

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY**

Tolleshunt d'Arcy

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115187

Headteacher: Mrs L Spencer-Campbell

Lead inspector: Mr G Bassett

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Inspection number: 257883

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	214
School address:	Tollesbury Road Tolleshunt d'Arcy Maldon Essex
Postcode:	CM9 8UB
Telephone number:	(01621) 860 253
Fax number:	(01621) 869 679
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd P Southern
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is in the village of Tolleshunt d'Arcy, just north of Maldon, Essex. The school is in the third building on the site and moved into the present premises in 1984. There are seven classes (a Foundation class, two mixed Year 1 and 2 classes, a Year 3 class, a Year 4 class and two mixed Years 5 and 6 classes. There are more boys (117) than girls (97) in the school. Six pupils left and six joined the school over the last year. The socio-economic status of the area is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is broadly average and the number of statemented pupils is well below average. There are 11 traveller children in the school but these families are now house dwellers who travel at certain times of the year. There is no pupil in the school with English as an additional language. The attainment on entry to the school is broadly average and children are admitted in two phases. At the time of the inspection there were only seven children in the Reception class. The present headteacher was appointed five terms ago in January 2002. The school has been awarded national achievement awards in 2001 and 2002. It has an 'Investor in people' award and is also working towards the award of a 'Healthy School'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21500	Mr G Bassett	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), Foundation Stage
9942	Mrs Susanna Stevens	Lay inspector	
18524	Mrs A Shaw	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, physical education
17756	Mrs H Monaghan	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, music, special educational needs
30669	Mrs M Sandercock	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>8 - 13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16 - 27</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an improving and effective school which provides a good standard of education.** The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but good in Years 5 and 6 and in the Foundation Stage. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher and governors are working well together to raise standards.
- The good and very good teaching occurs when lessons are lively and interesting so that pupils want to work hard.
- Standards in science are below average in Year 2.
- Recording and making use of information on pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.
- Managing pupils' behaviour is very good and has improved their attitude to learning.
- Subject co-ordinators do not check and develop teaching and learning sufficiently.
- All pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and capabilities, are fully involved and supported.
- Relationships are very good between the children and all adults in the school.
- Play areas, the access to classrooms and soundproofing are unsatisfactory.

The school has improved since the previous inspection in 1998 and nearly all of the issues raised have been dealt with. Generally, standards have risen in Year 6 and are improving in Year 2. The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching overall is still satisfactory but assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are tackling shortcomings, including the role of subject co-ordinators. The school is well placed to improve further.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A	C	C
science	B	A	C	C

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

**Overall, pupils achieve well.** In the Foundation Stage, pupils have made a good start in their personal and social development but in the other areas of learning it is too soon to make firm judgements about their progress towards the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, there have been severe disruptions to the quality of teaching and learning over the last two years in these year groups. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 in recent years were well below average. There is now a stable staff and standards in these subjects have risen and are as expected. Standards in science are still below average because there have been too few opportunities for pupils to experience investigative work. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and good in Years 5 and 6. Standards for the oldest pupils in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards in other subjects are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and the few travellers make good progress.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are well provided for.** Their behaviour is good and they have a good attitude towards their learning.

Each pupil has a trusting and very good relationship with staff and this stems from the first day they enter the school. Attendance is well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory overall in the other classes.**

This has a good effect upon raising standards. There are noticeable improvements in the current provision made for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The stability established in staffing these two year groups is already having a positive impact raising standards; the quality of their learning in reading, writing and mathematics is now satisfactory. Literacy, numeracy and the use of new technologies are well taught. However, checking and recording pupils' performance in Years 1 to 4 is unsatisfactory and teachers and pupils are not sure what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning. The curriculum is now good throughout the school and fully involves all pupils. Resources are satisfactory but access to classrooms is unsatisfactory, play areas are restricted and classrooms are not sufficiently soundproofed. These shortcomings hamper pupils at work and play. The pupils are well looked after and their views listened to. Links with parents and with the community are good, enriching the pupils' learning opportunities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management overall are good.**

The headteacher has developed a clear vision for the future development of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and fulfil all their statutory duties effectively. Although the role of the subject co-ordinators has been steadily expanding, there is still need for them to check and develop teaching and learning more rigorously.

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

The parents are generally pleased with the school. A few parents felt they did not receive sufficient information about their child's progress and were dissatisfied with the range of activities outside of lessons. The inspection team found that the school does all it can to meet with parents and to share information and is planning an additional consultation evening. As well, the range and variety of additional activities for pupils were found to be good. The pupils like school but many have concerns about the school toilets.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise standards in science by the end of Year 2.
- Establish more effective ways for checking and recording pupils' progress so as to identify weaknesses and find out how to improve their learning in all subjects.
- Help and support subject co-ordinators in checking and developing teaching and learning.
- Tackle shortcomings in the accommodation and grounds so that fewer disruptions occur to pupils' learning and play.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science and in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics but below average in science. Through the Reception Year the children achieve well and by the time they leave the school the pupils have achieved well and made good progress. The pupils in Years 1 to 4 achieve satisfactorily and make satisfactory progress.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The trend in standards shows that the school's overall performance is rising.
- The pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 6 because of the consistently good teaching.
- By the time pupils leave the school, they have achieved well and made good progress.
- The standards in science in Year 2 are below average because the pupils have done little practical work.
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
- The traveller children make good progress and achieve well.

#### Commentary

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (28.6)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.6 (28.2)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.0 (29.6)	28.3 (28.3)

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

1. The results for 2003 have not yet been compared with the national average. However, it is clear that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 is once again above the national averages in English, mathematics and science. The trend shows that the school's performance has been continuously above the national average since 2001 in these three subjects. The school met its target for mathematics and exceeded the target it set for English at the end of 2003. There is no significant difference between the achievement of the boys and girls. When compared to attainment of this year group in similar schools at age seven their achievement by the end of Year 6 in 2002 was satisfactory in mathematics and science and well above average in English.

##### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.5 (15.1)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.0 (17.3)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are currently in line with the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, for the past two years, 2002 and



2003, the pupils' overall standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have been well below the national average. The proportion not reaching the expected level for their age was much too high. Consequently, the standards being achieved by pupils in Year 2 were the central focus for this inspection. Following the scrutiny of work from this period and from the current Year 2 classes, as well as discussion with the headteacher and staff, it is now clear that the school experienced a substantial disruption in maintaining regular teaching staff in one of the classes made up of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils during this period. The scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that because of the short term nature of the teachers' stay in this class, many areas of the curriculum for all three subjects were not covered with as much rigour as necessary to ensure that all the pupils reached their full potential. For example, it is evident from the pupils' work for that period that many aspects in mathematics were not covered adequately and some areas were covered too many times. Consequently, the achievement of many pupils was unsatisfactory because of the teachers' lack of skills and knowledge of the subject requirements. The school has now resolved this problem and teachers on permanent contracts have been moved into these classes. This is having a good impact on raising standards in most subjects with the exception of science where standards are below average because too few pupils have had opportunities to experiment and carry out investigations.

3. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the expected levels for children under five years of age. The children's attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage is average. Nearly all the children last year reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they left the Reception Year. It is very early in the school year to make judgements about the achievements being made by the children in the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning as they have only been in school three weeks. However, it is clear that they have made good progress in developing more mature skills in their personal, social and emotional development but not so well in their physical development because of a lack of appropriate facilities.
4. Overall the pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 4 is now satisfactory but in Years 5 and 6 it is good. The more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well whereas those in Years 1 to 4 make satisfactory progress. The pupils with special educational needs and also the traveller children achieve well and attain standards appropriate to their abilities. The pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are now average in reading, writing and mathematics but still below average in science. By the end of Year 6 the pupils' standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. At the meeting before the inspection the parents expressed their general satisfaction with their children's achievements.
5. The pupils' standards in other subjects are broadly in line with the expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There has been a good improvement in the standards reached in music and ICT throughout the school since the last inspection.

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

The pupils' attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour in and around the school are good. The attendance rate is well above the national average. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils co-operate willingly in a friendly manner.
- The relationships between the pupils and with the teachers are very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good overall.
- The pupils' moral and cultural development is very good.
- The traveller children are fully involved in school life.

## Commentary

6. The children in the Reception class enjoy coming to school and develop sharing qualities well. Even at the early stage of the school term it is apparent that these children are making good progress in the development of their social and moral skills. All the pupils show a good loyalty towards the school. The results of the pupils' questionnaire show that they enjoy coming to school. They accept responsibility and show increasingly sensible, mature behaviour as they progress through the school. Most of the pupils respond well to instructions and react well to the consistently high expectations of behaviour. The pupils work well in groups and play happily across the age groups during break times. The pupils from the travelling community are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and are valued for the cultural input they bring to the school.
7. The teachers and staff manage effectively the short attention span displayed in young pupils and the occasional over-demanding and attention-seeking behaviour of a few boys. All the pupils respond well to the school's consistent behaviour strategies of praise and of registering disappointment. The teachers quickly restore harmony and this minimises disruption to the class. The pupils are helped to become mature and socially responsible young people.
8. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The pupils' moral and cultural development is very good.

## Attendance

The pupils' attendance is very good and consistently above the national average.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8%	School data	0.2%
National data	5.4%	National data	0.5%

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

## Exclusions

There has been one boy excluded for a fixed term during the last academic year. This low rate is testament to the effectiveness of the school's very good inclusion strategies and the provision it makes for pupils who have social and behavioural difficulties.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Any other ethnic group (traveller children)

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
203	1	0
11	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. A strength throughout the school is the positive management of the pupils' behaviour. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs and

also the traveller children is good. The most significant weakness is the lack of complete records of ongoing assessments for each pupil for each subject.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but in Years 5 and 6 and in the Foundation Stage it is good. The assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 and in the Reception Year is good and sometimes very good because the lessons are lively and interesting.
- Slow pace of lessons and low expectations for pupils in Year 1 and 2 science lessons.
- Good support given for the pupils with SEN.
- The traveller children are totally integrated in all events and activities planned in each class.
- Good classroom management and discipline throughout the school.
- Assessment is not used effectively to improve the quality of the teaching and learning.
- A marking policy is not consistently applied.

### Commentary

9. During the inspection in over half of the lessons seen, the teaching was good or better. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school due to a lack of common strategies for teaching and for assessing the pupils' work.

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (13%)	14 (44%)	12 (38%)	2 (6%)	0 (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.*

10. There have been many changes of staff in classes with Years 1 and 2 over the past two years and this has resulted in a lack of continuity. The pupils' learning has been disrupted and standards achieved by these pupils during this time have been below those expected nationally. This situation no longer applies, because the headteacher and governing body have established staffing in these classes that is now stable. Consequently, the quality of teaching in these year groups is now satisfactory with most pupils making satisfactory progress.
11. The quality of teaching still varies from class to class and between subjects throughout the school. In Years 5 and 6 most of the teaching seen was good and in three lessons it was very good. The quality of teaching in the Years 1 to 4 was mostly satisfactory. There were several good lessons observed in these classes and also one very good science lesson. However, both of the lessons where the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory were also observed in these classes.
12. Where teaching is good or better, the teachers plan well making the subject interesting and relevant to the pupils in lively lessons. These teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and performance. Work set is appropriate for pupils of differing capabilities, so they all increase in confidence and make good progress. Where the teaching is the best, the creative style of teaching engages the pupils effectively as teachers share their enthusiasm and expertise for the subject. In these types of lessons the pupils are well motivated. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are divided into sets according to their capability and this enables teaching to be more closely targeted to their needs. These teachers analyse each pupil's performance well and subsequently target teaching effectively so that all the pupils are

challenged by work at levels appropriate to their ability. This brings about good achievement, which many parents identified at the meeting before the inspection. The pupils make very good progress and, by the time they leave the school, they achieve standards that are above the national average.

13. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace of the lesson was too slow and the tasks were not matched sufficiently well to the pupils' needs or prior learning. In these lessons the teachers are uncertain of what the pupils already know and what they need to learn next because there are no reliable records of ongoing assessments to which they can refer. **(This is an issue for improvement.)** The work set is then too difficult for the less able pupils and the most able are insufficiently challenged. Often the pupils were not actively involved in making decisions or thinking about the answers other pupils were making. This was more obvious in practical science lessons where the pupils were not sufficiently involved in the activities and the teacher carried out too much of the work whilst the pupils watched.
14. A positive aspect of teaching across the school is the good classroom management of the pupils' behaviour and discipline, which all teachers have worked hard to develop. The school has established a consistent approach and introduced effective strategies for behaviour management. As a result, the pupils have a good attitude towards their learning and are able to make progress and enjoy good relationships within the school.
15. All teachers use nationally recommended programmes of work. In planning their teaching most of them identify what is to be learned. This is made apparent to the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. The teachers support the pupils well during group work and give good feedback during lessons, which helps the pupils to improve. The traveller children are given good support when it is needed and consequently the quality of their learning is effective. The teachers encourage the pupils to reflect on what they have achieved during each lesson and some teachers have devised a system through which the pupils have begun to evaluate their own work indicating with a colour code whether they think they have done it well or if they found it difficult. This has not yet been developed into a system of more detailed self-analysis and the pupils often give in work without reading it through, correcting or checking it.
16. The school is aware of the differences in the quality of teaching and in teachers' subject expertise and experience. They have begun a process of observing lessons in which all teachers will be involved through discussing and sharing effective practice. The parents also recognised that the quality of teaching varies from class to class. These differences in the quality of lessons occur because of the emphasis placed upon the planning of the lessons through the half term plans and also in the way that the teachers make use of assessment records to plan what they need to teach next. Even though many teachers carry information about each pupil's progress and achievements in their heads, this is not reliable enough and consequently the recording of ongoing assessments of each pupil's attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. **(This is an issue for improvement.)** There are various procedures for assessing the pupils' work that are based on their understanding of the learning objectives. A few teachers record ongoing assessments to show what each pupil has achieved in mathematics but this is not common practice in other subjects. Consequently, in most classes the assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Reliable and comprehensive records of what each pupil has achieved during the year are not passed onto the next teacher. This means that teaching time is wasted while the new teacher establishes what each child knows, understands and can do. The use of new technology to track each pupil's end of year performance is used well in Years 5 and 6 and is gradually being extended to all classes.
17. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the teaching assistants in each classroom and consequently they make good progress. The pupils are identified early and given individual programmes of work. Class teachers, support staff and the special

needs co-ordinator check the progress of each pupil regularly. The pupils' progress is reviewed at a meeting with the pupil and his/her parents. The school has recently appointed a very experienced part-time special educational needs teacher. She has begun working with children using the Early Reading Research programme, which is already improving reading standards and she is now training teaching assistants in its use.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils of all ages, capabilities and interests. The out of lesson activities are good. The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced.
- The statutory requirements are in place for all subjects.
- The health, safety, drugs and sex education curriculum is good.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum is fully inclusive and meets the needs of the traveller children well.
- The access to some classrooms is unsatisfactory and the poor soundproofing causes many unnecessary disruptions.
- The school grounds are poorly drained, the playground is too small and there is no secure outdoor area for the reception children to use.

## **Commentary**

18. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and follows the national guidelines very well. The provision made for these children is good. The curriculum for the pupils in Years 1 to 6 meets the requirements effectively and is now good. In many classes the work is matched well to meet the differing needs of the pupils. The teachers plan well for the more able pupils in most lessons although there are lessons in science where these pupils are not challenged sufficiently well by the materials prepared for them. There have been significant improvements to the curriculum for ICT and music and this has had a good influence upon raising standards in these two subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used effectively and guidelines are used well as the basis for planning what is taught. There is a two-year cycle for topics in science, history and geography and this is effective, especially in the four mixed aged classes. ICT is now used successfully to enhance the teaching and learning in other subjects.
19. The education of the traveller children is planned well and takes good account of the need to provide work when their families are travelling. All the pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the detailed planning of the tasks and the additional group work that is introduced when appropriate. They are well supported by the teachers and the teaching assistants who help them with work that matches the stage and rate of their learning.
20. The school provides good opportunities for enriching the learning of the pupils outside the school day with opportunities to play netball, football, hockey and cricket and to participate in the district sports. Music is another area where the pupils can develop their interests and skills, as there are opportunities for the pupils to play wind instruments both individually and in the school wind band and also to sing in the choir. There are clubs for pottery, computers and French. Visits to local places of interest enrich the cultural and social education of all the pupils.
21. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The resources of the school are satisfactory. There are a sufficient number of teachers and support staff with the qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. The completion of the ICT suite and the library has

widened the curriculum opportunities of the pupils. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Even so the ICT suite is too small for the number of pupils who use it at one time and it becomes uncomfortably hot.

22. The school field is poorly drained and prevents the pupils from using it on many occasions. The playground is also too small for all the pupils to play together and it frequently floods causing the bottom end to be covered in mud causing it to be very dangerous. The children in the Foundation Stage do not have an adequate outdoor area for outside play so that their physical skills are not developed as well as they might be. The lack of doors between some classes and the lack of corridors to move around the school disturbs the teaching and learning of some of the pupils. **(This is an issue for improvement.)** The headteacher and governors are fully aware of these restrictions. They plan to change doors between the classrooms and to build an outdoor area for the reception children immediately funding is available. They are also investigating the building of a corridor to access all classrooms easily without disturbing the neighbouring class.

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

The pupils are well looked after and are given satisfactory support and advice; their views are taken into account effectively.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Child protection procedures are very effective.
- Supervision of the pupils at break times is good.
- Reception children are very well supported by very good induction programmes and motivated well by staff.
- The pupils' school council is very purposeful.

### **Commentary**

23. The care and concern shown to all the pupils by the adults working in the school is a significant strength. All members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and are vigilant about the care and welfare of the pupils. Procedures in the event of an accident are known and followed precisely. The arrangements for contacting parents are updated regularly and all families are well known to staff. The pupils receive good pastoral support and guidance in their personal development. However, it is not so good for their progress in learning. The pupils' response to the questionnaire indicates a general satisfaction with the value placed on their views and ideas by the teachers, such as in the home/school agreement and in the school council.

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

The links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parental concerns are dealt with very well.
- The school keeps the parents well informed about the day-to-day work of the school.
- The school's links with the traveller community are good.

## **Commentary**

24. Most of the parents stated in the questionnaire that the school 'is a happy place which still enjoys village values' and where pupils are well known and respected by their teachers and staff. The inspection evidence supports these views.
25. Most of them say that they are kept up-to-date with developments and are comfortable about approaching the school. The parents are given an opportunity at the beginning of the year to meet with the teachers to hear about the topics and themes their children will be covering during the year. This is good and is an open invitation for the parents to become fully involved in their child's learning. The parents are given good up-to-date reports about their child's targets and achievements at the parents' evenings.
26. The majority of parents feel the school helps their children to become mature and to manage many behaviour problems without adult intervention. The parents praise the caring attitude of school staff, including clerical staff, towards children with special educational needs and to those who are ill or distressed. This was witnessed during the inspection when a very young child arrived in floods of tears on the school bus and was given the time and support needed to overcome her upset and by break time she was 'bubbling with happiness'.
27. The Friends' Association involves all village life through fund raising and local elderly residents are regularly invited into school. Visitors from ethnic minority groups, local business links and charity support, provide good community links for the pupils. Links with the local community give the pupils the opportunity to visit the church and to meet the senior citizens at special times of the year. The pupils also exhibit their artwork in the annual village show.
28. The traveller community parents are enabled to help their children's education during their cultural travels with appropriate work set by the school in consultation with the families.
29. Some parents would like to receive more information about the progress their children are making and an additional parents' consultation evening when parents can view their children's work. The inspectors agree the desirability of an additional consultation evening and understand the school is considering this request. However, the information given to parents in newsletters and in the child's reports was found to be good. Likewise, the range of after school activities is judged to be good for a school of this size.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher and governance of the school are good. The role of the subject co-ordinator has evolved steadily since the appointment of the present headteacher but their monitoring routines are still underdeveloped. The instability within the staffing of Years 1 and 2 has now been resolved.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a clear vision for future developments.
- The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The subject co-ordinators do not check and develop teaching and learning sufficiently.
- The school has a total commitment to inclusion of all the pupils in all that it does.
- The management of the Foundation Stage and special educational needs is good.

## Commentary

30. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. She has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Since her appointment five terms ago she has built more stable staffing which has helped to secure the satisfactory quality of teaching throughout the school. Through training and performance management, the quality of teaching has been improved significantly and good and sometimes very good, teaching has developed successfully. The headteacher has rightly been concerned about the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. The school has been faced with uneven sizes of year groups in these years and this has meant that the Year 2 pupils have been split across two and sometimes three classes. With the added complication of the severe disruption to the teaching of some of these Year 2 pupils over the past two years, the standards have declined significantly. The headteacher and the governing body have resolved this problem and the staffing is now stable and standards are rising. It is planned that the pupils in the current Years 1 and 2 will be set in two ability groups for literacy and numeracy to follow the good practice established in Years 5 and 6, where standards have risen dramatically.
31. Working closely with the staff and the governors, the headteacher has produced a purposeful school development plan. This forms the main thrust for the future developments throughout the school for the subjects, the premises and staff training. The headteacher has given good advice and support to the governing body. Each governor has adopted a year group of pupils and follows their progress throughout the time they are in school. This gives each governor a good overview of the day-to-day running of the school and helps them gain a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Each committee of the governing body has formal terms of reference and has delegated powers. The relevant committee of the governing body approves all policy statements. The governing body fulfils all the statutory duties effectively.
32. The headteacher has begun to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators and each one has already accepted financial responsibility for ordering resources for their subject. Some co-ordinators have checked the quality of teaching and learning in a few classrooms and given a written feedback to the class teachers. However, not all of them have had opportunities for classroom observation and most have not completed a scrutiny of the pupils' work to assess the standards achieved throughout the school. **(This is an issue for improvement.)** The deputy headteacher is currently allocated two days a week to carry out his administrative duties but at present none of his time is used for whole school evaluation or to allow other co-ordinators to carry out their responsibilities. Consequently, although the school follows the national guidelines for all the subjects, the co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to identify the overall quality of work in their subject and to check what needs to be done next.
33. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator has put in place efficient systems for the identification and support of these pupils. He regularly analyses the provision in order to make improvements. The school is aware of the specialist help available and makes good use of support agencies outside the school including the educational psychologist, speech therapist and the social services. The special educational needs advisory service for Essex has been particularly helpful in linking the school with the support they need. The management of the Foundation Stage is good and is providing an improving quality of education.
34. The school has not devised a whole school procedure for recording ongoing assessments for each pupil in each subject and the end of year tracking system is not yet reliable, as some staff cannot access the information. **(This is an issue for improvement.)**
35. All the staff have attended training courses for the use of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning in other subjects. This has been most beneficial and is one reason the pupils' standards in ICT have improved substantially since the last inspection. The governing body



also takes part in training so that they are aware of new developments and concerns that may face the school in the future.

### Financial information

The committee responsible for setting the budget and monitoring expenditure has a clear understanding of the financial situation. It receives up to date reports each meeting and requires the headteacher to be accountable.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	517,166	Balance from previous year	59,000
Total expenditure	535,166	Balance carried forward to the next year	41,000
Expenditure per pupil	2,500		

36. The school uses good strategies to ensure that the best value principles are understood and followed efficiently and effectively. The school makes good use of the resources available and deploys the teachers and teaching assistants effectively to raise standards. This is especially so in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 where additional staff are used most efficiently. The reserves held by the school are to be used to improve the soundproofing between the classrooms and to provide a secure outdoor area for the use of the children in the Reception class. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching.
- Good recording of ongoing assessments for each child.
- Activities well planned to ensure that each child is challenged appropriately.
- Good deployment of the teaching assistant.
- All children achieve well and make good progress.
- There is no secure outdoor area in which the children can use large equipment and wheeled vehicles.

### Commentary

37. The Foundation Stage consists of one class of reception children. At present only seven of the 30 children are in school as the majority arrives in January. The attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Last year nearly all the children entered Year 1 having completed successfully the early learning goals in all the areas of learning and this matches the attainment seen at the time of the last inspection.
38. During the inspection, six lessons were observed and wall displays of the children's work were seen but, at this early stage of the school year and with such a small group of children present, it is not possible to make judgements about all the areas of learning. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. The teacher plans the lessons well and makes accurate assessments of what each child can do. The teacher has good, secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of children in this class. The long term planning for all areas of learning is consistent with the national guidelines. The classroom displays are colourful and stimulating.
39. The teaching assistant is well prepared and gives good support to all children, often working with a small group to develop their **personal, social and emotional development** and this enhances the provision, which is **good**. Most of the children take turns readily and share equipment willingly. On many occasions, the teacher and the teaching assistant were observed encouraging some of the children to take more care with each other and to wait for attention. This positive support is beginning to prove successful, as most children are involved happily in their tasks with others. As a result most are interested and keen to learn.
40. The provision for **communication, language and literacy** is **good**. The teacher and the teaching assistant keep all the children involved. The activities to develop the children's knowledge of letter sounds are well devised. All children take an active part and several confidently know the sounds of many letters. All of them enjoy 'reading' the big book, "*The enormous turnip*" and most can recognise simple words such as 'in' and 'is'. All but two children can write their own names, with some writing over the teacher's script. The activities are varied well and include tracing over letters, painting their names in bold paint strokes and using the computer to type and print out their names. Most of the children speak clearly and in complete sentences when answering questions. Their achievements since they started school are good.
41. The provision for **mathematical development** is **good**. In one session seen during the inspection the children were working with simple two-dimensional shapes. By the end of the

lesson, they had achieved well and made good progress. They could name the four shapes such as square, triangle, rectangle and circle. A few were beginning to see that there were similarities with *'straight sides and corners'*. The activities were appropriately balanced between teacher directed and child initiated. The staff intervene effectively when the children need help and use their time well to assess what each child has achieved during the lesson.

42. The provision for **knowledge and understanding of the world** is **satisfactory**. The classroom has many areas designed to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The role-play corner is currently set up as a kitchen. This environment provides a familiar setting for the children's investigations. To enlighten the children about how certain people help us, the *'house caught fire'* and firemen came to put out the fire. However there is a lack of good resources in this area and when the children were on a flight in their aircraft, the only resource for them to use was a uniform for the pilot.
43. The teacher uses good links between all areas of learning. The provision for their **creative development** is **good**. The children have achieved well since joining the school. In the music session all the pupils were fully involved playing percussion instruments. Even so, there were times when some children were quite difficult to manage because they wanted first choice and sulked if this was not so. The teacher and the teaching assistant handled these problems well and soon all the pupils were taking turns. The development of the children's fine skills when using crayons and scissors is developing well. The variety of media such as crayon and paints are used effectively to improve the children's writing skills. Their modelling of fruit was also successful as they observed and investigated different items to be displayed at the school's harvest festival service.
44. Although, the children's finer skills of writing and cutting are being developed well, the provision for their **physical development** overall is **unsatisfactory**. The teacher makes good use of the facilities available but these are restricted. The classroom area has recently been extended and as yet the resources have not been purchased to fulfil all the children's needs for developing their physical skills by using large construction apparatus. There is no secure outside area for the children to use wheeled vehicles, such as bicycles, wheelbarrows and wheeled vehicles. The teacher has drawn up plans following visits to other schools. The school has put aside some money for this development and also plans to create a door, which leads directly from the classroom to the outside play area. In the one session observed outside the children were taken to the school playground to throw and catch balls and beanbags. This was their first experience of this type of activity and many found it difficult to maintain concentration, wanting to go to the toilet or requesting a drink. The children's achievements in the development of their physical development are less noticeable than in other areas of learning because of the lack of facilities.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good** and the pupils' standards of work at the end of Year 6 are **above average**. Lessons in English were observed in all classes throughout the school and a sample of pupils' work from each year group was inspected. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator and also the headteacher regarding the development of English throughout the school. It is clear that the standards at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be average.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good and the pupils achieve well.
- The teachers' planning and assessment routines in Years 5 and 6 are good.

- The standards over the past two years have been below the national average in Year 2.
- The ongoing assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4.
- The co-ordinator does not check and develop teaching and learning sufficiently.

## Commentary

45. Since the last inspection the pupils' standards of English have risen steadily especially at the end of Year 6. The unsatisfactory standards at the end of Year 2 during the last two years reflect the staffing difficulties experienced by the school and the unsatisfactory assessment procedures that do not provide sufficient detail about what should be taught next. The improvement in behaviour now evident in the school, due to the recently implemented behaviour policy, has had a good impact particularly upon the younger pupils. Consequently, standards of work in Years 1 and 2 are now in line with the expected levels for their ages.
46. The pupils' standard of speaking and listening in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory and in Years 5 and 6 it is good. In one very good lesson, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 extended their vocabulary as they read *'The Granny Project'* by Anne Fine by discussing the meaning of words such as 'relocate', 'non-functional' and 'economic'. The pupils in Year 3 develop their listening skills as they hear and read the book *'Borka the Goose'* enjoying the humour of the story. In these lessons most of the pupils achieved well and made good progress.
47. The pupils' standards in reading by the end of Year 2 are average and by the end of Year 6 are above average. The pupils in Years 1 to 4 make satisfactory progress in reading. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils make good progress by reading texts that challenge their thinking especially of moral and cultural issues. The more able readers tend to use the public libraries, thereby developing their skills and a good habit of regular reading. The traveller children can also select books that tell stories of traveller families, if they wish. The recent addition of the school library is very welcome and it is planned to enrich the teaching of reading and also the development of the pupils' research skills by using this new facility with weekly sessions for each class.
48. The pupils' current standard in writing is in line with the expected levels for their ages in Years 1 to 4 but in Years 5 and 6 it is above average. Basic spelling knowledge is satisfactory and is developed with weekly tests in each year group. The use of computers to aid writing and presentation is satisfactory. The progress made by children with special needs is also good. The quality of handwriting and presentation in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory. The expectations of some of the teachers are not consistently high enough as some teachers do not consistently check the way in which the pupils grip their pencils and pens and this hampers the speed at which the pupils write. The pupils' standards improve in Years 5 and 6 as the teachers insist upon the pupils dating and setting out their work well and using a neat cursive style. However, a new handwriting scheme is to be introduced.
49. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the sympathetic and hard working teachers and the teaching assistants. All staff know the pupils with special educational needs well and the work assigned to them is appropriate and purposeful. The traveller children are totally integrated into the lessons and receive good support when necessary. They bring many aspects of their life into discussions and into the class displays.
50. The teaching and learning in the English lessons seen during the inspection was good in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 to 4. The teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and plan their lessons appropriately to match the capability of the pupils. The recording of ongoing assessments of pupils' achievements is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4. Consequently the next stage of their learning is not apparent. In Years 5 and 6 the ongoing assessment records are more carefully analysed and the teachers have a clear understanding of what they need to teach next. Their expectation of the pace of work is higher. The marking of the pupils' work is not consistent

across the school. The comments in the books do not always provide advice to the pupils upon how they can improve their work and presentation. However, the school has devised a marking policy, which is being introduced.

51. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Even so, the co-ordinator has no allocated time at present to check the work of pupils and teachers. The co-ordinator has introduced a whole school system involving narrative and non-narrative writing that is used to set standards for each year group. This is used as an exemplar to establish and compare the work done across the school with the national standards. This is beginning to enhance the teachers' knowledge of the subject and to provide them with a more accurate idea about the standards of work and planning the next stage of learning.

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

52. There are some good examples of the development of reading and writing skills in history. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about the Second World War and compare it to present conflicts discussing and recording their thoughts. Some pupils take books home to read about their topics. The use of information and communication technology to enhance the teaching and learning in English is satisfactory and assists pupils in the development of their writing skills.

### **MATHEMATICS**

The provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** overall. Lessons in mathematics were observed in all classes throughout the school and a sample of pupils' work from each year group was inspected. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator and also the headteacher regarding the development of mathematics throughout the school. It is clear that the standards at the end of Year 6 are **above average** and have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' achievements are good at the end of Year 6.
- The standards of the present pupils in Year 2 are broadly in line with the expected levels for this time of the year.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is good overall and in all other classes satisfactory.
- The recording of ongoing assessments is inconsistent across the school and records are unsatisfactory.
- The instability of staffing in Years 1 and 2 last year caused a decline in the pupils' standards.
- The co-ordinator does not check or develop teaching and learning sufficiently.

### **Commentary**

53. From the evidence it is clear that there is a significant variation in the capabilities of different year groups of pupils in the school at present. The current group of Year 6 pupils are reaching above average standards in mathematics. This follows the pattern established over the past two years.
54. The level of the pupils' knowledge and skills in mathematics at the end of Year 2 has declined over the last two years according to the results of the national tests for 2002 and in the unconfirmed results for 2003. This has been because of staffing instability over the last two years. This problem has now been resolved as permanent appointments have been made and as a consequence, the standards in the current Year 2 are now broadly average. There is a significant proportion of pupils who receive extra help from the teaching assistants in order to raise their achievements.

55. During the inspection, the best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. In these two classes, the overall quality of teaching is good. The teachers plan well together to ensure that all areas are completed effectively. They maintain good ongoing assessment records that show what each pupil has understood and achieved. These records are used effectively to plan what the teachers teach next. These teachers set the pupils into ability groups at the beginning of each year and use the end of year tracking records compiled for these older pupils, effectively. The lower ability group also has the advantage of additional teaching assistants to support them in activities and tasks. This arrangement is organised efficiently and raises the standards of these lower ability pupils. As a result of this good quality of teaching the pupils make good progress. They develop positive attitudes and are willing to offer answers and explain their methods of calculation eagerly to others.
56. The teaching in the other year groups is satisfactory overall. It was seen that some teachers do not involve all the pupils when asking questions. Often questions and activities are directed to one pupil whilst the others look on. There is insufficient demand to ensure that all the pupils are thinking and prepared to answer the question posed.
57. The significant instability in staffing in Years 1 and 2 has been the main reason why standards at the end of Year 2 have declined recently. The inspection of the work completed by the pupils in Year 2 last year shows that some aspects of mathematics were not covered as effectively as they should have been by the temporary teachers. Consequently, some pupils were not able to answer related questions in the national tests. The quality of teaching is now improved and is at least satisfactory. The work is interesting and the two teachers plan together to ensure complete coverage of the topics. Although they use information about the pupils' attainment at the end of each year to group them the recording of ongoing assessments is unsatisfactory. This is also a weak point in Year 3 and Year 4. **(This is an issue for improvement.)**
58. Under the direction of the headteacher, the role of the subject co-ordinator for mathematics has developed over the past year. Even so, there are many areas of management that are still not rigorous enough. There is insufficient examination of the pupils' work. There are no routines to check either how well the curriculum is covered in each class or on pupils' progress. Consequently some areas were not taught as well as they might have been last year and assessment records were not maintained to show what each pupil had achieved from week to week. **(This is an issue for improvement.)**
59. There is an inconsistency in the way that the teachers plan lessons. There are variations in the schemes of work being used, with two different published schemes and within one class in Years 3 to 6, the weekly plans are taken from an Internet site. This causes some confusion in tracking what each year group has done. The subject co-ordinator is not certain about the differences that these variations make to the pupils' learning and whether or not the programme of study is covered adequately. Some teachers are not sufficiently flexible in using the national strategies and are often seen following the published scheme too rigidly regardless of what the pupils should be taught next.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Mathematics is used effectively in other subjects. For example, in ICT lessons the pupils draw up results of surveys and other data collection. They draw graphs to show favourite food and use LOGO well to design regular shapes of different sides. Fine measurements in centimetres are used accurately in design and technology tasks.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. Science lessons were observed in one mixed Year 1 and 2 class and also in Years 3 and 4. A sample of the pupils' work from each year group was inspected. A discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator regarding the development of science throughout the school. It is clear that the standards at the end of Year 6 are now above average and have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- The pupils' standards are above average in Years 5 and 6 and below average in Year 2.
- Insufficient emphasis placed upon investigations in Years 1 to 4.
- There has been instability of staffing in Years 1 and 2 in recent years.
- More able pupils do not have work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Assessments are not used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

61. The pupils' standards in science were below the national average by the end of Year 2 in 2002 and unconfirmed results for 2003 show that they were well below national expectations. This represents a drop in standards since the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with those nationally.
62. At the time of the inspection, which was very early in the year, the standards in Year 2 were still judged to be below those nationally. By the end of Year 6 in 2002 standards overall were in line with the national average with the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels being above those nationally. Unconfirmed results for 2003 indicate that overall scores were well above national results. At the time of the inspection, the standards were judged to be above those nationally and all the pupils including those with special educational needs were achieving well. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with those nationally. The more able pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 but because of the insufficient opportunities in Years 1 to 4 for the pupils to be engaged in practical activities, these pupils only achieve satisfactorily. The traveller children achieve satisfactorily and build competently upon the skills, knowledge and understanding reached previously.
63. When pupils enter Year 1 their knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. During the past two years the progress made by the pupils at the end of Year 2 has been unsatisfactory, mainly due to the changes of teachers leading to inconsistency in teaching and a lack of continuity in lessons.
64. The pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory with most of them beginning to make up for their low achievement in the past two years. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils' progress is very good due to the teachers' detailed analysis of each pupil's needs and well-targeted teaching, which ensures that by the end of Year 6 all pupils achieve as well as they are able.
65. The quality of teaching throughout the school varies and lessons observed during the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. The teachers in Years 1 and 2 place emphasis on developing the children's skills of making observations and comparisons but the level of teaching varies between topics. An analysis of pupils' work shows that the most able pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to develop the skills of investigation. They have not, for example, used a range of measuring equipment in different contexts and made generalisations from the simple patterns they find in their data. Some teachers make lengthy oral introductions and explanations so that the pupils have too little time or opportunity to explore concepts themselves. Prepared worksheets for recording are sometimes the same for all pupils in a class and the teachers' expectations of pupils of differing capabilities are not

made explicit. In these lessons, the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and fail to reach the standards of which they are capable.

66. The teachers' plans show that lessons in Years 3 to 6 are well prepared. In the lessons observed in Years 3 and 4 the equipment and materials required were collected before the lesson so no time was wasted. The teaching was well related to the pupils' experience and captured their interest well. For example, as part of a lesson on recording data relating to animal nutrition the pupils eagerly shared their personal knowledge of the diets of a great variety of pets. However, the pupils' books reveal that in Years 3 and 4 the work is not sufficiently based on practical experiences and often pupils of all capabilities copy out the same information. This is an inappropriate activity for the more able pupils who are insufficiently challenged and for the less able pupils who rarely complete the task and sometimes do not understand what they have written. A part-time science specialist teaches pupils in Years 5 and 6. They benefit from her expertise and work for pupils in these two years is highly practical. This reflects the recently increased national emphasis on investigative science. The pupils work in groups to devise and carry out tests and analyse and interpret the data collected. They are taught the correct scientific terminology and are able to use this when explaining results and achieve well.
67. The subject co-ordinator ensures that all areas of the programmes of study are planned and encourages all teachers to put appropriate emphasis on the teaching of scientific investigations. She attends courses and updates teachers in staff meetings. She supports teachers individually in their planning and orders and maintains the science equipment to enable them to teach effectively. She checks what teachers have taught but at present there is no strategy for her to watch teaching in classrooms or for teachers to share their expertise and exchange good teaching strategies. Consequently the quality of teaching and learning continues to vary considerably across the school. Resources for science are adequate and include equipment for data logging, which is used by the older pupils.
68. The ongoing recording of assessment of science is unsatisfactory. The pupils' work is marked regularly but there is no common marking policy and in some classes there are many occasions when errors are not identified or corrected. At present, there is no common system for recording the pupils' progress and therefore no useful records are passed on to the next class teacher. The teachers make assessments of the pupils' achievements at the end of each year and some of these have been transferred to the school's "target tracker" database which could be used to set targets for pupils to aim for. This system is at an early stage of development and data at the time of the inspection was not sufficiently detailed to identify the pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Annual tests are carried out in Years 3 to 6 and the school has carried out a detailed analysis of Year 6 tests to identify areas of weakness in the teaching of some topics. This information has been well used to improve the resources and teaching of these topics across the school and this should be effective in raising standards in the future.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision in information and communication technology is good. Three lessons were observed in the computer suite and samples of the pupils' work were accessed on the computers. A discussion with the co-ordinator showed how well ICT teaching and learning had developed since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' standards are now in line with the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- There are reliable assessment record procedures in place at the end of each topic of work.
- The accommodation is very cramped and many computers are old and of unsatisfactory specification.



- The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has established the subject very well in all classes.

## **Commentary**

69. The school has succeeded in raising the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in ICT since the last inspection when the pupils' skills were judged to be unsatisfactory. The pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expected levels for their ages. They all make good progress because of the good structure given to lessons and the teachers' effective plans for each half term. This reflects the improved quality of teaching seen during the inspection. All teachers and most of the teaching assistants undertook the national training course to use ICT to support the teaching and learning in other subjects. This has clearly improved the quality of teaching.
70. In the lessons observed the teachers used the large screen monitor effectively to introduce the skills to be learned. The instructions in all of these lessons were clear and precise so that all pupils knew what they had to do. They have gained skills that are appropriate to their year group. The older pupils in Year 6 were seen exploring LOGO whilst designing procedures for drawing multi-sided polygons. Others drew up a procedure to control lights and a buzzer. The quality of this work was satisfactory. The pupils show a good level of interest and enthusiasm for the use of computers. All the pupils achieved well during these lessons and acquired new knowledge and skills.
71. The co-ordinator has provided a very good direction to the teachers in the development of their skills. He has also prepared the computer suite very well by installing software and networking all the computers and printers. Because of his efforts, the use of ICT has been improved. All pupils have their individual computer folder in which they store their work and this makes the start to all lessons effective and purposeful. The teaching assistant for ICT gives very good support to the pupils and the teachers during each lesson. She ensures that the hardware and software are fully prepared for each lesson. She also provides good technical support to resolve problems with the computers.
72. The accommodation is very cramped for the number of pupils involved in the lesson in Years 3 to 6. Many have to work in threes and this is not totally convenient. Although the teachers are aware of the need to give each pupil a chance to input their thoughts and ideas, many do not get a fair share of the keyboard. The room is also very hot and this is not an ideal situation for a productive working environment. To ease this situation the teachers often use the adjacent library for the pupils to research topics in the books as well as through the computer. Many of the computers throughout the school are no longer matching the specification that is needed to run the most up-to-date programs. The school has not yet acquired the consent of the parents for the pupils to use the Internet and the governing body is in the final stages of setting up an agreement policy for the parents to sign.

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

73. The teachers now use the facilities in the ICT suite more readily to teach literacy and numeracy with each class having at least one session each week. The teachers also use graphics programs effectively in their teaching of art and design and technology. For example, some pupils created a slide show presentation to show others the exciting things they had done on their residential visit. This was challenging and it is evident that the pupils enjoyed the task and made good progress.

## **HUMANITIES**

Two history lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6 and one geography lesson in Years 1 and 2. Comments are based on these lessons, on examination of the pupils' previous work and on discussion with pupils and teachers.

## **History**

Provision in history is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use of artefacts evokes atmosphere of times past.
- Good teaching strategies engage the pupils' interest.
- Mature individual research project by pupils in Year 6.
- Marking and presentation is sometimes inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

74. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well included in lessons and achieve well. This maintains the standards found at the last inspection. The quality of teaching in both lessons seen was good. Creative teaching strategies held the pupils' interest. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed representing the role of historical characters and, consequently, the part they played in history was well remembered. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 responded well to their teacher's high expectations, demonstrating a maturity of thought when discussing the social issues of World War 2. Group work in this lesson was well adapted to the range of capabilities within the class and all pupils achieved well. A scrutiny of the work in the pupils' books, which was completed over the past year in Years 1 to 4 was of variable quality and the presentation of some work was poor and rarely marked in detail. In contrast, project work in Years 5 and 6 was of a high standard; independent research into the lives of, for example, the Wright brothers, Martin Luther King and John Baird were packed with interesting information and constructively marked with appropriate praise and specific suggestions for improvement. The pupils' work in history is well linked to other subjects across the curriculum, in particular ICT, music and art and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and thinking skills.

## **Geography**

The provision for geography is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use made of the school environment.
- Pupils have good opportunities to ask questions.
- Good use made of the local area for visits.
- Good links with other subjects especially in multicultural annual topics.

### **Commentary**

75. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the pupils' standards are in line with national expectations. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well included in lessons and achieve well. This maintains the standards found at the last inspection. Contexts for geography studies build well upon children's knowledge and interests. The pupils in Years 1 and 2, studying their immediate locality, were encouraged to ask questions of the school secretary and the lollipop lady about the jobs they do. Older pupils prepared a holiday graph before studying the world map. The pupils' work about other countries is appropriately

matched to their capabilities. For example, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 study Africa by looking at the animals that are found there and older pupils have their stereotyped preconceptions of life in Africa challenged with pictures of Johannesburg at night. Geography studies are made more relevant by links with other areas of the curriculum. For example, while studying Africa the pupils enjoyed the beautifully illustrated story of an African child and her friend, "Handa's surprise". In the whole school multicultural topic, "Aspects of India", the pupils enjoyed tasting Indian food as well as being introduced to the art and music of the country by visitors to the school. Geography is a successful subject in the school and stimulates the pupils effectively to carry out their own research.

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

Only one lesson was observed in art and design, physical education and design and technology. Two lessons were observed in music.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

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

- An improvement in the development of skills since the last inspection.
- The pupils use a sketchbook to make observational drawings.

#### **Commentary**

76. In the Year 5 and Year 6 art and design lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good as the pupils made paper sculptures to communicate ideas and feelings. The work on display around the school shows that the pupils are developing secure skills in the uses of many media and in the development of their drawing and painting skills. In one lesson observed the pupils used sketches they had made in their sketchbooks. These drawings showed a variety of actions such as jumping, running and throwing. They then attempted to create a sculpture from these sketches. They listened carefully to the clear instructions of the teacher and began to work with great enthusiasm taking note of the difficulties in folding paper to the correct size, in order to achieve the right proportions. The end results were impressive.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory.

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

- The enthusiasm and knowledge of the co-ordinator that has raised the confidence and knowledge of the teachers since the last inspection.
- The skill level in the pupils' work has improved and is now satisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

77. During the design and technology lesson for Year 5 and Year 6, the pupils made good progress as they designed a box to hold a Kinder surprise. The teaching was very good with appropriate regard for health and safety. The teacher had devised worksheets that catered

for differing capabilities. The teaching support, to assist the pupils with special needs and those who found the task difficult, was satisfactory.

78. The management of design and technology is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic providing the teachers and assistants with ideas and confidence. Hence the improvements since the last inspection are good. Pupils throughout the school are acquiring the skills necessary to design, plan, communicate and complete products, reviewing them and altering designs where necessary.

## **Music**

The provision for music is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching due to teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm.
- The pupils have well-developed skills in composing and performing.
- The pupils' singing is often hesitant and lacking expression.

### **Commentary**

79. The pupils' standards in music are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an improvement since the last inspection where standards were found to be below those nationally. In both the lessons seen during inspection, the quality of teaching was good and teachers were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject. This was communicated to the pupils who made good progress during these lessons. The pupils in Year 2 identify high and low sounds illustrating their understanding in a variety of ways. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 can work co-operatively in groups to develop their own compositions using instruments of their choice. They devise symbols to represent sounds in order to construct a graphic score. A school video recording shows their confidence and enjoyment as they perform similar compositions in a musical production. The pupils enjoy listening to music from a wide range of composers and cultures. A visiting teacher gives pupils the opportunity to learn to play a range of musical instruments and some pupils take part in the local musical festival.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils are enthusiastic.
- The out of lesson activities promote effectively the learning in the subject.
- The co-ordinator is both skilled and knowledgeable and organises several after school clubs for boys and girls.

### **Commentary**

80. In the one lesson for a mixed Years 5 and 6 class, the quality of teaching was very good as it fully involved all pupils of all levels of skills. The pupils use the space well and learn to identify muscle groups and ways to move in a healthy and safe manner. They show good body control and sequence flowing movements interspersed with moments of stillness. The standards of physical education in this lesson are above average. Swimming meets the national standards for Year 6.

81. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and promotes the learning of many sports taking part in the district and local community fixtures and matches for cricket, football, netball and athletics. An annual sports day is held in school that provides enjoyment and participation for all.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	3

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