

INSPECTION REPORT

STANWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114732

Headteacher: Mr Brian Combes

Lead inspector: Mrs E Pickford

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th November 2003

Inspection number: 258020

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	221
School address:	Villa Road Stanway Colchester
Postcode:	CO3 0RH
Telephone number:	(01206) 574819
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Blowes
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stanway Primary is an average-sized community school, which admits pupils between the ages of four and 11. The school has been on the present site since 1911 and several classes are housed outside the main building in mobile classrooms. The 221 pupils on roll are taught in eight classes; all but two of these are mixed age. Most pupils live close by in local authority or privately owned housing. A below average percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is a fairly high level of pupil mobility in some year groups. Forty-four pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This is broadly average with pupils having a range of behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below average for the size of school. Children's attainment is average overall when they join the reception class but varies considerably from year to year. Nearly all pupils are of white UK heritage, although there are a small number of dual race Chinese and Asian pupils. One pupil is starting to learn English as an additional language. During the last two years, there has been a high turnover of staff, although recruitment has not been a problem.

The school received a Healthy Schools and School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23128	Esme Pickford	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, music, citizenship
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
21073	Roger Fry	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, history, geography, physical education
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology
25455	Mary Summers	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, religious education, special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17 - 29
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides a **good** standard of education and fully involves pupils in all aspects of school life. Pupils behave well and have **good** attitudes to learning and their personal qualities are developed well. **Good** leadership has enabled standards to rise since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6 as a result of the **good** quality teaching and support they receive. The high turnover of staff has adversely impacted on standards in Year 2, which are average, whilst standards by year 6 are above average. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The new headteacher, his deputy, key staff and governors lead the school well, identifying the right priorities for improvement.
- The interesting learning opportunities and lively teaching provides children in the reception class with a good start to their schooling.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are keen to learn.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety.
- Many lessons are over long and this limits the learning, particularly of younger pupils.
- Subject co-ordinators have insufficient knowledge of the teaching and learning in other parts of the school.
- Classroom assistants are not used well enough in all classes.

The school has made **good** progress since the last inspection in 1998. All the key issues have been tackled effectively. Standards in physical education have improved. Pupils have good opportunities to investigate and solve problems. The outdoor learning areas have been created and are used well. Planning has improved and standards have risen by the end of Year 6.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Childrens' achievement in relation to their capabilities is good in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is satisfactory elsewhere. In the current Year 6, standards are **above average** in English, mathematics and science, although the capabilities of this group are lower than usual and there has been a high turnover of pupils. In Year 2, standards were found to be improving and just **average** in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have been below average in the Year 2 national tests over the last three years. Standards of attainment for children joining the reception class vary from year to year but are average overall. For the current group of reception children, attainment is above average and most are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' spiritual and multi-cultural development is less well catered for. Social development is good, pupils are tolerant and co-operate well within the school community. They have good attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Pupils develop sensible and balanced views and are given good opportunities to express them. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Very good levels of care and good quality teaching mean that pupils are achieving well by the end of Year 6. Setting arrangements in English, mathematics and science are very effective in Years 5 and 6 and ensure that there are high levels of challenge for more able pupils, as well as good support for pupils identified as having special educational needs. Teachers question pupils well and encourage them to think. **Good assessment** systems are in place, which track pupils' progress and are used to set targets for the next steps in learning, but not always used well enough when planning lessons.

The breadth and balance of the curriculum is satisfactory overall but improvements are needed to reduce the length of lessons and provide greater variety within the day. As a result resources, such as the specialist rooms, are not used efficiently. The curriculum for the reception children is interesting and varied and motivates them to learn in an enjoyable way. The school is good at providing visits and visitors, and activities outside the school day, which enrich learning. There is a good partnership with parents and the school works closely with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The new headteacher and his deputy have high aspirations for the school. Several organisational changes have recently been made to rectify weaknesses identified as a result of their monitoring and analysis of data. These are already showing benefits in Years 1 and 2. The senior management team work well together. The leadership of subjects and areas is good overall but co-ordinators have too few opportunities to monitor colleagues' work in classrooms to improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher is supported by an experienced and hardworking governing body, which ensures that governance is good. Governors play an effective role in planning for school improvement and ensuring good financial management. Management overall is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are pleased with the school. They are particularly pleased with the way the children are helped to mature and are expected to work hard in a well-led school. There were significant concerns about the lack of information provided on progress. The inspection team consider that the information on progress is, in fact, very good. Pupils were generally supportive but a good number thought lessons were not always as interesting and enjoyable as they could be and inspectors felt that there was some justification for these views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Restructure the timetable to make better use of learning time and resources.
- Provide opportunities for subject and area leaders to monitor teaching and learning across the school.
- Make the best use of classroom assistants.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in the reception class and in Years 3 to 6 with pupils achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The standards of attainment of reception children when they start school varies but is average overall. Standards of attainment are **above average** in English, mathematics and science, by the end of Year 6, with pupils making good gains in skills and knowledge. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the current Year 2 were found to be **average**. There is no significant difference between the attainment of pupils from different backgrounds, including the very small number with English as an additional language. Boys attain better than girls in English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are much higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- Children in the reception class make good progress.
- Standards are rising in ICT and are above average by the end of Year 6.
- There is good provision for higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science.
- There is some underachievement in Years 1 and 2.
- The school is not investigating the differences in attainment between boys and girls.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (28.4)	27.5 (27.9)
mathematics	28.2 (29.4)	27.5 (27.8)
science	30.2 (30.9)	29.3 (29.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Since 2000, standards in Year 6 have risen dramatically in English, mathematics and science, and the school received Achievement Awards in 2002 and 2003. Much of this improvement is due to the good quality teaching they receive and the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6, which provide good challenge for higher attaining pupils, and additional support for the least able, who work in small groups with good adult support. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in older classes and therefore reach good standards for their age. Very few of these pupils failed to reach nationally expected levels in the tests in English, mathematics and science in 2003. Good assessment ensures that pupils are grouped appropriately and that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. Individual targets are used well to motivate pupils. The current Year 6 are likely to achieve the targets set for of the end of year, which are lower than usual due to the lower capabilities of the intake and the high turnover of pupils within the year group. Standards in Year 3 and 4 are average overall in English, mathematics and science, and show good achievement from the below average standards attained by these year groups at the end of Year 2.
2. Children in the current reception class are achieving well. This is the first year for some time that reception children have been taught in a single age class. Children are carefully assessed and their progress in all areas of learning is carefully monitored by the class teacher.

Assessment is used well in lesson planning to help them to achieve the early learning goals. The majority of this group are likely to achieve above average standards by the end of the year. Another two groups of pupils will join the class in the Spring and Summer terms. The analysis of data shows that the children who join the school in the summer term and do not achieve the early learning goals are also those children who do not achieve so well at the end of Year 2. Changes have recently been made to the organisation in Year 1 to enable these children to work in a small single age class and move ahead at a faster rate. The school has applied to change its admission arrangements from 2005 and admit children twice a year in order to improve the situation. Many of the pupils who join the year groups other than at the start of the year do not attain the expected standard at the end of Year 2.

3. In the 2001 tests, standards achieved by Year 2 declined considerably. Standards in reading and mathematics were below average in 2003 and standards in writing were average but these results show an improving trend in comparison with 2001 and 2002. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 is below the national average, suggesting a lack of challenge for the most able. In comparison with schools who record a similar percentage of free school meals, standards in all three subjects were well below average. The baseline assessment of this group of children was high in relation to the county average and Year 2 results show considerable underachievement in comparison to this. The school attributes the below average performance to high staff turnover, large mixed age classes and a lack of additional adult support. Also, there were an above average percentage of pupils who joined the school after the reception year. Since September, the headteacher has made considerable changes to the organisation in Years 1 and 2 to tackle this underachievement. The changes made to staffing and planning, and the reduction in class sizes, is already showing benefits. At the time of the inspection, standards were found to be just average in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was satisfactory overall rather than good because tasks were not so closely matched to what pupils needed to learn next and many lessons were too long. Not enough was expected of the higher attainers. Clear and challenging targets have been set for this Year 2 group, which are likely to be achieved if the momentum is maintained. Pupils with special educational needs sometimes do not achieve well enough in class because the levels of support vary from good to unsatisfactory. Tasks are not always matched well enough to pupils' needs and fail to move them on in their learning. Pupils learning English achieve as well as others in the class.
5. In all other subjects inspected and sampled, standards were found to be as expected for age by Year 2 and Year 6, and in religious education were in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. In ICT, pupils benefit from good teaching and the effective use of the expertise of the teaching assistant, resulting in above average standards by the end of Year 6. The development of the ICT suite has significantly contributed to this. More classroom computers would enable standards to improve further.
6. National data from previous years shows that boys outperform girls in the national tests in all three subjects. The composition of the current sets in Years 5 and 6 does not reflect this. In the highest sets, there are considerably more girls than boys and the reverse in the lower sets. The school has yet to address gender issues.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development and their relationships with each other and with adults are **good**. Behaviour and attitudes improve as pupils move through the school and are **very good** by the time they reach Year 6. Attendance and punctuality are **very good**. There were eight exclusions last year but none since the arrival of the new headteacher. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes to learning and behaviour of the older pupils which result in a good learning environment in which they achieve well.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and with all the adults in the school and this results in increasing their confidence and self-esteem.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
- Pupils' personal development is well provided for in most aspects but to a lesser extent in spiritual and multi-cultural aspects.

Commentary

7. Pupils are keen to come to school and this results in very good attendance figures with little lateness. The school has very good systems in place to encourage good attendance and to make parents aware of the need to ensure that children attend and to notify them if they are absent. On the very few occasions where there is poor attendance, the school gets good support from the external agencies.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.7	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

8. Pupils show good and often very good attitudes to learning in lessons. They listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and work with enthusiasm. In some classes, for example, in the reception class, pupils are extremely well motivated and show incredible concentration. The pupils' positive attitudes allow the teacher to concentrate on helping them learn without being distracted by the need to control any behaviour issues.
9. Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school, including at break times and in the dining room. The behaviour of the older pupils is mostly very good. All pupils are involved in agreeing on class rules and are fully aware of the high standards expected of them. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. Parents consider that behaviour is good in the school and that the very isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and well. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	174	8	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	24	0	0

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

10. Although there is provision for reflection in assembly, opportunities are missed in lessons to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Pupils have a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions but multi-cultural aspects are not as well provided for.
11. The school offers a good range of activities for pupils and they join in with these with enthusiasm. As well as the sporting opportunities, some of which are seasonal, there are a number of clubs in which they can participate, including a recently started ICT club.
12. Relationships are good in the school and this is demonstrated in the playground, where pupils of different genders and ethnic backgrounds play harmoniously together. In lessons, they work well, both in pairs and in groups. Staff give a positive lead in engendering good relationships, for example, by giving praise and encouragement wherever possible and by creating good role models.
13. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance have shown good improvement since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The curriculum is broad with **good** provision for the arts and sport. **Good** quality teaching and **good** levels of care and support mean that all pupils are able to achieve well. There is a **good** partnership with parents and the school works closely with the local community.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. For children in the reception class, it is often very good. In Years 1 and 2, it is mainly satisfactory with a few instances of good teaching in Year 1. In Years 3 to 6, it is good overall but there are some elements of satisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4. Assessment is **good** overall but there is some variation in the use made of the information when planning lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The organisation of English, mathematics and science lessons in Years 5 and 6, where pupils of similar capability are taught together, is successful in meeting individual needs and challenging higher attaining pupils.
- Varied activities and lively teaching enables reception children to achieve well.
- Early reading skills are taught well, enabling pupils to develop good strategies for spelling and tackling new words.
- Teachers question pupils well, encouraging them to think and explain their learning.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Homework is used well to promote learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how they can improve.
- Teaching assistants are not always used well enough.
- Assessment is not always used well in lesson planning to provide work appropriate to pupils' needs.
- Many lessons are too long.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	21 (55%)	13 (21%)	0 (0 %)	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.

14. The setting of Years 5 and 6 for English, mathematics and science has contributed significantly to the rise and maintenance of high standards over the last three years at the end of Year 6. The deputy headteacher now teaches in this team, enabling groups to be smaller and for expertise to be shared. Assessment is used well to organise the groups and plan a range of work within sets which meets the needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils thrive on the additional challenge and an above average percentage achieve the higher levels in national tests. Target setting is well established and pupils are very clear about the next steps in their learning and also when targets have been achieved. Additional staff are used well in these lessons to ensure that pupils with differing needs and temperaments are well supported and included.
15. The reception class teacher has a very good understanding of the varying needs of these young children and provides a good range of interesting activities firmly rooted in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The topics and resources chosen interest and motivate the children, who learn in an enjoyable way. There is plenty of variety and a good balance between teacher-directed activities and personal choice. Equal value is given to both the outdoor and indoor learning areas, including the use of specialist areas in the main school building. All areas of learning are creatively blended, which enables children to use their learning across the curriculum and achieve well. Children sustain their concentration and behave well because sessions assigned to an activity are of an appropriate length and adjusted if necessary. The school is reviewing the way the baseline assessment is administered.
16. Teachers successfully implement a strategy for teaching letters and sounds in a structured way. This provides pupils with good strategies to blend sounds to help them read unfamiliar words and the confidence to tackle spellings. Pupils enjoy these short daily sessions and the teaching assistants who work regularly with groups effectively contribute to its success. Most parents use this method when reading with their children at home to develop their vocabulary and spelling. The benefits can be seen in the improving standards in reading and writing in Year 2. Parents attending the meeting talked of the success of the scheme and the confidence it had given their children.
17. Lessons are carefully planned and have a clear purpose, which is shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. Work usually builds on what has gone before and teachers question pupils well to see what they have remembered. Teachers are good at encouraging all pupils to take part in class discussion and direct questions to those who do not volunteer answers. All answers are valued and pupils praised for their efforts. Good questioning develops pupils' thinking skills and draws out learning through their explanations of predictions and mental strategies. In all subjects, teachers effectively develop specialist vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it in their answers. The school has worked hard to develop thinking skills and the success of this is reflected in pupils' increasing ability to solve problems and reason things out.
18. Teachers insist on good behaviour in their lessons. Each class has clear rules and established routines, which enable teachers to teach and pupils to learn. The school behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school. Pupils develop self-discipline, tolerance and show mature behaviour. Teachers have good strategies for managing challenging behaviour and do not let it affect the learning of others.

19. Homework is used effectively to support learning, with most parents giving good support to this aspect of the school's work. It is regularly set, mainly reading and spelling for younger children and English, mathematics and science for older pupils. In Years 5 and 6, homework is used very well to consolidate, extend and revise learning and contributes to the high standards at the end of the school. Pupils are responsible for handing in their completed work on a given day and know that their parents will be informed if they regularly fail to do so. Homework is marked and returned before the next piece is set. Sometimes, pupils are required to research topics in preparation for work in other subjects.
20. Older children have a very clear idea as to how they can improve through the good system of target setting based on regular assessment. Most written work is marked well with descriptive comments explaining what needs to be done to improve. Younger children have targets which are shared with parents but they are not so involved in setting them. At the end of most lessons, children are given opportunities to evaluate their learning against the objective of the lesson. Assessments made during lessons are not always used well to plan tasks which meet pupils' learning needs. This is most obvious in Years 1 and 2 and is limiting pupils' achievement.
21. Overall, the teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils learning English is satisfactory. Teaching assistants who support pupils with special needs are used effectively to manage behaviour and to ensure that pupils have full access to the curriculum. They are clear about the purpose of the lesson and give good support in literacy lessons. They know their pupils well and provide the right blend of help and challenge so that pupils do not become too dependent on them. The skills of the teaching assistant in the ICT suite are used well by the staff and she knows exactly what is expected of her. She has many of the qualities of a good teacher. The other teaching assistants are used less effectively because they are not as well directed by all teachers. In some lessons, they are not used well enough during the teacher's input to monitor responses and to assess pupils' understanding as they work in groups. Teaching assistants are deployed unevenly across the school and are often in several different classes each day, which limits their contribution to children's learning.
22. Time within the long timetabled sessions is not used efficiently. Lessons often extend to fill the time available; pupils spend too much time listening and not enough time doing. Within the session, there is insufficient variety of activity to maintain the pace of learning and pupils' concentration, especially for younger pupils. In most classes, only literacy and numeracy are taught in the morning and facilities such as the hall and ICT suite are not used efficiently. Younger pupils need shorter but more frequent physical education sessions.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum for its pupils. It enriches pupils' learning by organising a good range of activities, including sports, the arts, visits and visitors. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities outside lessons.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and means children receive a good start to their education.
- Lessons are often too long because of the structure of the school day.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs varies between classes.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is planned effectively to ensure that pupils are taught the full range of National Curriculum subjects plus religious education. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a wide range of experiences, based on nationally recommended guidelines. Their needs are well met and they make good progress in this class.
24. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 classes are regrouped according to their abilities, for lessons in English, mathematics and science. This enables teachers to plan more effectively to meet their needs and means that the pupils achieve well. The curriculum has been designed on a two-year cycle so that pupils in mixed age classes cover the full range of the National Curriculum. In the main, this works successfully, although in a few cases, teachers do not take enough account of the different ages and needs of pupils when planning their lessons.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately. Individual education plans are well constructed and identify pupils' different needs very clearly. A useful overview of information relating to these pupils is provided for each teacher. This is not always used well enough, however, to plan activities at suitable levels for the pupils in different lessons. Very effective support is given to pupils who have difficulties with literacy. Pupils are withdrawn for extra help and this benefits them enormously. In mathematics, however, additional support is not so effective; pupils' needs are not identified well enough by teachers and assistants are not directed carefully. The support by assistants within class lessons also varies considerably; in some cases they provide careful and sensitive support whilst in others, they are not used efficiently. This again is down to teachers.
26. A good range of activities are on offer outside the school day; pupils have access to a range of sports clubs according to the season, as well as opportunities to develop their skills in music, art, drama and information and communication technology. The school arranges appropriate visits to make the pupils' learning more interesting and exciting; the residential week for Year 6 pupils is particularly useful, enabling them to improve personal and social skills as well as developing their knowledge in subjects like history and geography.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is well organised. Pupils have regular 'circle times' when they can talk freely and openly about their ideas and opinions across a range of topics. Teachers encourage pupils to work together in pairs and small groups, thus enabling them to develop good social skills. Health education is carefully planned and covers subjects such as road safety, misuse of drugs and sex and relationships.
28. The structure of the school day is such that sessions are often too long. Teachers extend their lessons to fill in the time available and this is not efficient. The length of the lessons makes it difficult for pupils, especially those in younger classes, to maintain their concentration and sometimes they become restless.
29. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The new computer suite is used well to provide pupils with a firm grounding of skills and also to use them in different subjects. However, the lack of computers in classrooms restricts pupils' opportunities to use them as part of their ongoing work.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care for its pupils in both the main school and the Foundation Stage. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils and their work is **good**. In addition to the school council, there are good opportunities for pupils to express their views through circle time and informal contact with staff during the day. The valuing of pupils' views is a natural part of the **good** relationships between staff and pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good health and safety provision with child protection systems fully in place.
- All pupils have good relationships with staff and will confide in them.
- The induction arrangements for new pupils joining the school are good.
- The school always contacts parents on the first day of absence to ensure the pupil's safety.
- The school provides good monitoring of pupils' personal development for short-term guidance but formal records are inadequate to facilitate long-term monitoring.

Commentary

30. The school has all the necessary health and safety procedures in place and they are regularly reviewed. These policies ensure the health and safety of both children and adults within the school. Risk assessments are carried out for all activities and facilities within the school and form a sound foundation for the health and safety inspections. Fire drills and other requirements such as equipment checks are carried out as required. The school has good medical facilities and records of accidents and treatments are kept. Child protection procedures are very good and there is good liaison with other agencies.
31. Parents are in strong agreement that the children are treated fairly within the school and that they are encouraged to become mature. Pupils are in strong agreement that they have good relationships with at least one adult who they trust and would confide in. The school ensures that all pupils are included in all activities as far as is practical and the building and facilities in the main school have access for disabled pupils – most of the temporary classrooms are not suitable for wheelchair access. Pupils at the early stages of learning English do have some additional support and are able to access the curriculum, and are well supported by their classmates, who establish communication. The school has policies to ensure race equality and the results of monitoring are to be included in the governors' annual report to parents. The one pupil who is in public care is given the appropriate support whilst in school with the head teacher attending reviews.
32. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families well, are sensitive to their needs and can therefore provide very good support and guidance. The academic assessment procedures ensure that academic progress can be tracked by the class teacher but the tracking of personal development is more informal and is an area for development to ensure that ongoing records are available. Pupils have good opportunities to receive advice and guidance during registration periods as well as during lessons such as PSHE (personal, social and health education).
33. Induction arrangements are good for new pupils. The school has links with the local playgroups and the class teacher visits these each term before they join the school. Pupils and parents have the opportunity to visit the school during the term before they join.
34. Seeking pupils' views and involving them in the work of the school is well established through a very effective school council, which meets regularly and is very well organised. All pupils are involved in producing class rules and in helping the class teacher during lessons. Older pupils have formal duties as monitors and supporting younger pupils on the playground but there are limited opportunities for the younger pupils to take responsibility.
35. The care of pupils has improved on the good levels seen at the time of the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, who are very supportive of the school. The school has also developed **good** links with the community which support the pupils' learning. Links with other schools are also **good**.

Main strengths and areas for development or further development

- The very good information on progress provided for parents.
- The activities and financial support provided by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is good.
- Good links with the community help enrich the curriculum.
- Good links with other schools ensure that pupils transfer happily on to their next stage of education.
- The school does not formally seek parents' views on a range of issues.

Commentary

36. Parents are well informed about the school through a well-produced prospectus, regular newsletters, the school web site and other correspondence. They are also well informed about progress through parents evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms as well as by an annual report they receive, which they can discuss with the school if they wish. The school welcomes parents in to school at any time to discuss concerns and values their comments. The school does not formally consult parents about the school but the governors are currently reviewing communications with parents to enable better consultation.
37. Parents are very satisfied with the school. They are extremely pleased with how the staff expect the children to work hard and help them become mature in a well led school that children like coming to. They also think the school is very good at helping children settle into school and that children are treated fairly. A number of parents were concerned about the lack of information about progress and that bullying takes place. The inspection team consider that information on progress is in fact very good and that whilst 'bullying' occurs very occasionally it is dealt with very effectively. There were concerns that parents' views are not actively sought and this is being addressed by the school with a view to improving consultation opportunities.
38. Parents make a good contribution to learning by checking reading diaries and ensuring pupils have good attendance records. Some parents help in the classroom and others help on school trips. Many parents play an active part in, or support, the PTA, which organises events and has been very successful in raising significant funds over many years, for example, to allow continued operation of the swimming pool.
39. The school has good links with the community. There are strong links with local churches and links have been established with local industry for sponsorship. The local football club have been involved with providing training at the school whilst sponsorship has been obtained for sports kit. Pupils go out into the community for Harvest and Christmas services and the pupils benefit from a range of speakers from the community who come into school to enhance the curriculum.
40. The good links with other schools include close liaison with other primary schools and strong links with the local secondary school. Pupils in Year 6 start a 'link project' which they then continue with at the secondary school to facilitate a smoother transfer. Consortium arrangements have been established which benefit the school, for example, by providing access to financial management expertise.
41. The partnerships identified at the time of the last inspection have been consolidated and developed, and continue to benefit pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership** and **governance** of the school are **good**. The **management** is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead well and have high aspirations for the school.
- The chair of governors and governors committees provide good support and guidance.
- The leadership of subjects is good overall.
- School development planning identifies issues for improvement well.
- Financial matters are dealt with efficiently.
- The administration of the school is efficient.
- Co-ordinators have too few opportunities to monitor their colleagues' work in classrooms.

Commentary

42. The chair of governors has been a governor for some years and knows the school very well. He and the headteacher work together closely and effectively to promote new initiatives and ensure that all the things the school should do get done. Governors have evaluated the good school development plan and are fully aware of its contents. Governors have identified links with parents as an area for improvement. They intend to consult parents more widely.
43. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, such as the way that the school attempts to give pupils a rounded education. They are also aware that standards at Key Stage 1 have been lower than at Key Stage 2. Governors have the support of a very good external finance manager. This decision has been a good one.
44. The headteacher provides good and effective leadership and manages the school with a clear strategic vision. He and the senior management staff work well together. The headteacher, in his first two terms, has begun to address the weaknesses he identified. The co-ordinators for subjects, such as English, now have some time planned to visit other classes to look at teaching and learning. The literacy consultant from the local education authority is working with the school to improve monitoring and raise standards. The headteacher has appointed a senior teacher to improve the lesson planning and tackle the underachievement in Years 1 and 2. He has established curriculum planning teams effectively.
45. The deputy headteacher has had an important impact on the improvements in teaching in Years 3 to 6. She is very good at motivating others and setting up systems to help teachers teach better. She has been released from class timetables to carry out monitoring activities across the school and share good practice. The above average standards in Years 5 and 6 have much to do with the quality of her work and that of her colleagues.
46. There is a good development plan in place that highlights many areas needing improvement. It is wide ranging and reflects the intention to provide high quality learning in all aspects of the school's life. Many of the targets included in it are the result of co-ordinators' inquiries and evaluations of their subjects. Some of the subject co-ordinators are new to their roles yet they already show leadership qualities and are clear about developments needed in their subjects.
47. The headteacher and deputy headteacher evaluate lessons effectively and the information gained has enabled them to determine how the curriculum should be developed. Standards in Key Stage 2 have been consistently raised as a result. The system in place for the appraisal and performance management of teachers is not yet fully linked to whole school priorities.
48. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator has too many duties to fulfil. She is also the literacy and Foundation Stage co-ordinator. In spite of this, the co-ordination of English is good and she has carried out very thorough investigations into why standards are as they are in English. Her

work has guided important aspects of the school development planning process. As Foundation Stage co-ordinator, she has established effective induction systems and a good curriculum, which is delivered very well by the current reception teacher, under her guidance.

49. Staff only teach in one key stage and so their knowledge of teaching and learning elsewhere in the school is limited. Most co-ordinators have few opportunities to see their colleagues at work in classes. Hence, some good practice has gone unnoticed and the capacity of teachers to learn from each other is limited. The school has good plans to make changes to the structure of the management of the school.
50. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides a strong lead to the school's work with these pupils but is restricted in the management of the provision by the short time she is in school. This means she is unable to monitor the work of support assistants to ensure that teachers are using them effectively and to check that the support they are giving meets the pupils' needs.
51. Learning support assistants who help pupils with special needs are effective. They are well managed by the co-ordinator. The other teaching assistants are less effective because they are not as well managed. The teaching assistants are spread unevenly across the school and are often in many different classes each day. This arrangement limits their effectiveness.
52. The headteacher has begun to address other barriers to learning. An additional teacher has been appointed so that reception pupils can be taught in a single age class. The younger Year 1, who only spent one short term in the reception class, are also taught in a small single age class, where they can benefit from a good level of individual attention. Last year, all younger pupils in Key Stage 1 classes were in separate rooms outside the main building. This year, one class is in the main building to give the school more of a sense of being one school.
53. The office staff administer the school efficiently. Their systems for keeping track of the school's spending, filing systems and other office practices are good. The school's finances are in good order and the balance carried forward is earmarked appropriately to priorities in the development plan. The school shares the services of a finance manager with a group of other schools. He provides good advice. He has negotiated contracts with 'best value' in mind and, in this area of the school's work, the planning ahead is very good. The school makes considerable savings because of the expertise it has bought in to support its work. The school's cleaners and caretaker do a good job and keep the school clean and well maintained.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	597,114
Total expenditure	603,028
Expenditure per pupil	2,502

Balances (£)	
Budget adjustment from previous year	56,173
Balance carried forward to the next year	70,138

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception class is a strength of the school. Children join the reception class at the start of the term before their fifth birthday on a full-time basis. The attainment of children when they enter the reception class varies considerably from year to year but is average overall. The attainment of the group of 13 children who started school this September is above average. The teacher initially focuses on developing social and communication skills and as a result children are managed well and make good progress. They achieve well because teaching is good overall and the curriculum is well planned to provide a wide variety of stimulating activities that are well matched to the particular needs of the group. Although there is only part-time additional adult support in class, children get a good deal of individual attention because the class is small. There was no detailed section for children in the Foundation Stage in the last report; however, there was a recommendation to develop a secure outdoor learning area for reception children. This is now in place and used well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because the teacher quickly establishes very good relationships and encourages them to work as part of a group and see the need for the class routines and a code of behaviour.
- Children learn to be comfortable in larger groups with older children and to work in other specialist rooms in the main building.

Commentary

54. Children join the reception class with a range of social skills. Most children have attended playgroups or nursery school and are sociable and interact well with other children. They quickly learn to maintain attention and concentration, and sit quietly when required, due to the teacher's high expectations of them. The interesting and exciting activities motivate them to learn. Children learn to share and co-operate well in groups, for example, sensibly taking turns to stir the cake mixture. Children are encouraged to be confident and try out new activities, and are also given opportunity to choose for themselves. Most develop the confidence to speak up in a group and express their opinions. The teacher intervenes well when groups of children are playing, talking to them and asking questions which encourage them to think and consider. Children enjoy being the helper of the day and taking responsibility for returning the register and collecting equipment. The teacher expects children to be responsible and self-reliant, and takes every opportunity to encourage this. All children can undress and dress themselves for physical education and tidy away equipment at the end of sessions.
55. Although the reception classroom is small and located well away from the main building, there is good provision to ensure that the class feel they are part of the school. Children join other younger pupils for singing and special assemblies in the hall and gradually adjust to being part of a much larger group. They walk in an orderly line to the main building for some activities, politely holding back the door for others. Children benefit from the regular use of the computer suite in the main building and become confident to work outside their own classroom with other adults. The provision for the social and emotional development of these children at lunchtime is good. Staff treat each other with respect and provide good role models for these young pupils. Adults work well as a team and provide a calm, well-ordered and secure learning environment. As a result of their encouragement and good teaching, it is likely that the current group of children will achieve standards above those expected by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher and support staff help children to develop confident speaking skills, to listen attentively to others and take account of their views.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills is very good and as a result children learn quickly and achieve well.

Commentary

56. Most children joining the class can use simple sentences to communicate their needs and interests, and listen to others when the conversation interests them. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs and interests of the group and provides activities which motivate the children to widen their vocabulary and express their ideas. For example, when the children received an invitation to a Teddy's Party, they discussed with a friend whether or not they had been given enough information to decide if they could go. This developed into a class discussion where the children were able to ask Teddy questions such as where the party was to be held, which day and at what time? Children are confident to share their ideas with the class and listen with interest to each other. Some ideas suggested for the party venue were considered and dismissed by the class, who did not consider them to be practical. Children also develop their speaking and listening skills well through role-play in the 'woods' where they talk with others as they prepare a picnic for their own bears. They are given many opportunities to talk and share their ideas with an adult, for example, when they are cooking. Adults question children well, encouraging them to think and consider their answers. Achievement is good and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Many of the current group are likely to attain these standards before the end of the year, due to the very good teaching.
57. Morning and afternoon lessons begin with a short session when children are taught to link sounds and letters and begin to read and spell some of the most common words. Children enjoy the brisk pace of sessions and make rapid progress, applying the skills taught to their work. For example, all children can spell and write the words *at* and *on* when writing a party invitation. Most have strategies for using sounds to spell *clock* and are confident to try. They also find words displayed around the room and copy them. Children who have difficulty are able to choose the right word from a list using the initial sound. Most children are able to use a pencil and hold it correctly to form recognisable letters and write their name. Parents are familiarised with this approach to teaching early reading skills at a meeting and they are also invited to observe a lesson. The rapid progress made by the children in their first half term reflects the very good teaching and the good support they get given at home. Children read to an adult in school every day and take books home to share with their parents. Children have favourite books and stories and most are read to at home. There is good communication between the teacher and parents through the reading diary. Most of these children are well placed to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and skilfully engages children's curiosity about numbers, and encourages them to use number to solve everyday problems.
- Children's mathematical vocabulary is carefully developed and children can use it to describe their ideas and ways of working.
- Parents are not as well informed as to how they can support learning at home.

Commentary

58. Most of the children who joined the reception class in September have mathematical skills that are appropriate for their age. Most children can now count objects accurately up to ten and some can count beyond. Using a number line, most can find one more or one less than a given number up to ten. The staff take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical skills and language as they work on a variety of activities. Regular computer sessions are used well to develop children's number skills and move learning forward on an individual basis. Problem solving is tackled well and effectively linked to the theme of the week. For example, the teacher told a story about the bears going to the picnic. Groups of teddies were counted and the children wrote the numbers on the board. They were able to add the groups together and write an addition sum on the board using numbers and symbols. More able children were able to count in twos to work out how many sandwiches would be needed if the bears had two each. After counting bottles, children could work out that there were not enough drinks for all the teddies and how many more would be needed.
59. Children know the names of several two-dimensional shapes and can combine them to make repeating patterns of alternate shapes and colours. They make graphs of the colours of their cars and front doors. They can talk about the graphs using words like *most* popular colour and *least* popular. Children develop a sense of *small*, *medium* and *large* by using a set of Russian dolls. They gain a good understanding of *long* and *short* from the snakes that they make. Children fill containers with rice and can describe them as being *full*, *half full* or *empty*. More able children are beginning to be able to explain their thinking when the teacher asks 'How did you work that out?', 'I counted in twos like this'. The teacher's very good questioning skills and individual knowledge of the children's learning through good assessment enables everyone to achieve well. Standards are above average and the majority of this group are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year.
60. At present, parents are not as well informed as they could be of ways in which they could extend their children's learning by playing games and using everyday activities in the home to develop mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

61. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area of learning but the work seen was of a good standard and the teaching observed was very good.
62. Children enter reception with varying levels of general knowledge but most are curious about the world around them. Best use is made of the limited classroom space and outdoor area to stimulate children's curiosity through interactive displays and motivating activities. Children deciding which colours to use for a jacket which would show up in the dark make predictions before testing a variety of colours outdoors. They make the jackets on return to class, choosing appropriate colours and some adding contrasting stripes. Children show considerable interest and concentration when working in the computer suite. They used the equipment with confidence and there are good examples of computer artwork in class showing that they can change colours and draw prickly hedgehogs. Children become familiar with stories from the Bible when they learn about Jesus and his friends. They learn what friendship means and are able to relate this to themselves and their own friends. In the toy topic children

show that they are able to develop an understanding of past and present when they compare old and new toys and the materials used to make them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children move with confidence and control and show an awareness of space themselves and of others.
- They show good control when handling pencils, tools and the computer mouse.

Commentary

63. Children are well co-ordinated and reach the standards expected for their age in terms of large and small movements. Teaching is good and children achieve well. During the inspection, children were seen skilfully manoeuvring large wheeled toys in the outdoor area, showing good awareness of each other. They use the space in the hall well when travelling around, running and jumping, and making big, small and medium-sized movements. In the classroom, they show good awareness of each other when moving from one activity to another in a fairly confined space. They know the importance of healthy eating, drinking water and warming up and cooling down at the end of physical activity sessions. Observations in the outdoor area were limited because of the weather.
64. Children develop good manipulative skills through construction work, using glue sticks, paintbrushes, cutters and when cooking. Children are able to use scissors safely and most can cut round shapes. Regular handwriting activities focus on correct pencil grip and many children already demonstrate this. Most children are showing improved control when colouring and keep within the lines.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

65. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards for this area of learning because it was not a focus on the inspection days. The work seen in the classroom was of above average standard and very effectively displayed. Children have good experience of exploring colour mixing and create collages of different shades and textures. They paint large portraits of themselves, using colour appropriately. However, there are not regular opportunities to choose a painting activity. Children also create and print images using the digital camera and computer. Earlier this term, as part of their toy topic, children made hand and stick puppets to a high standard, using a variety of materials. When singing with older children, they show that they can join in with others and learn new songs quickly. They use their imagination well when acting out stories with puppets and in the role-play area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils achieve well over the key stage.
- The teaching of reading has improved and is now good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 5 and 6.

- In Years 5 and 6, girls are in the majority in the above average group.
- The English co-ordinator leads the subject well, but does not have sufficient time to monitor work in classrooms and identify good practice.
- Writing standards, which are not as good as other aspects of English, have been a focus for development.
- Some lessons are too long and pupils lose concentration.
- There are good links between work in, for example, history and English.

Commentary

66. Standards in English have been maintained since the last inspection. There are some variations year on year because of the make up of particular years of pupils. The standards observed in Year 2 in reading, writing, speaking and listening are average and are above average in Year 6. Two of the main reasons standards are higher amongst older pupils are that pupils consolidate their knowledge as they grow older and that the teaching is better in Years 5 and 6.
67. The inspection found that the achievement of Year 1 and 2 pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, is satisfactory. Evidence provided by the school shows that Year 2 pupils this year are beginning to achieve better. Their scores for spelling are higher this year and their reading scores are predicted to show a similar improvement.
68. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teaching assistants keep pupils on task and repeat vital information clearly so that pupils can make good progress in lessons. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are put into 'sets' of pupils of similar abilities. This system works well and allows pupils to develop their English skills effectively. Within each English set, teachers match the work to pupils' abilities accurately so, overall, pupils in all sets receive work they can do but that also moves them forward. Across the year, pupils follow a similar curriculum. The upper English set has many more girls in it than boys. The reverse is true of the lower set. The school has not fully recognised that there is a gender issue to be addressed presently in English.
69. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Years 1 and 2 and are above average by the end of Year 6. Many older pupils speak confidently. Some young pupils have a restricted vocabulary on entry to the school. They have a lesser capacity to listen actively, which limits their progress. The length of some lessons works against the younger pupils. Some lessons are too long. Teachers sometimes teach with pupils on the carpet in front of them for 30 minutes and more. Pupils lose concentration because 15 minutes teaching at any one time is the likely maximum some pupils can manage.
70. Pupils' standards in reading are average in Year 2 and are above average in Year 6. There is a well-organised reading programme, based on the 'Early Reading Research' system in place. The teaching of reading to pupils in Years 1 and 2 is improving because of it. Pupils know how to build up a collection of letter sounds to make a word. Pupils across the school have many chances during the school day to use their reading skills. Teachers encourage pupils to read with parents at home and this helps their progress. The library is being reorganised and was used little during the inspection.
71. Pupils' standards of writing are just average in Year 2 and are above average in Year 6, and show improvement as a result of a current school focus to improve standards. Older pupils achieve well because of the good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers predict that four in ten of the present Year 6 pupils will attain the above average Level 5 in the national tests next summer. Pupils are on course to do so. The school has targets for each year group for the improvement of writing standards. Teachers accurately work out how much progress pupils have made through the National Curriculum each term. Pupils have good opportunities to write unaided and there are twice-yearly formal spelling tests. The results are used to track pupils'

progress and to adjust the teaching to take account of any problems that pupils have encountered. Teachers' marking of pupils' writing is good and pupils know what they have to do next to improve.

72. The teaching is good. In the lessons seen, the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good overall. The teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is good overall in Years 3 to 6. In the good lessons, the teaching keeps pupils well involved in all aspects of the lesson. Teachers use a wide range of techniques, such as putting pupils in a 'hot seat'. Other pupils in the class then ask questions of the pupil, in the instance seen, about the characters in the book 'Matilda'. In satisfactory lessons, the teaching is not as polished. Nevertheless, pupils make steady progress through the tasks set, such as writing short poems or learning to read some of the hundred most common words. The main negative aspect of the teaching is the length of lessons. Pupils' concentration and capacity to make progress is limited when lessons are 75 minutes long.
73. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be improved and what has worked well and leadership and management are good. She has collected a large amount of writing from all years and analysed it. The results of her work with colleagues have been used to guide the key objectives in the school's development plan. Pupils' national test answers have also been checked for common errors. Improvement in writing standards, and in pupils' capacity to recognise and give the correct sounds of letters, and then spell or write them, feature prominently in the plan. The school has identified the correct areas for improvement. The co-ordinator has not yet had sufficient time to monitor lessons and therefore to discover whether there are aspects of the teaching that need attention or are particularly good. Good practice has not yet been shared fully.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

74. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well overall in other subjects. There is a particularly good link between history and English in Years 5 and 6. Pupils use their reading and writing skills in more limited ways in science to explain what they have discovered.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 achieved well and reached standards that were above average in the 2003 national tests.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit considerably from the setting arrangements.
- All teachers encourage pupils to solve problems and discuss their mental strategies using mathematical vocabulary.
- Teaching and learning is good overall, but there is some variation across the school.
- Classes in Years 1 and 2 do not have enough adult support in numeracy lessons.
- Lessons are often too long and younger pupils are unable to maintain their concentration.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

75. Standards in mathematics are currently above average in Year 6. In the 2003 national tests, 90 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level and a third of these pupils achieved the higher levels. Pupils benefit from the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6, which provides well for different abilities and extends more able pupils. Teaching and assessment are good and individual targets are used very well to move learning forward quickly. Most pupils achieve very well in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 4, where standards are average. The

above average standards are likely to be maintained in 2004, despite the overall lower attainment of this year group compared with previous years. This is the result of good teaching and learning in Year 5. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and taught in small groups and achieve as well as others in their year groups.

76. In the 2003 tests, standards in Year 2 were below average and well below average in comparison to similar schools. At the time of the last inspection, standards were average but have declined since 2000, although the attainment of the intake is similar. The school attributes this underachievement to high staff turnover and large mixed age classes in these year groups. Since September, considerable changes have been made to the organisation and staffing in Years 1 and 2, which are beginning to show benefits. Standards seen in Year 2 currently are just average and progress is satisfactory. Target setting is being used more effectively and greater challenge provided for the higher attainers. Two weekly sessions for mathematics in the ICT suite are also helping to raise standards. Although the classes are now smaller, there is still a need to provide regular adult support in numeracy lessons so that the needs of the different abilities can be met.
77. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Planning and assessment in Years 5 and 6 are very good and the available adult support is used effectively to enable pupils of all abilities to achieve as well as possible. Lessons are well paced and time is used well. These pupils have less opportunity to use the computer suite to develop their mathematical skills. Homework is used very well to consolidate and extend learning. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is good and the majority of the class make good progress. However, the activities provided by the teachers for the least able groups, often supported by the teaching assistants in an adjacent room, are not matched carefully enough to the pupils' needs, nor are they practical enough. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the resources that could be borrowed from other year groups. Lessons are too long and lack a variety of activity; some pupils become restless and do not achieve as well as they could. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but pupils spend too much time on the carpet after the teaching input whilst activities are being explained at length. To some extent, this is a consequence of the lack of additional support in the lessons. Again, lessons are too long and momentum is lost.
78. The strengths of the teaching across the school are the carefully planned lessons, which have a clear purpose and build well on previous learning. Questioning is used well to assess understanding and advance thinking. Teachers are very good at encouraging pupils to use mathematical vocabulary and explain their methods of calculation and reasoning. All pupils have good opportunities to use mathematics to solve problems and investigate, which shows improvement since the last inspection.
79. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, experienced and manages the subject well. She has good subject knowledge and is well informed about developments in teaching. Since the last inspection, she has contributed significantly to the good improvements made in developing an investigative approach and to the high standards attained at the end of Year 6. By sampling work across the school, the over reliance on worksheets for recording was noted in Years 1 and 2. These pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to set out work for themselves and this is found to be a disadvantage for many as they move up the school. Although she has noted some improvement since this was discussed with staff, the problem was still evident in the samples provided for the inspection. Leadership is satisfactory because the co-ordinator's influence across the school is reduced through a lack of opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and to address the differences between year groups.

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. **Satisfactory** use is made of mathematics across the curriculum but is given greater emphasis in some year groups than others. Opportunities are not systematically planned for and tend to occur coincidentally. In science, pupils create graphs of their results, weigh materials and measure liquids accurately. Pupils weigh ingredients for cooking and accurate

measurements are sometimes used in art and design and design and technology. Computers are used to collect and display data and programs to develop number skills are used regularly in some year groups.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 reached standards which were well above average in the national tests in 2003.
- Pupils have good opportunities to carry out their own investigations and experiments.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not take enough account of pupils of different abilities when planning their lessons.
- Lessons are often too long, which makes it difficult for the pupils to concentrate all the time.

Commentary

81. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Standards are higher and the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils receive a firm grounding in scientific facts and skills in the youngest classes. They are encouraged to investigate, for example, the relationships between the size of their feet and their hand spans. These good investigational skills are extended as pupils become older; they learn to predict and hypothesise and to draw conclusions from the results of their experiments.
82. More pupils in Year 6 last year reached the higher Level 5 in the national tests than in most schools. Although a high percentage of pupils in Year 2 attained the expected standard, teachers' assessments showed fewer pupils than average attaining at the higher level. This is due mainly to the fact that work planned for pupils is virtually all the same. Too many worksheets are used and this restricts the brightest pupils' opportunities to develop their initiative and independence. Additional support is given to pupils who find the work difficult but this does not move them on from their existing levels of skills and understanding.
83. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' good questioning skills help pupils to understand new principles. Teachers gradually draw out pupils' learning by asking them to explain their predictions and conclusions. In this way, the pupils have to consider all the evidence carefully before presenting their ideas to the rest of the class. This technique also enables them to become confident and fluent speakers. Homework is used well to consolidate pupils' learning.
84. A good start has been made in Years 3 and 4 to teach pupils the correct way of recording their science experiments. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 however, have not moved on enough in this aspect of their work; many are still learning the basic principles of recording. Throughout the school, the quality of pupils' work is hindered by the fact that all work is done on loose paper; pupils do not have the satisfaction of recording in a proper science book, which would then enable them to build on the presentation aspect of their work.
85. A common problem in many lessons is the length of the session. Often, the teaching part of the lesson is too long with teachers repeating explanations and instructions too many times. This makes it hard for the pupils to maintain their concentration.
86. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good knowledge of the subject. There has not been enough time, however, for her to take a full audit of the strengths and weaknesses in provision to make appropriate plans for the future. Standards by the end of Year 6 show considerable improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 pupils reach standards which are above average for their age.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps pupils achieve well during their lessons.
- Pupils and teachers have very good support from the teaching assistant based in the ICT suite.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment is not used well enough to plan work at different levels.

Commentary

87. Pupils enjoy their lessons in the ICT suite. Standards in Year 6 are above average They work enthusiastically in pairs or independently, sharing ideas and information to help one another. Year 6 pupils confidently make PowerPoint demonstrations of their work and direct and edit films of their activities and school visits. Standards in Year 2 are average; pupils can use an art program effectively to draw pictures and patterns and they are learning how to input text into a document in different ways.
88. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to put over their lessons confidently and clearly. Behaviour management is good; pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond very well. Most teachers make very effective use of the teaching assistant, making sure that she knows exactly what her role is during the lesson. Although teachers make ongoing assessments of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, these records are not used enough in all classes to plan work at different levels for the pupils. This means that sometimes the brightest pupils carry out tasks which are too easy and that the least able struggle with the work.
89. Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection. The new computer suite enables pupils to be taught specific skills. Each class has two sessions a week in the suite and this means that skills can be taught and then pupils can use them to support their work in other subjects. The recent introduction of a mathematics program is already beginning to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics in younger classes. Plans are in hand to extend its use. Improvements have been down to good leadership and management of the subject. Needs have been identified and actions planned to address these.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. Pupils use their ICT skills well to support a range of subjects. They draw graphs to support their mathematics work and practise their literacy skills as they publish brochures, make PowerPoint demonstrations and word process poems and reports. There are a few laptops available in the older classes and a computer in reception and the Year 1 and 2 classes. However, this means that most of the learning takes place in the suite and restricts the opportunities pupils have to use ICT as part of their everyday lessons.

HUMANITIES

91. In the humanities, work was sampled in **geography** and **history**. One lesson of history was seen and part of another. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There are indications from pupils' work that standards are meeting those expected nationally and that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

The school now has a scheme of work and there is a common system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress across the school.

92. In both subjects, it is clear that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. In a Year 3 and 4 history lesson, the teacher prepared pupils for a visit to Colchester Castle. She efficiently revised what pupils knew about the Romans and the Celts. Pupils showed that they have a good knowledge of the weapons of the time and of the way people lived. She prepared pupils well for their visit by reminding them of what they needed to find out. Pupils prepared interesting questions to ask the staff at the Castle, such as about how shields are made. Another pupil wanted to ask, 'Why did the Romans fight the Celts?'
93. Years 5 and 6 pupils compared and contrasted two pop groups, the Beatles from the 1960s and West Life from the present. The teacher used an enquiry approach effectively. Pupils had to evaluate information and make relevant comments. The teacher ensured that there were strong links with English lessons. She introduced words such as 'change', 'different', 'cause' and 'effect'. Pupils learned or consolidated what these words meant effectively. The work set was matched well to pupils' abilities. Pupils had different tasks to do, which they could cope with but which also extended their thinking. Pupils noticed, for example, that many Beatles photographs were in black and white and were taken from different angles by photographers that are uncommon now. They noticed differences in hairstyles and clothes and in the kinds of music then and now.
94. Evidence drawn from pupils' work in geography shows that younger pupils carry out traffic surveys and are beginning to classify what they see into different categories. They begin work on mapping skills and study some countries of the world. In Year 6, for example, pupils study rivers and use Ordnance Survey maps. Older pupils enjoy a residential week away at Wicken House. They visit, for example, Duxford Air Museum and study the differences in climate around the Wicken House site.
95. The co-ordinator has ensured that all aspects of both subjects feature in teachers' planning. She has worked effectively to build up resources for use in lessons that teachers use to make lessons interesting. Co-ordination of the subjects is good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have good opportunities to practise their literacy skills when they write reports and accounts of their religious education studies.
- Too many worksheets are used in Years 1 and 2; work set is all the same with no account taken of pupils' different ages and abilities.

Commentary

96. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can describe some of the differences between Christian and Sikh weddings and are beginning to notice how the basic principles of 'good' and 'bad' are inherent in all faiths. Work in Years 5 and 6 is usually recorded in an interesting way, often enabling pupils to practise literacy skills; a headline reads 'David kills human giant!' and the pupil goes on to recount the story in the style of a newspaper report.
97. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject and are able to present their lessons confidently and respond effectively to pupils'

questions. Too many worksheets are used in Years 1 and 2 and this restricts pupils' independence and the development of their literacy skills.

98. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has a firm grasp of the subject and has plans to carry out a full audit of provision in the summer term to assess where improvements can be made. At the present time, the introduction of a new locally agreed Syllabus has prompted an audit of learning resources to identify any gaps.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These aspects of the curriculum were not an area of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. No lessons in art and design and design and technology were timetabled during the inspection.

Art and design

99. It is evident from the work on display around the school and in the co-ordinator's portfolio of pupils' work that the school provides an interesting range of activities in art and design. Pupils have the chance to work with a broad range of materials as the move through the school, for example, paints, pastels, charcoals, clay, modroc, fabrics and different sorts of paper.
100. In Year 1, they learn to mix paint well and to produce different colours, and to make them darker or lighter. In Years 3 and 4, they use the computer well to create pictures based on warm and cool colours. Pupils have produced some very good "Aboriginal Artwork" during their residential visit to Wicken House. Older pupils frequently work co-operatively in small groups to produce work on a large scale, for example, the collage of the school, displayed in the entrance hall.
101. The scheme of work ensures a broad curriculum, but it needs to be refined to ensure that pupils consistently extend and refine their skills, rather than repeating them at the same level, but for different projects, in the next class. The school needs to ensure that the full range of materials is used regularly. Pencil crayons are used frequently so more thought needs to be put into teaching pupils to use them skilfully and creatively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 say on their questionnaires that they would like to spend more time on art and design.

Design and technology

102. In design and technology, discussions with pupils revealed that it is a popular subject. An examination of work on display around the school reveals that pupils have a secure understanding of the design process. Younger pupils have designed houses very carefully, after researching and testing methods of making doors and windows which will open and close. They evaluate their work well, saying what works well and what they would improve next time.
103. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 designed and made healthy food bars, incorporating a variety of fruits to alter the flavour. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 researched the "shelters" using the internet and produced well drawn and carefully annotated plans to show what they intended to make. Their shelters showed initiative and a sensible choice of materials, but the quality of finish was of a lower standard than is normally seen in pupils of this age. However, their designing and evaluation skills are very well developed.
104. The new scheme of work ensures all the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught. It is now ensuring that pupils consistently extend and refine their skills, but this has not yet had time to impact on overall results. There is currently variation from one activity to another on the standards expected. The moving toys made by Year 2 pupils are of a much higher standard

than the picture frames made in Years 3 and 4. This issue needs to be addressed to ensure pupils make maximum progress as they move through the school.

Music

105. In music, it was only possible to observe lessons in Years 1 and 3/4, and a singing practice for younger pupils. Music is played at the start and end of whole school assemblies and the weekly themes are discussed with pupils. A recorder group who meet after school played pieces in two parts at the end of an assembly. There is a lack of subject expertise amongst the staff although a commercial scheme of work is used well to support class lessons and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In the Year 1 lesson, where the teacher has more secure subject knowledge, pupils are able to sing tunefully unaccompanied and quickly learn a new song from a tape, changing the pitch of their voice appropriately. They are also developing a musical vocabulary and are able to read a simple tune which they have composed and play it on chime bars. In the Year 3/4 lesson, groups played an *ostinato* tune composed in groups the previous week and developed this further by adding a *drone*, using chime bars and a beat using a drum. All groups worked well and successfully performed to the class. Very good support was given in this lesson by a supply teacher with musical expertise.
106. Lessons are enhanced by instrumental teaching for the violin and guitar. There are opportunities to take part in concerts with other local schools. A pianist is brought in to help with school performances and to train pupils for music festivals. Pupils' musical development is restricted because they do not regularly work with a pianist to develop their singing. Staff do not have the benefit of regular support and expert advice. The co-ordinator, who is returning from sick leave plans to start up the choir again. Resources are just adequate for the large classes in Years 3 and 4 and some are in need of replacement. Links between music and information and communication technology are at an early stage of development.

Physical education

107. Only a small sample of the work of the school in physical education was seen; therefore, it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. From viewing planning and discussions with teachers and pupils, it is evident that all sections of physical education, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are taught regularly. Pupils' standards in swimming by Year 6 are good and pupils benefit from the school's on-site pool. Pupils' standards of work were found to be unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. In the two lessons observed, standards met national expectations, which is an improvement. Teachers now have a scheme of work to follow and their knowledge of the subject is greater and so overall improvement is good.
108. In the lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, pupils made good progress with interpreting Beatles songs. Groups reached a good standard, as they responded to the different songs. Pupils achieved well because they were interested in their work. The teacher kept good control of the lesson and made helpful suggestions when needed. One group, for example, used forward, backward and side steps, and handclaps, in time to the music. All groups showed that they could interpret the music according to the mood they felt it expressed. Part of a lesson in Years 1 and 2 was observed. Pupils behaved very well as they used mats, benches and low tables to perform sequences of jumps and balances. All pupils showed that they could carry out the required movements and many did so with a good level of control.
109. The co-ordinator is new to the school; yet he has made a very good start this term. He is enthusiastic about physical education and is knowledgeable. The co-ordinator already has a very good overview of the subject because he has completed the survey required by the assessors for the 'Active Mark' award in physical education, which the school hopes to gain in the coming year. Over recent years, the school has provided good opportunities for competitive sport with the local cluster of schools. A good range of after school clubs develops pupils' games skills further.

110. The school has identified the need to improve teachers' subject knowledge through further training. Since the last inspection, teachers have benefited from various courses, including 'Top Sport' sessions. The co-ordinator has identified that staff need more training in dance and gymnastics to improve their teaching further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

111. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work so no judgements have been made about overall provision and teaching. The programme for personal and social and health education is good and co-ordinated by two senior members of staff. The curriculum includes work on diet, health, sex and relationships, personal safety and drugs. Visitors from outside the school are used well to enrich learning. The school achieved a Healthy Schools award in 2003 in recognition of its work. Pupils also learn about the administration of their local community and have visited the Parish Council.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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