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but throughout the school there is not enough good or better teaching to enable pupils' progress to be consistent. Fifty per cent of the teaching seen across the school was good or better but there are examples of unsatisfactory teaching which limit pupils' achievement. Where lessons are less than good, teaching does not provide sufficient focus on developing and extending pupils' writing skills. There are missed opportunities to provide pupils with good clear examples of new learning, how they should plan their work and of the need constantly to check for spelling, grammar and punctuation. As a result, pupils do not always produce their best work or achieve the standards they are capable of.
54. Teaching in Year 6 is predominantly of a good quality and this enables over three quarters of the pupils to make rapid progress in their learning, to achieve well and reach the expected level for their age. Lessons have a good pace and teachers are particularly skilled in adopting strategies that are suited to different learning styles and to breaking down barriers to learning. Marking is usually good and in the best cases there is specific guidance to help pupils improve. Work is challenging and thoughtfully planned to engage pupils' interests. Teachers model new learning well to build up skills, engender confidence and an enthusiasm to succeed. Progress for lower attaining pupils is often slow but they respond well to being taught in small classes and most work to capacity and achieve well. Teaching assistants provide very good support for children with special educational needs enabling them to reach the targets set in their individual education plans.

55. The school is aware of the need to improve the provision for promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills. Planning rarely refers to this aspect of pupils' learning and there are many missed opportunities to provide good models for pupils and to extend their competencies. Computers are not used sufficiently in literacy lessons, resulting in missed opportunities to develop word processing skills, or to use software appropriate for the development of individual pupils' reading or writing skills. The subject manager is a skilled practitioner and has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of standards and teaching and learning in the junior classes but less so in the infants. There is a regular monitoring of work and use of data to set targets. Test results are carefully analysed and areas of improvement identified. The school is aware of the need to improve standards further and to develop the manager's role across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. The pupils use a variety of methods to record their ideas in other subjects. The application of their literacy skills across the curriculum is a contributory factor to their success in subjects such as science, history and religious education and provides an outlet to express the powerful and conflicting emotions many pupils have. However, weaknesses in literacy skills have a negative impact on the speed of their work when word processing and using other information and communication technology applications. Overall, the use of literacy skills across the curriculum is good.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at ages seven and 11 are rising.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Relationships are very good and give pupils' the confidence to explain the methods used to solve the question.
- The neatness with which pupils present their work makes it easy to follow the methods used.
- Pupils find solving word problems difficult, as they do not always understand what the question is asking them to do.
- The use of information and communication technology within lessons is very limited.

Commentary

57. From evidence seen during the inspection, standards in the subject are below average for pupils in Year 2 and broadly average for those in Year 6. The results of the 2003 national assessment tests for seven year olds were very low when compared to schools nationally and well below average when compared to schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds. The results for higher attaining pupils were also well below the national average. The inspection evidence suggests that in 2004 there will be an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the expected level in Year 2 but not at the higher levels, so overall results are likely to remain below average. The results of the national assessment for 11 year olds in 2003 were below average when compared to schools nationally but above average when compared to schools with similar pupils. Based on their prior attainment when they took the tests in Year 2, the attainment of pupils was well below average. However, very high mobility amongst the pupils, and a rise in the number of pupils entering the school for whom English is an additional language, has an adverse affect on the results. The inspection evidence suggests that the pupils are on course to achieve standards broadly in line with national average.
58. Given the very low attainment on entry to the school, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well, as are those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. Pupils

in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, are achieving very well. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language.

59. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on the learning of number. In Years 4 to 6 pupils' work shows very good progress, whilst that of Years 1 to 3 shows good progress. The majority of pupils take a pride in their work and it is neatly done. Typically, the work of lower attaining pupils is good in quantity and shows the impact of the very good support and well-matched tasks. The setting of appropriate tasks for both higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs provides a good level of challenge at different abilities.
60. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 enjoy mathematics as they develop their understanding and competence using number operations. Many pupils in Year 3 are still exploring numbers to 100 because of the limited knowledge they have of the basic number facts. Older pupils enjoy the challenge of converting units when working with grams and kilograms, or centimetres and kilometres. Younger pupils enjoy quick fire mental questions using a card that can be folded to make number bonds to 10. Telling the time is a struggle for many younger pupils. Across the school many pupils find solving word problems difficult, due to their low literacy and thinking skills. They are often unsure what the question is asking them to do. The school is already aware that this area needs developing.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some strengths in Years 3 to 6. No unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was observed, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are generally well motivated to succeed especially where teachers are enthusiastic and begin the lessons with well focused mental problems. Questioning is used effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' knowledge. Because relationships between staff and pupils are very good, pupils are confident in responding to questions and in explaining how they arrived at their answers, sometimes demonstrating on the board. One of the strong features of planning in this subject is the way appropriate tasks are planned to match the needs of all pupils. However, in Years 4 to 6 opportunities are missed to provide additional challenge for the higher attaining pupils within each group.
62. There is no systematic planning for the use of information and communication technology and computers within mathematics. The school has already highlighted this as an area for development. The very good support provided by learning support assistants benefits all pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, ensuring equality of access to the curriculum. All teachers share the lesson objective with the pupils. In the better lessons teachers then ask pupils if the objective has been achieved and how successfully. This gives teachers an instant assessment of which pupils may need additional help.
63. In some lessons the final session or plenary is well used to recap and reinforce learning or to resolve any problems identified during group work. Lessons judged to be satisfactory tended to be rather slow paced and consequently pupils were not instantly engaged and motivated by the tasks so lost interest and concentration. Occasionally, behaviour was not effectively managed and this detracted from the learning.
64. The subject leader has a clearly defined monitoring role and has undertaken lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work. The school has developed a system for tracking pupils' progress but there has been insufficient time for it to have an impact on standards. Pupils have individual targets but they are often too vague and general to help them move forward.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Mathematics is not used as effectively as it could be in other areas of the curriculum. Occasionally information is recorded using data handling in science and information and

communication technology but, generally, there is limited use of mathematics across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and are now broadly in line with those expected; achievement is very good.
- The best teaching encourages pupils to appreciate the place of science in the real world.
- The work done to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary has been successful.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

Commentary

66. Although standards have been maintained at a similar level since 1999, they have not kept pace with the improvements evident nationally and so have fallen behind. However, when the 2003 results for the tests at the end of Year 6 are compared with those of schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds, standards are broadly average, with an above average proportion of the pupils reaching the higher levels. The recent improvements to the leadership and quality of teaching in the school have resulted in a clear upturn in standards and these are now broadly in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6. Given their attainment on entry to the school, pupils are achieving very well and making good progress. Achievement is less successful where the teaching is weak due to a lack of subject knowledge on the part of the teachers.
67. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good, and at times very good. The best teaching is very well resourced and planned, and this gives all pupils good opportunities to experiment and try out their predictions. For example, in one good lesson on circuits the pupils had a good range of bulbs, batteries and wires to enable them to predict and then make comparisons about the result of using two batteries and one bulb or two bulbs and one battery. The very good teaching is well paced and the lesson is divided into well-planned sections, each with clear objectives that help the pupils to know exactly what is expected of them. The written work is often well presented. The learning support assistants provide very good support in lessons by assisting the less able or those at an early stage of learning English by observing and assessing their work and by informing the teacher of the progress made thus aiding the good assessment process.
68. Where the teaching is weaker, the teachers' subject knowledge is less well developed. In a minority of lessons, there is insufficient difference between the tasks provided for pupils, particularly for some of the higher attainers. For example, in one lesson pupils were all engaged in drawing the same diagram as consolidation of their learning about the parts of a flower.
69. In one very good lesson on magnetism in Year 3, pupils were able to build on their practical experience of using magnets by sorting objects, firstly with different materials and then with a range of metals. The teacher then extended this work, and linked it to the practical use of science in the real world, by setting pupils the problem of how they could sort a non-magnetic can from a mixture of materials. This also supported the pupils' work on recycling and the environment, and helped their social development. The curriculum is well planned and ensures the full coverage of the appropriate topics matched to the ages of the pupils.
70. The subject has a new co-ordinator who has yet to have sufficient time to monitor the teaching and learning in any detail. She has attended co-ordinator training and has improved the resources in the subject efficiently by focusing on those needed for the planned topics. The

analysis of past test results recently led to a focus on developing pupils' scientific vocabulary, as this was a weakness recognised in their work. This work has been successful and pupils now use the correct terminology more confidently, and teachers make use of displays and lists of key words to provide pupils with the correct terms. In some of the pupils' written work, however, these words are spelt wrongly and not corrected appropriately by the teachers' marking.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school benefits from good full time specialist teaching.
- The resources and accommodation are very good.
- The curriculum is very well organised and planned.
- Computers are not used enough in classrooms, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching of controlling and modelling using computers is good in Year 6.

Commentary

71. By the end of Year 6, the standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected. The provision has improved since the last inspection because the resources are better and the teachers have had more training. The computer suite is very well equipped, and efficiently and effectively used, and the specialist teaching available is mostly good, and at times very good. The suite is used in a variety of ways. As well as introducing specialist teaching of particular skills, the suite is used to consolidate the skills and knowledge that pupils have been introduced to in classrooms. For example, in one good Year 2 lesson pupils followed up work in the class directing a programmable robot by drawing common two-dimensional shapes with a screen turtle. Very good use is made of the projector to demonstrate skills and illustrate the work to the class before they start.
72. The pupils are very enthusiastic about working in the suite and they behave well whenever they are in there. This is helped by the clear and consistently applied rules that the co-ordinator has devised. In most lessons the teachers are very well supported by the learning support assistants, who help pupils, observe their attainment and record progress for the teachers. Where the classes are set by ability, different work is provided for them. However, there is scope for the staff to provide more individually matched tasks for pupils in all classes. By the end of Year 2, pupils can save their work in the correct folders. They are able to follow instructions and predict outcomes well. In Year 4, pupils prepare good multimedia presentations by opening files, starting slides, producing a colourful cover, changing the size of the pictures and adding text. The good teaching ensures pupils learn to use correct terminology, such as that of fields and records when using databases.
73. In Year 6, pupils have devised a program to operate lights and sound buzzers as part of a story about a house. This has required a good level of logical thinking skills and also shows how the successful and imaginative use of the computers can encourage and inspire pupils. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Older pupils can use word processors well, and in Year 6 can change the font, size, colour and style and are confident in understanding the correction warning signs produced by the software. Throughout the school, pupils meet the expected range of software, including word processors, data bases, spreadsheets and multi media presentations. A weakness in the teaching is the inconsistent use of computers in classrooms, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons. Evidence of appropriate use is rare and the teachers need more support and training, as well as improved software, to encourage more computer use in other subjects. The school is aware of this, the co-ordinator is in the process of organising all computers to be networked, and this will enable teachers to access all software in their own rooms as well as in the suite.

74. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those who have special educational needs, are well supported in lessons, usually by the learning support assistants, and this enables them to take a full part in the learning. However, as with the other pupils whose literacy skills are less well developed, this has an impact on their learning and on the speed and accuracy of their reading and typing. Good use is made of the computer suite each morning for a session with pupils at an early stage of learning English to enable them to use software to develop their basic literacy skills. This work is well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
75. The subject co-ordinator, who also teaches the subject throughout the school, is knowledgeable and leads the school well. He has worked hard over the last three years to develop an accessible scheme of work through a system of folders for each year group, which contain the appropriate resources linked to the different nationally accepted curriculum plans. Teachers make good use of his expertise and enthusiasm and this has had a beneficial impact on provision. Digital cameras are used by teachers throughout the school for recording work and special events; their use by the pupils is limited.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. This is an area the school is aware it needs to develop further as computers are not used sufficiently in other subjects in the classrooms. In particular, in literacy and numeracy lessons it is rare to see the computers in classrooms used effectively. This did happen in one good Year 3 mathematics lesson, where the teacher had created grids for less able pupils to colour in fractions as part of their planned numeracy work. In the computer suite, however, pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes. In Year 4 pupils prepare good multimedia presentations about an Indian village as part of their geography work.

HUMANITIES

77. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography**. A scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that the school provides an interesting and well-planned curriculum. It promotes pupils' interests in people, places, events and happenings through the ages and across the world. By well-planned visits and visitors, teachers bring the subjects alive for pupils and promote eager learners who speak enthusiastically about their work. In both subjects, pupils have a range of opportunities to build up a good knowledge base and to develop good geographical and historical skills. The school is introducing a good assessment system that identifies the skills and knowledge acquired in each topic studied providing a good overall picture of pupils' attainment and progress in each subject.

Religious education

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 3 to 6 are above average; there was insufficient evidence to judge standards in Years 1 and 2.
- Achievement is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There are good links with literacy and other subjects.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

78. Standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the age of eleven and pupils make significant gains in their achievement as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as their second language achieve equally well alongside their peers. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning have both improved since the last inspection.
79. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and consequently pupils make good gains in their learning. A strong element in the teaching is good subject knowledge and well planned lessons that pupils enjoy. Teachers make good links to similarities and differences of religions. There is a very good balance between learning about religion and challenging pupils to apply their knowledge of religious education to their own life situation. The contribution to personal development is therefore very strong as pupils develop mature understanding and sensitivity to the feelings of others. In a good Year 6 lesson pupils were reluctant to end the lesson as they asked questions about the death of Jesus and discuss the difference between reincarnation and resurrection. Analysis of work confirms the rigorous challenge. Year 6 pupils compare the account of the Nativity in the gospel of Matthew with that of Luke. They identify similarities and differences in the two accounts. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the life of saints such as St Patrick and St David. Progression is consistent throughout the school. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of festivals of other religions, such as the Hindu festival of Lohri and they know Hindus worship Krishna.
80. There are very good links with literacy and other subjects such as history and geography. Pupils draw a time line of Jesus' life. Religious education is well linked to current affairs for example pupils write about the current situation in Israel and the Gaza Strip. They write accounts that show good understanding of what Israel means to the Jewish people. Assemblies are well planned and contribute to pupils' growing knowledge and awareness of religion.
81. Leadership and management are very good and there is a clear plan to develop the subject. The co-ordinator is a very good role model and her very good subject knowledge contributes to the quality of provision. A portfolio of pupils' work confirms the quality of provision. Resources are good and the school is still developing them. Visits and visitors such as the local Rabbi enhance the provision. There are very good links with the community and pupils visit many local churches and a synagogue, as well as building new links with a recently opened Greek Orthodox Church.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. The school makes good use of the **design and technology** curriculum to help develop pupils' thinking and practical skills. Although few lessons were observed, the scrutiny of pupils' designs and the displays of their finished work show that by the end of Year 6, achievement is satisfactory and occasionally good. For example, pupils have designed and made good quality cushions after assessing what would make a good design and what materials would be needed. However, their skills in designing and building a shelter to carry a given weight are less secure. There is too little evidence of effective evaluation of work to show how it could be improved another time and this is a skill that the school could usefully develop further. Very good teaching in Year 3 led to pupils being very enthusiastically involved in making monsters with moving parts using a pneumatic system. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to use different mechanisms such as rotating and sliding. There are some good cross curricular links made, such as when pupils in Year 2 make models with moving limbs to illustrate healthy ways to exercise. They also use a winding mechanism to create effective models illustrating a Nursery rhyme. Year 2 children also took part in a very good 'construction' day and made model rooms for a large house as part of a project involving the construction industry. In a very good project in Year 4, pupils have designed and built model chairs and they are designing repeating patterns for upholstery.

83. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning in **art and design** indicates that the school provides pupils with a wide range of experiences to develop their skills, techniques and knowledge and understanding of art and design. Work displayed around the school effectively demonstrates this. Visits, artefacts and natural materials are used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in art and to provide a focus for their work.
84. During the inspection, there was little opportunity to observe **music** being taught. Consequently there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards. Singing was heard as part of assemblies. It was tuneful, pleasant, with clear words and children joined in with enthusiasm and interest, obviously enjoying the experience. The subject is well led by two knowledgeable enthusiastic teachers who provide good guidance and support for the staff. A new published scheme has recently been introduced throughout the school but it is too soon to judge the impact on standards. The good range of extra-curricular activities include a number of recorder groups for beginners and more advanced players, a choir, and guitar and violin lessons. Teachers have a range of personal expertise in playing different instruments and provide pupils with good role models in special assemblies, such as that for St Patrick's Day when up to five staff played an Irish song. Visiting musicians, a brass band, a string quartet, an African drummer and an Egyptian workshop extend pupils' musical knowledge. Pupils have opportunities to sing in the local music festival, play their instruments in assembly, and perform for the parents at Christmas and in class assemblies. All these experiences enhance the pupils' appreciation and understanding of music.

Physical education

85. **Physical education** was not a focus of the inspection. Three lessons were seen together with two shorter observations; the evidence relates to Year 6, Year 3 and Year 2. The school now provides swimming lessons for pupils in Year 3 and 5 but no records were available to evaluate standards achieved. The limited evidence is insufficient to make a judgement about overall standards or provision. In the lessons seen in Year 6, standards were below average. In the shorter observations in Year 2, games skills were well below average and basic skills were still at an early stage of acquisition. A significant number of pupils were unable to catch a ball confidently and lacked the ability to throw a ball accurately. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 6, the teaching was good but standards were below average and pupils were not achieving as well as pupils with similar potential in other schools. Nevertheless, the pupils worked hard and responded to their teacher enthusiastically. In a Year 3 dance lesson, pupils enjoyed responding to the music but their ability to use space was not well developed. Provision for extra-curricular sport is developing but could be better. Twelve pupils recently took part in a tag rugby tournament with other schools. The school provides skipping ropes and balls for break times and this is helping pupils develop their games skills in an informal play situation. The coordinator has produced a thorough subject evaluation that identifies areas for development. The school has, rightly, identified physical education as an area to develop and plans are in place to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' experience of physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and the ethos of the school contribute strongly to this area of learning.
- There are very good links with other subject areas such as literacy and religious education.

Commentary

86. The school places a strong emphasis on this area of its work and consequently the provision is good. There are close links to the strengths emerging from the school's excellent inclusion of the pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, previous experiences and abilities. The subject is well led and there is a clear scheme of work. Good use is made of outside agencies and very good assemblies promote awareness of others. Two lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching and learning in both lessons was good. From the evidence available standards are in line with those expected from pupils at the age of eleven. Pupils achieve well in their understanding of their rights and responsibilities and duties as citizens. There are clear responsibilities for the playground and pupils learn how to respond to bullying. Pupils develop an awareness of their community and the need to care for it through awards such as the tidy class award. The school council makes a very good contribution and provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence and learn about the etiquette of meetings and growing awareness of taking responsibility. There are very good links with other subjects such as religious education and literacy. A significant strength is pupils' ability to empathise with the feelings of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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