

INSPECTION REPORT

MONTGOMERY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Colchester, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114751

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Rudland

Lead inspector: Mr Geof Timms

Dates of inspection: 1-4 March 2004

Inspection number: 256943

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	160
School address:	Baronswood Way Colchester Essex CO2 9 QG
Telephone number:	01206 570231
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Lt Col P Andrews
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Montgomery Infant and Nursery School is located within the married quarters of the Colchester garrison. It serves pupils whose parents work for the Armed Services but also takes children whose families are renting accommodation from housing associations within the perimeter of the estate and those who apply from outside the catchment area. Few children take free school meals. Attainment on entry is broadly average but some pupils have underdeveloped language skills. Pupil numbers have grown since the last inspection; there are 160 pupils on roll including 48 part time in the nursery. There are slightly more girls than boys. At the time of the inspection almost all the pupils were of white British origin, with a small percentage from other backgrounds. There is a small percentage for whom English is their second language and these are from Fijian, African or French backgrounds. The incidence of identified special educational needs is average, with no pupil having a statement. The most common identified learning difficulty is delay in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. A few pupils have specific barriers to learning, such as communication difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural problems. Well above average numbers of pupils leave or join the school at times other than at the beginning of the year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr. G. Timms	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Physical education English as an additional language
9132	Mrs. J. Godfrey	Lay inspector	
11419	Mrs. P. J Underwood	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Art and design History Music Religious 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	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	18
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	21
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Montgomery Infant and Nursery School is a **very effective school**, with high expectations of its children. Value for money is very good. Standards are above average in most subjects inspected. The school has a very good ethos reflected in the children's very good behaviour and attitudes. Teaching is very good leading to very good learning and achievement. Children enjoy an appropriate curriculum very well enriched by visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. There are effective links with parents whose views about the school are very positive, as are the children's. Links with the community, other schools and colleges are very good. Leadership is excellent, being well supported by effective management and administration. The contribution of the governing body is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and often well above the average when compared to similar schools.
- Members of staff give very good support to each pupil, especially those identified with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development resulting in very good behaviour and very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching and learning.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, very well supported by key staff, has resulted in raised standards.

Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The school has responded very well to the key issues of that inspection. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science because teaching is now very good, planning is more rigorous and assessment is used more effectively to ensure tasks are very well matched to the needs of all pupils. Provision for information and communication technology has been enhanced by the opening of the computer suite, the increase in staff knowledge, the development of a more effective curriculum and the guidance of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. Management issues have been very effectively addressed as subject leaders have clearly defined roles and the headteacher has time to evaluate what is happening in the classroom.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	B	C	B	C
Writing	A	B	B	B
Mathematics	A*	B	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is typical for their age, but communication skills are less well developed. By the end of the Reception year most children are on course to meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning, sometimes exceeding them. Standards by the end of Year 2 are often above or well above average, with a good number of pupils achieving above the level expected. Due to the very high mobility it is difficult for the school to set accurate and meaningful targets for the end of Year 2. Pupils achieve very well. Standards are above average in art and design, design and technology, music and satisfactory in geography, information and communication technology and physical education. Religious education meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve very well.

The school makes very good provision for the personal development of pupils. This results in very good behaviour and very positive attitudes towards school. Very good opportunities are provided for the pupils to grow in self-knowledge, work co-operatively with others and begin to appreciate all cultures as well as their own. Attendance is very good. Pupils arrive in good time to start school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good. The provision made for children identified with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is very good. They are very well supported by teaching assistants. Consequently, all pupils learn very well. The teachers plan lessons that capture their interest and provide activities to match their needs. Many activities give pupils practical first hand learning experiences. However teachers' expectations of presentation are insufficiently high.

The curriculum is good and very well enriched by a wide variety of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. All statutory requirements are met. The school is able to provide very good care, guidance and support, particularly in times of stress because it knows its pupils very well. Partnership with parents is good and the school does a great deal to encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's learning. Taken together all these features have a positive impact on their children's education. Links with the community, especially the local schools, are very good and have a significant impact on learning and the overall provision, through a range of courses for staff and activities for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's excellent leadership is particularly effective in helping to raise standards and in creating a welcoming haven for all children. Other members of staff make a very valuable contribution to the running of the school and implementing improvements. The role of subject co-ordinator is now very well defined and all provide very effective support and guidance for their colleagues through the monitoring of teaching and learning. The governors play a good role in the work and life of the school, helping to shape its development, challenging staff and gaining a good overview of the developments. Because the school is very well managed, it runs smoothly, ensuring a very good climate for teaching, learning and achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very positive and they feel the school is very responsive and understanding of their needs. Parents appreciated the concern given to individual children's needs particularly when members of their family are away on duty. Pupils also have very positive opinions about their school and are happy and well motivated.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise expectations of the neatness of pupils' work in all areas of the curriculum.
- Plan for the more systematic use of information and communication technology in literacy and numeracy lessons.
- Implement the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

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 school overall. Children in the Foundation Stage are also achieving very well. They make good progress and achieve standards that are on course to match or exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Where there is sufficient evidence to make judgements, standards are satisfactory in geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education and above average in design and technology, music, art and design.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to very good start and achieve very well.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Recent improvements in information and communication technology have been very good: standards are now satisfactory.
- Very good provision for pupils identified with special educational needs ensures they make very good progress and achieve very well.

Commentary

1. When children are admitted to the Nursery, their early achievement varies but overall it is in line with that expected of children of similar age. A few children have underdeveloped language skills and find speaking difficult. Because of very good provision for speaking and listening, these skills develop well and children are encouraged to become articulate, confident speakers. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well because they are very well taught through a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities. Consequently, the majority of children will achieve the expected levels in all areas and exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and gross motors skills (running, jumping, body control for example). They grow in maturity, creating good and trusting relationships with each other and adults.

The most recent National Curriculum test results are tabulated below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.8 (14.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The school's standards in National Curriculum tests have improved considerably since the previous inspection when standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics, and science) were below average. This is despite the very high percentage of mobility amongst the pupils. Since the previous inspection the test results at the end of Year 2 show an upward trend that is better than results nationally. Overall, both boys and girls have outperformed boys and girls nationally. In 2003 girls outperformed boys in both reading and writing whereas boys outperformed girls in mathematics. This is very similar to the pattern nationally. Compared to similar schools, the results for seven year olds were average for reading, above average for writing and well above average for mathematics.

3. Part of pupils' successful achievement can be attributed to the arrangements the school makes to support pupils who find learning difficult or have the potential for higher achievement. Very good support keeps pupils involved in their learning and well focused on the tasks set. Because of this very good support most pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. In addition, pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with English as an additional language achieve very well and make very good progress because of the very good support provided. When specialist help is required this also supports the pupils' very good learning.

4. Pupils across the school achieve very well. They acquire efficient skills in English and mathematics and use these skills well to reflect their understanding in a range of subjects. In most classes, speaking and listening give a strong impetus to their learning. Pupils read above the expected standard, showing an enjoyment and enthusiasm for books. However, opportunities for research in other subjects are limited. This is an area for further development that has already been highlighted by the school. Although presentation of some work is untidy, writing skills are used effectively across a range of subjects. Standards in science are above average, because of the emphasis given to practical investigation and very good teaching. Design and technology standards are now above expectations with pupils designing as well as they are making. This has improved since the last inspection because of broader curriculum coverage and improved use of assessment. Standards in physical education are satisfactory but above expectations for dance, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Standards in art and design have also improved and are now above expectations due to the impact of a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader. A range of carefully executed work is attractively displayed around the school. Music remains above expectations, as pupils in Year 2 successfully sustain a simple song in two part harmony, adding an accompaniment which is effectively recorded on a graphic score. Standards in religious education are in line with those found in the locally agreed syllabus. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in history.

5. Since the previous inspection the school has made a great deal of improvement in information and communication technology, in resources, in the confidence of staff and learning support assistants and in the curriculum provided. The subject is being very well led to create a vibrant atmosphere for teaching and learning. As yet standards in information and communication technology are only satisfactory because there has been insufficient time to develop the subject as the computer suite has only very recently been finished. However, pupils' skills are improving rapidly.

Subject	Years 1 and 2 Standards
English	Above average
Mathematics	Above average
Science	Above average
ICT	Satisfactory
RE	Satisfactory
Art and design	Above average
DT	Above average
Geography	Satisfactory
History	No judgement
Music	Above average
PE	Satisfactory

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Levels of attendance are very good because there are very good procedures to promote punctuality and regular attendance. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, overall. Their relationships with staff and with each other are very positive. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The result is that pupils have positive attitudes towards each other and increasingly mature self-esteem.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good, having improved greatly since the previous inspection. Punctuality is good.
- The pupils have good very attitudes towards school and learning.
- The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- The pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their personal and social skills, to become independent and to take responsibility.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

Commentary

6. Attendance is very good and has improved greatly since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn and arrive in good time for the start of the day. The youngest children are settled and leave their parents and carers happily. Parents are aware of the importance the school places on good attendance and do their best to support this. They avoid taking holidays during term time. The school's very good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality, including telephone calls on the first day of absence, encourage good attendance. There is very little unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.1
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.

7. Pupils behave very well around the school and in lessons. The members of staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this is reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. Relationships are often excellent, as are the opportunities provided for pupils to take responsibility and become independent. This is often evident in lessons where pupils have very good opportunities for investigative work.
8. Pupils are very interested in the work and enthusiastic about the tasks planned and provided for them. In particular, they enjoy challenges set by the staff to encourage all pupils to take a full part in lessons. Pupils are very happy at school and willingly take part in the range of activities provided for them. This begins with the youngest children and continues through Years 1 and 2. In particular, a good number take part in school clubs, which they do enthusiastically and with real enjoyment. They are proud of their work and happy to share it and talk about it with adults.
9. The school is very successful in providing a range of responsibilities for pupils. As well as monitor roles within classrooms, older pupils are able to take part in various initiatives. For example, they can be playground 'buddies' helping younger children and providing a friend for those in need. The school council meets regularly and the pupils see themselves as having an

important role in helping prioritise improvements to the school. The reception children are well on course to achieve the expected early learning goals for their personal, social and emotional development.

10. Personal, social and health lessons and assemblies are used to promote self-esteem through discussion about children's positive qualities. These focus very strongly on promoting and reinforcing positive messages about behaviour and school routines. The system of rewards, including ribbons and certificates, works very well and is very effective in creating a positive ethos in the school.
11. Relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally good and pupils are very happy with the support and care they receive. All pupils, whether boys or girls, or from different ethnic backgrounds, are fully included in all aspects of school life. Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy school and want to do well. This is because relationships are very good and adults win the pupils' trust. They are quick to notice when pupils are frustrated and provide appropriate help. Other pupils are supportive and encouraging to their friends. For example, in a physical education lesson one girl helped her friend balance without any prompting by the teacher. They follow the good example of adults, and this helps to raise the pupils' self esteem.
12. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is an important strength of the school. Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of different religious beliefs and values through assemblies and religious education. These, along with circle time, provide pupils with time to think and share their thoughts. Pupils' moral development is very effectively promoted through the curriculum and reward system which significantly aids pupils' progress and helps to create a happy environment conducive to learning. Pupils' social development is promoted very effectively through the range of responsibilities they are given in and around the school. Different cultural traditions are explored through studying different places in geography, listening to stories and participating in activities to celebrate special festivals such as the Chinese New Year. Much use is made of the cultural and language diversity within the school and community to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. It is very well supported by very good teaching and learning, very good provision for pupils' personal development, including a good programme of study in personal, social, health and citizenship. The school takes very good care of its pupils ensuring a very good climate for learning. The progress of pupils is tracked carefully so tasks can be matched to the needs of individual pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of the teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teaching and learning are very good in all subjects where judgements could be made, except in physical education where they are satisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and this encourages very good learning habits.
- The school has very good quality teaching assistants and they are very effectively deployed.
- The planning is effective and the teachers have very high expectations.
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are not always high enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (10%)	19 (63%)	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	0	0	0

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

13. Overall, the teaching and learning are very good. None of the teaching is less than satisfactory and the proportion that is very good or better is well above that normally found nationally. The teachers have a range of experience and expertise but they work closely together, supporting each other and this ensures that very good practice is evident throughout the school. In the nursery and reception classes, the teachers plan a very effective and exciting curriculum.
14. The school has developed very good relationships between teachers and pupils. This is particularly important due to the background of many of the children and the high level of mobility in the school. Teachers see a big part of their role as helping the children settle into new surroundings and to creating a very positive learning environment in which the pupils can develop and grow personally and academically. Parents particularly praised the way the staff supported pupils during the recent war in Iraq when many of their fathers were serving there. The very positive learning ethos helps create an environment in which pupils are not frightened to be wrong and are able to learn from their mistakes, as well as one where they are praised very effectively.
15. The school has a set of very good quality teaching assistants and they play a full part in ensuring that pupils are able to learn. The teachers have a very clear format for sharing planning with their assistants. During lessons, this planning is used appropriately and at the end of lessons the teaching assistants report to teachers how well their work has gone and the progress made by individuals. In addition, they observe pupils in whole class teaching sessions and make notes to enable teachers to have a clear picture of the learning of all pupils in their class. The teaching assistants also have very good relationships with the pupils who enjoy working with them. When they are used for particular purposes, such as when they work with a small group under the Talking Partners scheme, they have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and their emotional and personal well-being.
16. The best teaching is characterised by excellent planning, use of resources and an approach to learning that is practical. The pupils' behaviour is very good and those who find it difficult to conform in lessons are firmly but sympathetically dealt with to ensure all make sufficient progress. Resources are very well prepared and often made or adapted by teachers for the purpose of the lesson. For example, in Year 2 a very good range of resources was gathered and provided for an excellent science lessons on materials. Where the teaching was weaker, it was due to teachers being less assertive with some of the pupils, and lacking expertise in physical education. In a range of subjects, teachers accept work that is poorly presented and untidy. In a few lessons the teaching objectives were not sharp enough and were not shared with the pupils to ensure they understood fully what was expected of them.
17. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is very good and the school provides a very positive and supportive environment for them. Outside support is sought as needed and the teachers make pupils welcome through displays of vocabulary in their home language or by celebrating customs and festivals in a range of countries. Similarly, pupils identified as having special educational needs are equally well taught and provided with tasks very well matched to their needs and closely related to their individual education plans. The individual education plans are regularly reviewed and new targets set. These pupils benefit from the very good support provided by the teaching assistants, who ensure they can access work and have the confidence to succeed.

18. The teachers have very effective assessment systems that give a good picture of pupils' progress in the core subjects. The school analyses test results and termly predictions of progress to assess how well pupils are doing, and whether they are making the progress they should. This is particularly important due to the high mobility and the number of pupils who leave and join the school at times other than the usual. Records are clear and teachers share the information with parents on a regular basis. The marking of pupils' work is very good and teachers make it clear to them what they can do to improve.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. The school provides its pupils with a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum, successfully meeting the needs of all the pupils. The curriculum is very well enriched.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is closely linked to the nationally agreed areas of learning.
- Many visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities effectively enrich the pupils' experiences.
- Provision for pupils identified with special educational needs is very good and very effective support ensures access to the curriculum
- The accommodation is very good and provides a welcoming, stimulating environment.

Commentary

19. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good curriculum, providing them with a very good range of learning experiences in all areas of learning. The curriculum allows pupils to achieve very well. The tasks set are interesting and there is a strong emphasis in many subjects on learning through practical activities. This motivates the pupils and makes them more willing and eager to learn. All relevant statutory requirements are met including the provision of religious education, in line with the locally agreed syllabus, and collective worship. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been very effectively implemented. Teachers plan a broad programme for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education. The latter two topics are mainly covered through answering pupils' questions as they arise rather than through direct teaching.
20. All pupils have access to the curriculum and this is a very good feature of the school. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are very well supported so they can work alongside their peers and take advantage of the curriculum offered. The targets set for them are clear and they receive very good support. These targets are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure they are still appropriate to the pupil's needs. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need. When necessary the curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils' individual education plans. The school moves quickly to take effective action when there is a need. Additional support is given to pupils for literacy and numeracy. A recently organised special art therapy club provides extra support for pupils with behaviour or emotional problems. It has been running for insufficient time to judge its overall effectiveness in helping these pupils.
21. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well. Guided reading and writing sessions are very successful in promoting essential skills, which are now regularly used in other subjects. The development of pupils' information and communication technology skills is now good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, largely due to the building of the computer suite and the impact on learning of a knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader.
22. The school puts a special emphasis on its policy to develop personal, social and health education. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to share experiences and discuss relevant issues, through activities such as circle time when children sit in a circle and

share their thoughts. The implementation of this has had a significant impact on behaviour, relationships and attitudes towards each other, and enhances the quality of learning.

23. Teachers provide a rich and varied programme of learning opportunities for all pupils, including a wide range of extra-curricular activities rarely seen in an infant school. These include art, computer and library clubs, choir, hand bell ringing and others. During term time pupils visit the museum, art gallery and use the local environment to give them first hand knowledge of geographical information. Visitors include local clergy, police, theatre groups and a man with snakes. People from different cultures also talk about their special celebrations: Chinese New Year, Divali or the Jewish Sabbath. All these experiences effectively enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding.
24. The school is staffed by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of teachers and support staff. They are very effectively deployed to teach the curriculum and to support pupils' learning. Teachers plan together in year groups often sharing their expertise in physical education, music or religious education. This ensures similar continuity and progression in the parallel classes. The accommodation is very good and has been improved considerably since the last inspection, with the development a new computer suite and library. Any deficits in resources identified in the last report have been fully addressed.

Care, guidance and support

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of pupils' welfare health and safety.
- Teachers know pupils very well and provide excellent support for pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- Induction¹ arrangements for all new children and pupils, at whatever stage they arrive in school, are very good.
- Pupils' views are valued. The school council is an excellent initiative and very effective in involving pupils in the school's work.

Commentary

25. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues, pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. Pupils' safety in lessons and at break times is paramount. Sensible risk assessments are made for school activities and visits out of school. Pupils are very well supervised and most members of staff have received first aid training. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and sensible. The school is very well maintained and regularly checked for safety. Internet provision is safe and secure. Child protection arrangements are good. The school was awarded a healthy schools intermediate award last October, but many pupils choose crisps to snack on at break time and much of their vegetables are discarded at lunch time.
26. This is a very caring and supportive school. Members of staff know pupils very well and give very good support, advice and guidance based on thorough monitoring of pupils' academic and personal achievements. Induction arrangements are very good and children settle very well at whatever age they join the school. Pupils are very keen to act as buddies to new entrants. Individual development from starting school through to leaving is tracked very well. Pupils with specific educational needs receive very good support, aided by very good relations with appropriate outside support agencies. Similarly, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds

¹ Induction refers to the arrangements made by the school to receive new pupils.

are very well supported and cared for. Their cultural differences are celebrated. Pupils feel very happy and secure in school and know there is always an adult they can ask for help. All pupils have personal targets that are regularly revised so they are constantly aware of how they can improve. Older pupils are beginning to be involved in setting their own academic targets. Preparation for transfer to the junior school is satisfactory.

27. The school greatly values pupils' views. This is an important strength of the school. Pupils are very positive about the school and know they will be listened to seriously. Members of the school council meet regularly and take their duties as 'The Voice of the Children' very seriously. They consult other pupils, make copious notes and contribute significantly to the very good relationships and smooth running of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good partnerships with parents, and very good links with the community and other schools and this has a major impact on pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views on the school's work.
- Parents particularly like the school's approachability and value the support they receive.
- The school provides very good advice to help parents develop their children's learning.
- Very good links with the community enhance learning and personal development.
- Very good links with a consortium of schools aid the school's development.

Commentary

28. The school has good links with parents who appreciate all aspects of the school. They find the school very approachable and value the support they receive for their children's academic and personal development. They say their children like school, are taught well and make good progress. They feel the school is well led and managed. Parents like the way their children settle well in school at whatever age they arrive. They particularly appreciate the support that families have received during many fathers' absence in Iraq.
29. The school provides satisfactory information to parents in the prospectus and governing body annual report, although there are some minor statutory omissions from each of these that have been brought to the attention of the school. The school makes very good efforts to involve parents in their children's education by informing them of topics to be studied, providing leaflets and running workshops for parents so they know how to help their children learn at home. Reading diaries are a useful means of communication. Pupils are encouraged to work at home in order to raise achievement and all pupils regularly take books home to read. A few parents help occasionally in classes.
30. Parents are consulted on a range of issues and their permission is sought for pupils to use the Internet. Annual reports are satisfactory. They are computer generated and give good information on what pupils have studied, but insufficient indication of progress. Parental attendance at termly consultation meetings is excellent and parents are involved in setting their children's targets. Parents enjoy assemblies and concerts, but the school finds it difficult to recruit parent governors and regular helpers to the Friends of Montgomery because of the high mobility of parents. The Friends of Montgomery is led and driven by the headteacher with good parental support for its activities. It makes a significant contribution to the financial and social life of the school.
31. The school has very good links with other schools. Regular meetings and shared training within the consortium of schools enhance curriculum development, support for pupils with special educational needs and the management of the school. The school has very good links with the Green Shoots mother and toddler group which uses the school hall every week and

this has helped parents of pre-school children to develop and understanding of the purpose of play. The school has a good relationship with the junior school next door and transfer arrangements are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 help out in the library every week and the school hosts secondary school work experience students as well as trainee teachers. Links with other schools make very positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

32. The school's good links with the community enrich the curriculum and enhance social development. Pupils do local traffic surveys in geography and visit Colchester zoo, a nature reserve and museums to widen their experiences. A good range of visitors, such as the local clergy, representatives of ethnic communities, football coaches and community police, promote learning and personal development well. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is raised through charitable fund raising, for example for a local hospice, the NSPCC and Cancer Research.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent** and has a forceful impact on the ethos of the school. The leadership of the senior staff is **very good**. The school is very well managed and the governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and she is committed to continually raising standards.
- The governors are very supportive of the school and have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The school is very well managed and the budget has been very efficiently used to improve the accommodation and resources since the last inspection.
- The senior members of staff provide very good leadership and subject leaders perform their role very effectively.

Commentary

33. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has led the school with an excellent focus on raising standards as well as improving the pastoral work necessary due to the very high mobility of pupils. This has resulted in the much improved standards now evident in test results and the better preparation of the pupils for the next stage in their education. The school has a very caring ethos that parents, especially those with problems, find extremely supportive and reassuring. Members of staff have created a very inclusive² school where the needs of all of the pupils are very well met. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the pupils in her charge and she has communicated this very effectively to the senior management team and to other staff. The school benefits from the exceptional teamwork and this enables staff to support each other when necessary.
34. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. There is an excellent clarity of vision and knowledge of the needs of these children and a lot of thought and effort has been put into planning an appropriate curriculum and improving the accommodation and resources to their present very good level. The nursery and reception teachers work well together, and with the support staff form a very effective team that can cater extremely effectively for the needs of the youngest children.
35. The role of the subject leaders has been greatly improved since the last inspection. The key members of staff have been given more responsibility, after appropriate training, and more is

² Inclusion refers to the arrangements used by the school to meet the needs of pupils of different gender, background, or ability, including pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented.

expected of them through the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Colleagues support each other, look at each other's planning and observe lessons, providing professional advice and criticism where needed. Subject leaders act effectively as consultants, offering advice on methods and on resources as needed. For example, this has been a real strength in the development of information and communication technology to its present level and the subject leader has been actively involved in the development of the new computer suite, the resourcing and the training teachers have undergone. This has clearly had a positive impact on the quality of the teaching as it is much better than it was at the last inspection. Teachers also share the results of their professional development with colleagues so the school gets maximum benefit from training attended.

36. The school's self evaluation is very good. Performance data is monitored closely and the progress of individual pupils is tracked with care. This is particularly important given the exceptional mobility of the majority of the pupils due to their service backgrounds. The system for performance management is very effective and the teachers have a shared pupil progress objective leading to a focus on continual improvement. The school improvement plan is a practical document that has a very positive impact on the work of the school. It is regularly monitored and progress assessed towards achieving the targets set. It provides a very good focus for the work of the school.
37. The governing body carry out their responsibilities well and all important statutory requirements are met. They have an appropriate structure for the size of the school and a number of the governors spend significant amounts of time in school. This enables them to talk about the work of the school with knowledge and understanding. Teachers are invited to the governing body to present new policies or schemes of work. Governors are linked to many of the subjects and most meet with co-ordinators to discuss their work. The headteacher formally reports to the governors termly, but communication between the headteacher and the chair, as well as many other governors, is much more regular.
38. The school's budget is very well managed by the bursar and finance committee. Regular monitoring takes place so that all governors and senior staff are aware of the school's financial health. Money is used very efficiently and the principles of best value are applied to all purchases. The money available for spending of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effectively used. In particular, the staffing support offered for them gives very good value for money. Spending decisions are always taken with a clear view of the potential benefits for raising standards.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	519,972
Total expenditure	543,286
Expenditure per pupil	2,814

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	100,908
Balance carried forward to the next	77,594

39. The proportion of the budget carried forward each year is appropriately allocated to retain current staffing levels and to cover the needs brought about by the exceptionally high pupil mobility. The previous years' high balance was money earmarked for building and resource improvements.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. This has improved since the last inspection

Foundation Stage	
Standards overall	Most children on target to achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning
Achievement overall	Very good
The quality of teaching	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage classrooms provide a welcoming and stimulating environment where children feel happy and secure.
- By the end of the Reception year most children are on course to achieve expected levels in all areas of learning, with some exceeding those expectations in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and gross motors skills.
- The very good teaching and teamwork has a very positive effect on children's learning.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The coordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable.
- The provision and planning for the use of the outdoor areas are very good.

Commentary

40. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is a major strength of the school and has improved greatly since the last inspection. Children are admitted into the nursery in the term after their third birthday and then into the Reception in the September or January before their fifth birthday. Owing to the high mobility of children they are often admitted at other times, if space is available.
41. The nursery and Reception classes contain interesting displays of children's work and a range of activities, providing the children with a stimulating environment. Each has access to a secure outdoor area that is used very effectively as an extension of the classroom.
42. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average but some children's language is underdeveloped. Attainment tends to vary with each cohort. Most Reception children are on course to achieve the expected levels in all areas of learning and exceeding the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development and in gross motors skills (body control and spatial awareness).
43. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children mean they are provided with a very wide variety of experiences in all areas of learning. This ensures they make very good progress towards achieving the early learning goals for children at the end of the Reception class. Planning is closely linked to these goals and is initially a shared activity between all Foundation Stage staff, with weekly planning being completed by staff in each year group. Questioning is used very effectively to encourage children to develop their speaking skills and extend their vocabulary. Very good relationships give children confidence to respond to adults' questioning and to share their thoughts and

opinions. The very good support provided by the teacher assistants for all children, not just those identified with special needs, has a positive effect on their learning and ensures they understand the tasks and concentrate well. Regular assessments are carried out and staff have devised a quick, easy and comprehensive method of recording day to day successes or difficulties.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in this area of learning is **very good**. This is reflected in the way children are learning to respect each other and play together.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development.
- Very good relationships ensure children feel happy and secure.

Commentary

44. Because of very good teaching and the many opportunities provided to develop personal and social skills, many children are on course to exceed the expected levels. Most children find it easy to conform to the high expectations of good behaviour set by the staff. Children know the routines well and settle to tasks quickly and quietly and with the minimum of fuss. Most are well focused and interested and, even when not directly supervised, sustain their concentration. A calm working atmosphere pervades each session. The very good teamwork of all adults provides the children with good role models of co-operation, which they try to emulate in their role play and shared activities. Children can be seen sharing construction toys or helping each other on the computer. All adults expect the children to listen carefully and to respect the opinions of others. The majority of children understand this and wait patiently for their turn. Because of very good relationships children are confident to ask for help, feel happy and secure.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and provides children with a wide range of experiences to develop reading and writing skills, helping to ensure children achieve very well.
- Every opportunity is used to extend vocabulary and develop language skills.

Commentary

45. Early indications suggest that most children are on course to achieve the expected levels. They are making very good progress in developing their language skills as a result of all the opportunities provided for speaking and listening. Many children are articulate and confident speakers replying to questions in complex sentences. All staff use every opportunity during activities, particularly directed activities, to develop vocabulary through probing questions and insisting correct terminology is used. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. Books are handled with care and pages turned carefully. The higher attaining children read accurately at an appropriate level and are beginning to develop strategies for working out unfamiliar words. Lower attaining readers answer questions about their books using picture clues and are beginning to recognise a few familiar words. All children recognise their names. Children are given a variety of activities to explore writing, developing their skill through mark making and then beginning to make recognisable letters. In more formal lessons children practise letter formation or write over adults' writing. The higher attaining children try hard to write for themselves and show elements of early writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good so children make very 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 is offered to support learning in this area so children become confident in understanding numbers.

Commentary

46. Because of very good teaching, the majority of children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year: a small number will exceed these levels. Adults use every opportunity to develop children's counting skills, even during self chosen activities. All children are confident counting to 10, with two thirds confident to 20. They can recognise missing numbers in the number line and explaining why. In one session higher attaining children demonstrated their knowledge of number: they knew $4+5=9$ and that is 1 less than 10. Links are made between physical education and mathematics as children develop their use of positional language through work on the apparatus.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many relevant visits and visitors help to enhance the children's understanding of the world around them.
- Teaching in this area is very good and children achieve very well.

Commentary

47. Although no specific teaching was observed in this area, talking to staff, looking at the long term plans and photographs showed a wide variety of relevant experiences offered to the children to enhance their understanding about the world around them. They explore the local area and, as part of their literacy work about little Red Riding Hood, they draw maps to show her route through the forest. These are well drawn and provide a good basis for extending into map work for geography in Year 1. There are opportunities to make different foods, ranging from porridge for the three bears to ice cream boats. Because the new computer suite provides the children with regular input they are becoming very confident and the skills of many are above expectations for their age. They also enjoy using the computer in the classroom.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned lessons and very good teaching ensure children achieve very well.
- The outdoor areas are used very effectively not just for physical development but also as an extension of the classroom.

Commentary

48. The very good teaching in this area of learning ensures many children are on course to exceed the expected levels in gross motors skills of whole body control and spatial awareness but achieve the expected level for fine motor control such as in the use of pencil and scissors. Children demonstrate good spatial awareness and body control as they move round the hall during a physical education lesson. They balance, walk, climb and crawl confidently. In one lesson there were clear links made with both literacy and numeracy, as the teacher talked about Red Riding Hood's route and introduced the children to positional language. All children enjoy all forms of physical exercise: the nursery children particularly enjoy the large wheeled toys. Children are provided with many activities to develop pencil control through specifically designed worksheets or colouring. Other activities encourage them to use scissors and cut out carefully, and to use simple tools to roll out and make patterns in play dough.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

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

Commentary

49. Children are on course to achieve the expected levels in this area of learning. They experience a range of different media as they explore what each will do. Activities include paper weaving, collage, painting, use of pastels and clay. There is photographic evidence of children sewing and making puppets. No lessons specifically planned for creative development were seen during the inspection but there were always activities available. Children have great fun in their role play areas and many of the reception children play well together as they act out Little Red Riding Hood or pretend to sell flowers in the Garden Centre. They also enjoy singing action songs and rhymes.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**. Standards have risen since the last inspection.

Years 1 and 2	
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Quality of teaching	Very good
Inclusion	Very good
Leadership in subject	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.

- The leadership of the subject is very good and has had a positive impact on standards.
- The use of computers within the lessons is very limited.
- Pupils' work is often untidy, detracting from the content of the story or poem.

Commentary

50. At the last inspection standards were low and improving them formed part of a key issue for the school. In 2003 the national test results showed that standards were above average in both reading and writing, compared to all schools. However, when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds writing was above average but reading was average. This very good improvement is due to the successful implementation of the literacy strategy, very good teaching and learning across the school and very good leadership. Current standards are above average in both reading and writing so test results are on course to be similar to those of 2003. However, because of the exceptional mobility amongst these pupils these results could be very different. Also this mobility makes it difficult for the school to set targets that are meaningful. All pupils achieve very well, including those identified with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. Very good support benefits these pupils, giving them access to their tasks and enabling them to be fully involved in class activities.
51. As pupils move through the school their skills in speaking and listening improve, so that by the age of seven most pupils are confident, articulate speakers. They are willing to share their thoughts and opinions with their peers. This is because teachers provide a range of experiences where these skills can be developed. For example, pupils are encouraged to role play the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff, adding appropriate voices for the characters. In another session pupils hot seat the teacher who is "Father Bear" to learn how to ask questions that require more than a single word for an answer and to develop the use of descriptive language. Pupils enjoy these activities and are very well motivated to succeed. They listen very well and respectfully to their peers, especially when working in groups.
52. Standards achieved in reading are above average and much improved since the last inspection. Reading is now well developed and children have sufficient skills to enable them to access the activities and tasks planned in all areas of the curriculum. The higher attaining pupils read confidently and fluently but tend to lack expression. Lower attaining readers recognise the more familiar words. When an unfamiliar word is met pupils have a variety of strategies for working it out. These include sounding out the letters, breaking the word into smaller words, using picture clues or reading the sentence. Pupils enjoy sharing stories and talk enthusiastically about the books they had read. No particular genre is their favourite as both fiction and information books are enjoyed. They can explain how to use a reference book, knowing the purpose of both the contents page and the index. However, the pupils have limited opportunities to use the library for research. This is an area that could be developed.
53. Standards in writing are above average, having been below average in the last inspection. They have risen because of the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the very good teaching. Children have many opportunities to write for different purposes: instructions, diary, retelling fairy stories or writing poems. Many pupils spell accurately and use punctuation appropriately. Higher attaining pupils use descriptive vocabulary to make their writing more exciting. However, the writing is often marred by poor presentation. This is an area for further improvement.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, so pupils achieve very well. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with the pupils. Effective questioning extends pupils' understanding and knowledge or encourages them to express their thoughts and opinions. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence to respond even if they feel the answer is wrong. Teachers continually praise the pupils for their efforts and this boosts their self-esteem so they strive to achieve more. The teaching assistants provide very good support for those identified with special needs or English as an additional language, working

on the carpet alongside them or in small groups. Regular liaison and a detailed planning sheet with assessment criteria ensure the support given by the teaching assistants has a very positive effect on the pupils' learning. Very good assessment procedures ensure that work is carefully matched to the needs of all pupils. There is a lack of systematic planning for the use of information and communication technology within the context of the literacy lesson. This limits the use of information and communication technology but the school is aware of this and is investigating possible options. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of drama and role play within lessons, visits from theatre groups, an author, a librarian, celebration of world book day and opportunities to perform for parents.

55. Leadership of the subject is very good. Her role is very well defined and includes observation of lessons and careful monitoring on pupils' work. Her enthusiasm and knowledge has helped to raise standards across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. The school makes very good use of pupils' emerging literacy skills to enhance learning across the curriculum. There are very good opportunities for pupils to practise their listening and speaking skills, for example during a religious education lesson when they role play the Holi story with puppets or during very well structured science lessons as they discuss an investigation problem. The use of written recording in other curriculum areas is helping pupils to develop these skills more effectively, as they write a diary about the Great Fire of London, a biography of Guy Fawkes or describe a design and technology project.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved greatly since the last inspection.
- The quality of the teaching is very good.
- The leadership of the subject is very good and has had a positive impact on standards.
- Computers are not used sufficiently to support learning in the subject.
- The presentation of pupils' work is too often untidy and careless.

Years 1 and 2	
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Quality of teaching	Very good
Inclusion	Very good
Leadership in subject	Very good
Improvement since last inspection	Very good

Commentary

57. At the last inspection, the standards were low and improving them became a key issue for the school. In 2003 the national test results showed that standards were well above average compared to all schools and when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. When the exceptional mobility among the pupils is taken into account, this represents a tremendous improvement and is due to the very good leadership and very good teaching now evident throughout the school. All pupils achieve very well, including those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. They achieve very well because the support they are given is appropriate and enables them to be fully included in all classroom activities.

58. The very good teaching is the result of lessons being exceptionally well planned, including the work of the teaching assistants. The teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively, adapting it as necessary and providing work that is well matched to the pupils' prior attainment. A strong feature of the teaching is the use of resources to make the subject more accessible for the younger pupils. For example, in one very good Year 2 lesson, the sharing of biscuits was used to illustrate the first steps towards the concept of division, and by the end of the lesson, the sharing of 12 between different numbers was clearly understood by most pupils.
59. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and this encourages and supports their learning. Pupils are keen to answer questions and not afraid to be wrong because the teachers' response to their answers is always appropriate. In Year 1, the very good learning is supported by a range of number rhymes and songs that help pupils remember basic number facts. Pupils can count to and back from 20 in ones and twos and they have a good awareness of odd and even numbers. A lesson on ordering numbers was very well planned so that the higher attaining pupils worked with a more complex number line than the rest; this challenged their thinking well. In much of the written work the pupils do not take enough care in their recording and in the presentation of their work, and this has a negative impact on how well they can communicate their understanding and does not prepare them sufficiently for the next stage in their education.
60. The subject has been very well led since the last inspection. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has worked alongside teachers, and monitored and evaluated their work well so that they are supported as necessary. Suggestions for improvements are accepted in a professional manner. Resources are good and pupils have many opportunities to use practical apparatus or equipment to support their learning. A very effective workshop was held for parents and pupils last year to help explain to parents how the subject is taught and the methods used with their children. This was popular with parents and due to the high level of mobility of families is something that can be regularly repeated.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. A very good link to literacy was managed in Year 2 with the use of a story book text to help introduce the idea of division. Computers are not used enough in mathematics but the school is aware of this and plans to introduce more computer work into the numeracy lessons in the future. In science lessons, data handling with early bar graphs or pictograms is a common method of recording findings, but is not always planned as part of pupils' mathematical learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- The subject is well led and this has led to the improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of the teaching is very good overall, and excellent in Year 2.
- There are very good opportunities for practical investigative work.
- The presentation of pupils' work is untidy and does not reflect the good quality learning.

Commentary

62. The standards achieved by most pupils are above average. In 2003, teacher assessment put standards well above average, and the present Year 2 are on line again to achieve standards at least above average. The main strength is in the emphasis given to pupils' investigative

work and they are given very good opportunities to explore the other aspects of the subject in a very practical way. The major reason for the high standards is the very good and excellent teaching. The teachers work hard preparing and planning lessons that give all pupils very good opportunities for investigating a wide range of scientific concepts. Teaching assistants support the less able and those with English as an additional language very effectively enabling them to take a full part in the lessons.

63. The planning also ensures pupils help and support each other through paired or small group work and a lot of discussion of findings or predictions. The full curriculum is covered appropriately. Teachers mark pupils' work well, and good annotations enable teachers to record progress and achievement while pointing out what still remains to be done. Some work is provided as homework, largely on a voluntary basis. This resulted in, for example, one pupil completing a sheet on materials used in their house. However, too much of the pupils' work is untidy and carelessly recorded and this spoils the impact of the learning and makes it difficult to share their learning with others. It also does not support the preparation of good learning habits for the next stage of their education.
64. The subject is linked where possible to other subjects, topics or to visits undertaken by pupils. So, for example, music, design and technology and information and communication technology work was linked to sounds and hearing when this was the topic in science. A visit to a natural history museum was used well in work about animal habitats. In two excellent lessons in Year 2, pupils had a range of opportunities to explore and use different materials. The support staff and volunteer helpers were used very effectively to keep all pupils busy, interested and on task. Some groups explored the fibres in materials following a video that provided a very good introduction to the work. Some pupils showed wonder at the silkworm cocoon as they unravelled and opened it. Year 1 pupils were encouraged to learn about sounds by some very good questioning from the teacher. Resources were used well to give all the opportunity to explore the sounds. The work is reinforced in all classes by the very good interactive classroom displays.
65. Leadership of the subject is very good. The adoption of a new scheme, alongside planning that takes a full account of national guidance, has had a very positive impact on provision. Resources have been improved and well stored to make access easy and to ensure that the parallel classes have sufficient materials for their work. Advice from the local authority has been used in devising assessment systems and the recording of progress. Examples of work illustrating different levels are helpful to staff in grading how well pupils have learned.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.
- The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- The accommodation and resources have improved since the last inspection.
- Computers are not used sufficiently in literacy and numeracy lessons.

Commentary

66. The standard of work produced is broadly in line with that expected for the ages of the pupils. This represents a very good level of improvement since the last inspection when standards were low. This improvement has been the result of training for the teachers, improved resources and better accommodation, especially the recently opened computer suite. This offers the school a real opportunity to develop pupils' skills and learning in information and communication technology in the future through more flexible timetabling and more whole class demonstration and teaching. Teaching assistants have also received training and are

offering pupils extra support when working with the classes. Teachers now use computers more themselves for planning lessons and devising resources. The use of computers in literacy and numeracy lessons is underdeveloped and opportunities to reinforce and practise skills are missed. The timetabling and use of the new computer suite needs to be reviewed as it is underused at present. The school is aware of this.

67. Pupils use computers with confidence. They are able to open programs, click on icons to move through menus, using the mouse with growing accuracy. When they have the opportunity to use the computer, they make good progress and learn quickly, often building on their use of computers at home. The good progress is due to the good teaching of the subject. Pupils also use other information and communication technology resources. In one lesson, Year 1 pupils recorded traditional tales on tape recorders, recording and playing back with confidence. They learn about a range of uses of information and communication technology in the real world as methods of communication. Year 2 pupils used Internet resources to research information about an author who was due to visit the school shortly. Teachers provide clear demonstrations and pupils are very enthusiastic about looking through the pages and making notes from them. Pupils change fonts, colour, size and style when using a word processor.
68. Leadership is very good and the subject leader has worked very hard to develop the subject to its present level from the low point at the last inspection. Resources have been well spent to improve the hardware and software available to pupils. She has organised training and acted as consultant to teachers and support staff who need extra support or suggestions. In particular, she has a detailed and appropriate action plan for the future of the subject and is aware of the need to improve the use of computers in other subjects. An excellent guidance folder to support teachers in assessing pupils' progress and skills has been produced. A good lunchtime club has been started offering pupils the chance to practise and extend the skills they have learned in lessons. Good use is made of outside expertise to staff this.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. Links to literacy are made through the tape recording of traditional tales and through the teaching of basic word processing skills. The teachers use a range of reading materials now available on the computers and pupils are able to click on pictures and words to create meaningful sentences. In science, pupils have used a microscope connected to the computer to study materials. In art and design, the computers have been used to create pictures in the style of Kandinsky.

HUMANITIES

Insufficient inspection evidence means that it was not possible to make judgements about the provision in religious education, history or geography. However, there was sufficient evidence from work seen and discussions with teachers to show that standards in geography are in line with those expected and in religious education in line with those expected from the locally agreed syllabus. The displays and the few lessons seen imply that provision is good in all these subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of visits to stimulate pupils' interest in history and geography.
- Subject leaders have well defined monitoring roles, ensuring good coverage.

Commentary

70. During the inspection no **history** lessons were observed. There was limited evidence so it was not possible to make any judgements about standards. Wall displays showed a range of topics covered with some careful recording, both written and pictorial. Visits to museums and

exploration of the local area provide the pupils with first hand experiences to enhance their understanding of history.

71. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe a full **geography** lesson being taught. However, evidence from the planning of a survey of local traffic and the scrutiny of pupils' work, together with discussions with staff, show that standards are at least in line with those expected and this has been maintained since the last inspection. The presentation of pupils' written work is not always sufficiently neat and tidy. Good use is made of the local area with surveys of local shops and buildings, and visits to a natural history museum. Teachers make good use of first hand sources such as these as a starting point for their teaching. Year 1 pupils draw maps of the route to the shops and show a good understanding of the differences between a quiet and a busy road. Good use is made of displays to deepen pupils' understanding and geographical knowledge and skills, and cultural awareness. For example, alongside displays of postcards and information about the countries visited by families who take the school bear with them, are displays about the countries of origin and examples of the language of pupils from other ethnic minority backgrounds. Other cultural development follows the study of festivals, food and clothing from other countries such as China and India. The staff plan very effectively and ensure that cross-curricular links are appropriate and effective in supporting learning. So, for example, computers are used to present the data collected during the traffic survey in an interesting and informative way. Older pupils develop satisfactory research techniques by using texts to answer questions about houses and homes.

Religious education

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of artefacts are now available; this was a weakness highlighted in the last inspection.
- Good use is made of visitors from other cultures to explain their special celebrations.
- Attractive displays further enhance the pupils' learning about other faiths.

Commentary

72. Although there is limited written evidence it is clear from the two lessons observed and the knowledge pupils demonstrate in assembly that they are achieving in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. They are very aware of the stories of Jesus and know they can be found in the New Testament in the Bible. They appreciate Christmas and Easter are special festivals celebrated by Christians. However, they enjoy learning about celebrations in other faiths. For example Holi was discussed during the inspection. Attractive displays illustrate the Chinese New Year, Divali and a Hindu temple, whilst photographic evidence shows pupils learning about the Jewish Sabbath. All these help to enhance pupils' understanding of how other cultures celebrate their special festivals and traditions. Assemblies play a very important part in helping to develop pupils' understanding of Christianity with the focus during the inspection on stories about Jesus.
73. The quality of teaching is very good. Interesting lessons are planned that motivate the pupils and encourage them to participate. For example pupils were given the opportunity in one lesson to make puppets to retell the story of Holi, an activity enjoyed by all. In another lesson about St. David, pupils' happily made daffodils or drew pictures of the flowers.
74. The headteacher co-ordinates the subject and has ensured that artefacts and resources have been considerably improved since the last inspection. Religious education plays a vital part in the life of school especially during the times when the school population contains a large proportion of ethnic minority pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence during the inspection to make judgements about the provision in art and design, music or physical education.
76. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in **art and design**. However, there was a wealth of evidence, displays and photographs, to judge that standards are above expectations for the age of pupils. Pupils are offered a wide range of experiences using a variety of media. These include pastels, chalks, paints, textiles and clay. Pupils explore the work of well-known artists and try to emulate their style, for example Andy Goldsworthy and Kandinsky. An information and communication technology program is used effectively to produce pictures in the style of Kandinsky. Pupils have had opportunities to make a screen print, weave and design collages. The knowledgeable and very enthusiastic co-ordinator runs a very popular art club where pupils can experiment with other forms of art. Because of her dedication and teaching standards in art and design are now good, having been improved since the last inspection.
77. At the last inspection, **design and technology** was unsatisfactory and standards were below those expected for the ages of the pupils. Since then the level of improvement has been very good, especially with regard to the designing skills pupils are expected to learn. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have good opportunities to design models, list the materials they require, and after making them, evaluate their work and say how they would change what they did the next time. However, the presentation of the designs is often very untidy and difficult to follow. In Year 1, pupils make very good fabric puppets and they have learned to join the materials in different ways. They use split pins to make moving figures. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, after learning to write instructions in literacy lessons, Year 2 pupils follow the instructions and make masks. Throughout the school, the pupils have good opportunities to use a range of hard and soft materials. The teachers create very good learning objectives for the lesson that cover both subjects and make clear to the pupils what they are learning. The leadership of the subject has been very effective and the school now has a portfolio of examples of work illustrating different levels so that teachers can accurately assess pupils' progress. The subject is well resourced.
78. During the inspection, three **music** lessons were observed. All the elements of music were included such as singing, rhythm work and appraisal of a piece of music. Standards at the age of seven are above those expected for this age. The high standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in a Year 2 class successfully sustained a simple song in two part harmony. They use a selection of percussion instruments to compose an accompaniment to a "skipping song", successfully recording their ideas on a graphic score. Younger pupils demonstrate a good "feel" for the beat as they keep together, making a sound picture using chime bars. The quality of singing in assembly is good, tuneful and usually with clear words. All pupils participate, enjoying the experience. The quality of teaching in the lessons was very good. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers motivate their pupils to succeed and produce work of a good standard. Extra –curricular opportunities include a handbell ringing club and a choir that sings in the community and at the local music festival. Visiting musicians help to enhance the pupils' understanding and appreciation of music.
79. During the inspection, four **physical education** lessons were observed. These included work in gymnastics and dance. The standards have been maintained at the expected level since the last inspection in gymnastics, but have improved in dance by the end of Year 2. The pupils start Year 1 with good levels of physical development from the work they have done in the Foundation Stage, and their skills are effectively built on throughout the school so that standards are largely above those expected by the time pupils are seven. They move confidently and imaginatively in Year 2 when devising movements for descriptive words such as melt and freeze. Year 1 also move with control and confidence when marching and keeping time with music. They are able to balance on different parts of their bodies and to make rocking and rolling movements on the floor and on apparatus. Good use is made of outside

expertise when, for example, a football coach is used to teach skills to Reception, Year 1 and 2. The work of the teaching assistants enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to take a full part in lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in this area underpins much of the school endeavours to achieve in behaviour, attitudes and values held by the pupils.
- There is a carefully planned scheme that is very well supported by all adults in the school through their work and very strong relationships with the pupils.
- The benefits of sensitive discussions and role play have a positive effect on pupils' self esteem and attitudes towards others.
- Very good leadership regards the provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education as central to the school's working environment.

Commentary

80. The school regards its provision for pupils' understanding of citizenship and for their personal development as a central element in its aspirations. It is this provision which informs pupils of the school's expectations of behaviour, relationships and attitudes towards work. The provision is very good and very effective as pupils try hard to get on well with each other and their teachers, and in the lack of behavioural incidents and exclusions. The provision is well managed. It arises from the clarity of vision of the headteacher and senior managers and points the direction for much of the work of the school. Provision is made through dedicated lessons and circle time, where important issues to do with personal and social development are discussed. There is a consistent approach from all staff in the way they work and relate to each other, providing very good role models that match the school's high expectations. The programme does not specifically cater for sex or drugs education; pupils' questions are answered sensitively when they arise.
81. One lesson was observed during the inspection and the outcome fully supports the school's desire to ensure all pupils feel valued. The teacher read, with expression, a story about how a boy felt when he realised he was moving into another class with a new teacher. Time was given for pupils to discuss the boy's feelings and relate them to their own experiences. The very high mobility within the school population means similar situations face many pupils on a regular basis. This is just one illustration of how aware and sensitive the school is to the needs of its pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).