

INSPECTION REPORT

THE LEVERTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Waltham Abbey

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115282

Headteacher: Mrs J Larkey

Lead inspector: Mike Capper

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th December 2003

Inspection number: 258142

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	222
School address:	Honey Lane Waltham Abbey Essex
Postcode:	EN9 3BE
Telephone number:	(01992) 715 885
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Harvey
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized junior school, which admits pupils between the ages of seven and 11. There are 222 pupils on roll, and they are taught in eight single-age classes. Although the percentage of pupils (12 per cent) eligible for free school meals is broadly average, pupils come from a very wide range of social backgrounds, including some from families that have low incomes. There is a relatively high level of pupil mobility: approximately one in five pupils in Year 6 did not join the school at the start of Year 3. There are 42 pupils on the register of special educational needs, with four of these having statements of special educational need. As a proportion, this is above average, with most of these pupils identified as having moderate learning difficulties. When they start school, pupils' attainment is well below average. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

The school is part of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone (SEEVEAZ) and received a School Achievement Award in 2003 and was re-assessed for Investors in People in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Lead inspector	Mathematics, French, Information and communication technology (ICT), Citizenship
9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector	
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Science, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Physical education
23658	Stephen Parker	Team inspector	English, Geography, History, Religious education, Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where pupils achieve well in many subjects, benefiting from good quality teaching. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and there is a clear understanding of what can be improved further. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The dynamic, innovative and resourceful leadership of the headteacher has built an effective and very enthusiastic team, including all members of staff, which puts the needs of the pupils first.
- Good teaching across the school means that pupils achieve very well in reading and well in writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), history and religious education.
- Work is not always closely enough matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils have weak spelling skills and do not always present their work neatly enough.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very effective, with very good opportunities to learn about different cultures.
- There are very good links with the local community and other schools.
- Attendance rates are below the national average.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1999. Pupils' achievement is good in English, mathematics and science and weaknesses in ICT have been fully addressed. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. There have been many recent initiatives in assessment and monitoring that have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Pupils' **achievement is good overall**, although test results vary significantly from year to year according to the overall capability of different year groups. Taking the last four years together, the improvement in the school's test results is broadly in line with national trends. Test scores at the end of Year 6 in 2003 show pupils had made much better progress from the beginning of Year 3 than was found in most schools nationally.

Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is below average overall in English, mathematics and science. In English, attainment is higher in reading than in writing. Pupils' attainment in reading is satisfactory, with achievement being very good due to the high amount of time allowed for the teaching of skills and the good impact of additional support from a teaching assistant. Achievement in writing is good overall. Topics for writing have a high interest level, so pupils willingly write for different purposes but there are important weaknesses in spelling and handwriting, neither of which improves as quickly as they should. In mathematics, pupils are developing a sound knowledge of basis concepts such as shape, money, time and data handling. Their investigative skills and understanding of some number concepts such as subtraction and

division are less secure. In science, lessons include good opportunities for pupils to use their investigative skills and they develop these securely. Pupils are less confident about explaining their predictions or findings from an investigation.

The inspection team also looked in detail at pupils' work in ICT, personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education and history, and found that standards were average, with achievement good in relation to the pupils' capability. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment in other subjects. However, in art and design, the quality of pupils' drawing and painting in sketchbooks is poor.

The **good provision for developing personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**, means that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. The school is good at taking into account pupils' views. Attendance is below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good**. **Teaching and learning** are **good** overall, with strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science. An imaginative use of a wide range of teaching methods by teachers, including ICT, helps to engage pupils' interest in learning. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and their good relationships with the pupils encourage good concentration and a willingness to work hard. A weakness is that there is inconsistency in expectations of presentation and spelling. Assessment procedures are good, though teachers do not always use information sufficiently well to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.

The school takes good care of the children's personal needs. It effectively promotes the pupils' welfare, health and safety in a secure and caring environment. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils and is very effective in taking their ideas and opinions into account.

There are good links with parents and very good links with the local community and with other schools. These have had a very good impact on learning, with the Education Action Zone, in particular, helping to improve school effectiveness. The curriculum is innovative and stimulating and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported well by an effective team of senior managers and subject co-ordinators. The school is very receptive to new ideas and members of staff are not scared to take on new initiatives, such as the Education Action Zone, even when it means a high level of additional work. Management is very effective, with self-evaluation very well established. Governance is satisfactory. There are a high number of new governors on the governing body and there is a strong commitment to supporting the school and developing it further. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are happy with the school. Parents feel that teaching is good and are pleased that their children like school. Pupils like the opportunities that they are given to take responsibility and they feel that members of staff value their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that planning for lessons is clearly based on assessments of pupils' previous learning so that all needs are met consistently, particularly for more capable pupils in some subjects.

- Raise teachers' expectations of how well pupils should achieve in spelling and the presentation of work.
- Improve rates of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Although pupils' attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science, achievement is good overall throughout the school. The variation between the attainment of boys and girls that is seen in some test results is not evident in most lessons. There is no difference in the attainment and achievement of pupils from different backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Test scores at the end of Year 6 in 2003 show pupils had made much better progress from the beginning of Year 3 than was found in most schools nationally.
- Pupils' achievement is very good in reading and good in writing, mathematics, science, ICT, PSHE, history and religious education.
- Weaknesses in spelling and the quality of presentation affect learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.3 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.1 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Test results vary significantly from year to year according to the overall capability of different year groups. Nevertheless, national test results at the end of Year 6 show that pupils' overall achievement, based on their attainment at the end of Year 2, is never less than satisfactory and is often good or very good. Taking the last four years together, the improvement in the school's test results is broadly in line with national trends. In 2003, test scores showed that pupils had made very good overall progress from the beginning of Year 3 to the end of Year 6 in comparison with all schools. Test results confirm that there are no significant differences between the attainment and achievement of pupils from different backgrounds. In 2003, test scores at the end of Year 6 show that the number of pupils achieving the level expected for their age (Level 4) or the higher Level 5 was:
 - In English, above average when compared with all schools and well above average when compared with similar schools.
 - In mathematics, well below average when compared with all schools and broadly average when compared with similar schools.
 - In science, below average when compared with all schools and above average when compared with similar schools.

Similar schools are those where pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

2. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is below average overall in English, mathematics and science. However, in these subjects, good quality teaching means that pupils are achieving well overall throughout Years 3 to 6 when pupils' well below average attainment at the start of Year 3 is taken into account.
3. In English, attainment is higher in reading than in writing. Pupils' attainment in reading is satisfactory with very good achievement due to the high amount of time allowed for the teaching of skills and the good impact on less able pupils of additional support from a teaching assistant. Achievement in writing is good overall. Topics for writing have a high interest level, so pupils willingly write for different purposes in a range of styles. However, there are important weaknesses in spelling and handwriting, neither of which improves as quickly as they should.
4. Pupils are given good opportunities to apply numeracy skills across the curriculum and they develop a sound knowledge of basis concepts such as shape, money, time and data handling. However, their investigative skills and understanding of some number concepts such as subtraction and division are less secure. The school has analysed test data to identify these key weaknesses and is placing a greater emphasis on developing investigative skills in the current year. This is having a good impact, especially in Year 6 where the quality of teaching is very good, although there are still occasions when work is not closely enough matched to pupils' needs, slowing the pace of learning. In 2003, test results in mathematics showed a significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, with more boys achieving the level expected for the end of Year 6 (Level 4). These differences are not evident in current work or in lessons.
5. In science, pupils learn quickly because teachers share their good subject knowledge well by explaining important concepts clearly and by promoting the use of correct scientific vocabulary. Pupils are less confident about explaining their predictions or findings from an investigation and teachers do not always help them to deepen their understanding of scientific principles by asking them to include possible reasons in their written work.
6. In ICT, attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, and pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior learning. There are particular strengths in word-processing skills and in the pupils' understanding of the many applications of ICT. These aspects are well supported by teaching and resources, which have been significantly developed since the last inspection, with the support of the Education Action Zone. Attainment is weakest in the control and modelling aspect of the curriculum, where a lack of resources restricts progress.
7. The inspection team also looked in detail at pupils' work in personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education and history, and found that standards of attainment were average, with achievement good in relation to the pupils' capability. In history and PSHE, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well prepared and resourced, giving pupils good opportunities to learn from direct experiences. Teaching is also good in religious education, although there are some missed opportunities to extend the learning of higher-attaining pupils.
8. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on pupils' attainment in other subjects. However, in art and design, the quality of pupils' drawing and painting in sketchbooks is poor.

Pupils with special educational needs

9. The number of pupils on the school's special needs register is above the national average. It is a good feature that pupils with special needs in literacy are identified early so that support is concentrated in Years 3 and 4. These pupils make good progress, and the number who failed to reach the expected level in the national tests in English in 2003 was lower than the national average. There is much less specific support in mathematics, although teaching assistants work effectively with pupils in lessons, meaning that pupils generally achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils are happy to come to school and have positive attitudes to their learning. Behaviour in lessons is good and outside lessons is very good. Pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is below the national average. There is little unauthorised absence and most pupils are punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and play an active part in school life.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- School has effective measures for promoting good behaviour.
- Social and cultural development is very good; pupils get on very well together and support each other well in lessons.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and contribute significantly to their achievement. As at the last inspection, pupils continue to be enthusiastic about the school and their work. This is particularly well illustrated by the older pupils who take pride in the organisation of the 'tuck shop'. They organise the system of queuing and sales, then show high levels of tolerance and patience when younger children want to change their mind about the items that they wish to purchase.
11. Pupils are hardworking and enthusiastic. The very good relationships throughout the school result from mutual respect and trust. Teachers make learning interesting, meaning that pupils are keen to learn.
12. Parents are pleased with the behaviour of their children at school. Inspection findings confirm their views. Pupils rise to the challenge of high expectations set by the school and, as a result, their behaviour in lessons is good. When they come to school, in assemblies, in the dining hall and on the playground, pupils show that high levels of orderly behaviour are consistently achieved. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other and play together well. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment being commonplace. Pupils understand what they should do if they have a concern.
13. The school provides many very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and they show that the trust is very well placed. Pupils make good progress in developing confidence and self-esteem as they perform jobs within the classroom and around the school. School and class councils provide a voice for staff to hear the ideas and opinions of the children. Play leaders, tuck shop operators, school bank officials, class monitors and other responsibilities all offer opportunities for pupils to develop their social, moral and community awareness.
14. Procedures for promoting cultural development are very good. The connections with schools in the United States, South America and Australia give pupils an early understanding of the similarities and differences between the lives of children in other parts of the world. Their cultural development is further enhanced by the many trips and visits provided by the school. Pupils respect the views of others and understand the importance of traditions and festivals of other religions. Pupils regularly support fund-raising for charities throughout the year.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	0.3
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.

15. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. There are sound procedures for promoting good attendance. Attendance registers are completed accurately and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted. However, the school does not consistently contact parents to explain the absence on the first day. Strategies introduced by the school and the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance have not yet been effective. Too many parents do not realise the importance of regular attendance to improve the quality of their children's education. Most pupils arrive on time enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

Exclusions

There have been no recent exclusions from the school.

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	195	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good quality teaching and good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well. There is a good partnership with parents and the school works very closely with the local community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall, with strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Assessment procedures are good, though teachers do not always use information sufficiently well to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in English, mathematics and science enables pupils to achieve well.
- An imaginative use of a wide range of teaching methods, including ICT, helps to engage pupils' interest in learning.
- Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and their good relationships with the pupils encourage good concentration and a willingness to work hard.
- Good assessment procedures enable members of staff to monitor pupils' progress, set targets and provide good additional support.
- Members of staff work together well, planning stimulating and well-structured activities.
- Teaching assistants provide skilful support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.
- Work is not always matched closely to pupils' differing needs.
- Teachers have insufficiently high expectations for the way pupils present their work.
- Specific subject vocabulary is emphasised well.
- Pupils understand what they are expected to learn.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0(0 %)	4 (10%)	18 (49%)	15 (41%)	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.

16. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory overall, with 14 per cent of lessons being unsatisfactory. Good teaching in science has been maintained and teaching has improved in English, mathematics and ICT where teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge overall. In science, there continues to be a good emphasis on learning through practical work, and new concepts and key vocabulary are taught clearly. Two specialist science teachers provide valuable additional support for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In English, the teaching of reading is a particular strength with additional lessons supporting pupils' specific needs well. In mathematics, teachers have clear expectations, use questioning well and are careful to promote the correct mathematical vocabulary. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from the good subject knowledge and fun lessons planned by a specialist teacher in French.
17. The school's evaluation that teaching is good overall is accurate and strengths and weaknesses have been identified correctly. Pupils like the teachers and feel that they are expected to work hard. 96 per cent of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching is good.
18. The school has a high turnover of teaching staff, due to the very effective way in which the headteacher enables teachers to develop professionally and gain promotion. Pupils benefit from the improved skills that result from such additional training. The close links between the school and colleges means trainee teachers work at the school as part of their training and are often encouraged to start their teaching career at the school once qualified. The effective way that teachers work together in carefully chosen pairs enables more experienced teachers to

support those with less experience and the good mix of experience and fresh ideas makes lessons interesting and relevant.

19. There is a good range of teaching methods used. Training and funding from the Education Action Zone means that teachers are very confident about using ICT resources in lessons. For example, teachers make good use of interactive white boards during whole-class discussions, engaging pupils' interest well. There is a good balance between clear instruction during whole-class teaching and opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves in individual and group work. Most lessons have a good pace and pupils' interest is held well, especially during practical tasks. Teachers explain the purpose of each lesson clearly so that pupils understand what they are expected to do and learn.
20. Effective use is made of well-trained teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs during whole-class, group and individual work and as at the time of the last inspection, these pupils are taught well. The school has identified correctly the need to increase the use pupils make of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum.
21. In most lessons pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations for good behaviour, by concentrating well and trying hard. Pupils work well with a partner or in a small group. As at the time of the last inspection, relationships between members of staff and the pupils are good. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows in Year 5, when pupils working on their own lose concentration.
22. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. Distinctive features in teaching of literacy and numeracy are:
 - In **literacy**, questioning is vigorous, prompting careful thought and demonstrating good speech. Teachers plan interesting tasks for writing, with a strong stimulus to creativity. There are clear explanations of language features in shared texts and good support by teaching assistants for lower-attaining groups.
 - Teachers make too little use of the final review (plenary) to check pupils' progress, to give regular practice in formal speech, and to coach speaking skills. There is a lack of focus and unclear expectations in checking the quality of pupils' writing during, and at the end of, lessons.
 - In **numeracy**, teachers have good subject knowledge and expect pupils to explain their strategies when working out calculations. Planning shows clear expectations for different groups of pupils. However, there are occasions when numeracy objectives for a particular year group are followed too rigidly, without being adapted to reflect the below average attainment of pupils.
23. A weakness in teaching throughout the school is that work is not always planned to meet pupils' differing needs well enough, with all pupils being expected to complete similar tasks irrespective of their prior attainment. This is most evident in subjects such as science, history and religious education, affecting different groups of pupils at different times with work sometimes not challenging enough for more capable pupils or too difficult for the less capable. In addition, as at the time of the last inspection, teachers do not insist on a consistency in the presentation of work, resulting in untidiness and careless spelling. In subjects such as science and mathematics, teachers do not ensure that technical vocabulary is spelt correctly, with errors being repeated in pupils' work.
24. A well-established system for tracking pupils' progress throughout the school is used effectively to identify groups of pupils in need of additional support and to improve the curriculum to incorporate revision of topics that pupils find difficult to understand. There are also a number of relatively new assessment procedures that have had insufficient time to have an impact on pupils' achievement. For example, a new system for marking pupils' work provides the opportunity for pupils to respond to teachers' comments and to help identify their own learning targets. This system is not yet being applied consistently across the school and

teachers do not always use their knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment when providing written tasks to meet differing needs.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs

25. Teachers' planning generally identifies appropriate tasks to meet the targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special needs. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of their needs and so give them generally well-directed help in lessons, helping them to meet their targets. A good range of assessment procedures ensures that their progress is monitored accurately so that their targets are adjusted as needed.
26. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 with special needs in literacy are withdrawn regularly for a programme of intensive instruction in reading skills, planned and taught by a teaching assistant. Their progress is good at these times because activities are taught at a brisk pace that keeps them interested and involved.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and is extended through a good range of out-of-class activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is innovative and stimulating.
- There is good provision for pupils with special needs.
- The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is effective.
- ICT resources are very good, though the location of the ICT suite is a weakness.

Commentary

27. The school has been very energetic in taking up new initiatives since the last inspection, meaning that there is a good breadth to the curriculum. Involvement in the Education Action Zone has resulted in a considerable increase in computer equipment and staff training. This has turned a significant weakness noted in the previous inspection into a strength, particularly in the use of technology for planning and teaching. There is now a sound scheme of work for ICT, though there is more scope to develop pupils' ICT skills through applications in other subjects.
28. Involvement in the action zone has also led to the adoption of an imaginative scheme of work that links music, art, dance and drama through literature. The scheme provides teachers with detailed plans, based on issues raised in high-quality children's fiction. Little evidence of the scheme's impact was available for inspection, but teachers are convinced that pupils have gained in confidence, skills and understanding through these cross-subject links.
29. A curriculum outline gives teachers and school management a clear oversight of the intended coverage from Years 3 to 6. Planning identifies common patterns of thinking and response across all subjects, to further strengthen links and ensure that pupils' aptitudes are fully developed. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are closely followed, and planning for other subjects is securely based on official recommendations and guidelines. This helps management to standardise teaching methods and subject coverage through the school, which is a particular advantage in times of high teacher turnover. Teachers in each year group plan together, so sharing their expertise. It is a good feature that provision is extended beyond requirements to include French, begun in the infant school. Pupils also benefit from the arrangement whereby teachers in Years 5 and 6 exchange classes for a lesson each week so they can teach their specialist subjects. Pupils are well prepared to progress on to the high school curriculum.

30. Measures taken to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum are satisfactory overall, with particular strengths. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator follows closely the guidance on best practice issued by the local authority. This ensures that special needs provision is managed effectively even when her role is limited at present because she has a full class teaching commitment. Pupils with special needs are given individual education plans that set out specific targets to guide their progress. These targets are well informed, clearly focused and regularly adjusted in the light of assessments. The targets guide teaching assistants so that they give good support to groups of pupils in lessons or withdrawal sessions. Very good care is taken to include pupils with physical disabilities; for example, special arrangements are made so that a pupil who uses a wheelchair can join her class for swimming lessons.
31. The school has developed a very effective programme of intensive instruction in basic skills for pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have special needs in reading. Though these pupils are withdrawn in small groups only for brief sessions, they nevertheless miss valuable teaching in other subjects, particularly in science, and they do not make up for lost time when they return.
32. The curriculum is enriched well through an imaginative range of special events and experiences, such as the visits to London museums by Years 5 and 6 during the inspection. After-class activities are popular and there is a good range. Good provision for the arts includes a choir, orchestra and dance club. There is a gym club, and school teams compete against others in football and netball. The breakfast club has a regular following, and the media club is involved in developing the school's website.
33. Resources are generally sound, with very good provision for ICT. There are some weaknesses in accommodation although it is satisfactory overall. The school building is kept clean by a hardworking caretaker. However, the library is short of information books and some are out of date. The computer suite and library are in cramped locations in corridors, and this weakness was noted in the previous inspection. Classrooms are small, and pupils' coats and bags strewn among the desks set a poor example of tidiness and create a risk of tripping. A lack of sinks in classrooms limits craft opportunities, particularly for painting.
34. There are an appropriate number of teachers for the size of the school. A specialist French teacher has a good impact on learning in Years 3 and 4. There are a good number of support staff. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of the children's personal needs. It effectively promotes the pupils' welfare, health and safety in a secure and caring environment. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils and is very effective in taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are clearly established.
- Members of staff know the pupils well and support them effectively in their personal and academic development.
- The headteacher and other staff are good role models and are committed to supporting the pupils' personal development.
- Members of staff are consistently available to offer support and guidance to the pupils.
- Very good procedures are in place to involve the pupils in the school's work and development.

Commentary

35. The school has improved its quality of the support and guidance and now effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in a warm, caring and secure environment. In this school, members of staff know the children extremely well and are well equipped to offer

support when it is needed. All staff counsel pupils well, offering high quality support to those most in need. Led by the headteacher, members of staff are good role models. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have a problem.

36. There are good induction arrangements for children when they start school, meaning that the transfer is smooth and trouble-free.
37. Pupils with special needs are well cared for. Teachers and teaching assistants develop close relationships with these pupils, encouraging them to take a full part in school life. Records of their progress and needs are well focused and maintained. Provision specified in official statements of special educational needs is fully met. Those who need it are given additional help by visiting specialists. There is very good support for pupils with physical disabilities.
38. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect of child protection issues. They understand the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Site inspections are conducted regularly to identify potential hazards and prepare action plans for correction. All equipment is checked and tested regularly to ensure that it is fit for its purpose. All members of staff are safety conscious and watch for the security of the children.
39. There are very effective systems in place to take account of the ideas and opinions of the pupils. The school council, supported by the class councils, is instrumental in providing the opportunity for pupils' views to be considered. Having been in place and working effectively for several years, many initiatives are evident. The playleader scheme is very effective, with pupils having to apply for the positions. Having been appointed, they are then given training in the requirements of the positions. Members of the local community come into the school to counsel the Year 6 pupils, and in turn, the older pupils help the younger children to become familiar with the school and its practices.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents. There are very good links with the community, other schools and colleges. There is a good educational support programme provision for parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about the work of the school.
- Many parents and grandparents are involved in the life of the school.
- The school works very hard to provide opportunities to enable parents to support their children's learning.
- Many members of the local community are involved in the life of the school.
- School provides good quality information for the parents.
- There are very good links with other schools.
- Not all parents respond positively to the encouragement to support their children's learning.

Commentary

40. The partnership with parents has been well maintained since the last inspection and continues to have a positive effect on the children's learning and personal development. Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting were very supportive of the school and its work. They believe that it has many strengths. They find members of staff approachable and feel that they are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. The school makes good use of questionnaires and workshops to involve parents as far as is possible in the day-to-day life of school. Parents appreciate this good level of consultation.

41. Although a few parents expressed concern about the quality of information provided for them, inspection findings do not support this judgement. Information for parents is good overall. Newsletters and the school prospectus give them useful information about the school and its organisation. Pre-consultation reports in the early part of the school year are clear and set out well the areas for attention and improvement. End-of-year reports contain much good information about what the pupils know, understand and can do. They are also clear about pupils' progress and contain information about areas for improvement.
42. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and a high proportion responds extremely positively. They are a considerable help in the classroom and around the school as well as on school trips and visits. However there are some parents who do not respond positively to the attempts by the school to involve them in their children's learning. The school values highly the support and contributions made by all parents and members of the community that enhance the children's learning and development.
43. Parents of pupils with special needs are consulted on the targets set for their children, invited to their annual reviews and kept fully informed of their progress.

Community Provision

44. The inspection included a focus on the school's community provision. The school has established itself at the heart of the local community. Regular use is made of the school building by a wide range of community groups. The school is fully involved in local activities, such as encouraging children to take part in a Remembrance Service in Waltham Abbey Church.
45. A breakfast club, which is organised by support staff, is enjoyed by a large numbers of pupils and parents and makes an important contribution to developing home-school links. The school has won two 'certificates of distinction' for the breakfast club from the national charity 'Education Extra'.
46. There is a good programme of support available to help parents to support their children's learning. In partnership with a local college of further education, the school is currently running ICT courses for parents and other family members. These courses are based on a good understanding of parents' needs. Courses are well attended by parents, grandparents and other members of the local community and high quality support is offered. The courses are well-organised and targeted to help parents better to support their children. Discussions with parents show that these courses are felt to be very valuable, helping them to give their children greater support at home.
47. The school enjoys very positive partnerships with a wide range of groups and specialist agencies in the community. As an active supporter of the Forest Independent Primary Collegiate, the school participates well in the development of trainee teachers. The partnership with the main feeder infant school and the secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer is of very high quality. The formal and informal links do much to enable the children to make smooth transitions, at both ends of the school.
48. There are strong links with schools further afield through the Education Action Zone. This has helped good practice to be shared and has had a very good impact on the work of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. She is supported by a very hardworking senior management team and co-ordinators who provide good leadership. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher supports members of staff very well, providing very good opportunities for professional development and very good quality induction for new staff.
- There are high aspirations for the school, with a clear vision for school development.
- Self-evaluation and strategic planning are well established and have a very good impact on the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher is very open to new ideas and has been very innovative in developing the curriculum and finding additional funding to supplement the school's budget and to improve provision.
- The headteacher makes very good use of teachers' specific skills to support the school.
- Co-ordinators in English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE provide good leadership in their subjects.
- There are some imaginative ways of monitoring provision but the monitoring of teaching and learning by co-ordinators is in the early stages of development in some subjects.

Commentary

49. This is a successful school because of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, which has meant that there has been a good pace to improvement with a long-term vision clearly established. Although the school is in an area where the recruitment and retention of teachers is a problem, this has not had an impact on its effectiveness. When teachers leave, it is normally because they have been promoted. This is because of the very thorough strategies that are in place for appointing and training good quality staff and then supporting them and giving them very good opportunities for professional development.
50. The headteacher has established an effective group of staff, with the teamwork and shared sense of purpose that is apparent throughout the school being significant features of the school's work. There is a good commitment to ensuring that the school is fully inclusive and all members of staff have their pupils' wellbeing and education at the forefront of their planning. This means that the school is in a very strong position to improve further in the future.
51. The headteacher, senior management team and other members of staff are continually seeking to improve the school. They know what is going well and where improvement is needed. Developments are carefully planned and monitored. There has been a high level of innovation over the last four years. Projects such as the Education Action Zone, participation in school-based initial teacher training, the Essex Schools Award and partnerships with schools in El Salvador and the United States of America have had a very good impact on school effectiveness. The school is very receptive to new ideas and members of staff are not scared to take on new initiatives, even when it means a high level of additional work. The headteacher's willingness to take risks is a key strength in leadership and management as it inspires and motivates staff to continually seek to improve.
52. There are very good strategies for evaluating the work of the school. They have been significantly developed since the last inspection. Detailed records of pupils' individual test scores are kept and used very effectively to set targets for improving pupils' attainment. The headteacher and assessment co-ordinator have established thorough procedures for analysing test data to identify where improvement is necessary.
53. The headteacher is very keen on giving members of staff opportunities to take responsibility, making good use of their particular skills or interests. As a result, the role of subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection. They are good role models and provide a good lead in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE. There are some interesting strategies for monitoring provision, including pupil perception surveys, scrutinising teachers' planning and looking at pupils' work. There have been fewer opportunities for co-ordinators to observe lessons, although the headteacher regularly does this. The school is aware of this weakness and a new monitoring programme clearly shows

how opportunities for co-ordinators to observe lessons are to be extended. Nevertheless, the headteacher has established a climate where the evaluation of teachers is accepted as an everyday part of life. The information gained from this is used successfully to set individual targets for improvement, to acknowledge strengths in teaching, and to identify priorities for personal and professional development. Training for teachers and other members of staff has been given a very strong priority and has helped to develop teachers' confidence in subjects such as ICT. Taken together, these strategies have had a very good impact on the quality of teaching throughout the school and have led to teachers becoming more reflective about the effectiveness of their own teaching.

54. Day-to-day management is efficient meaning that the school runs smoothly. The headteacher is well supported by a hard working and efficient administration team who are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
55. Governance is satisfactory. There are a high number of new governors on the governing body who are showing a strong commitment to supporting the school and developing it further. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and understand where the school has strengths or weaknesses, based largely on the detailed information that is provided by the headteacher. Governors are given detailed feedback on test results, and use this data effectively to gain an understanding of what could be improved. Occasional visits to school help governors to extend their understanding of the school's work, although these could be developed still further.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	610,503
Total expenditure	572,689
Expenditure per pupil	2,406

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,385
Balance carried forward to the next	37,814

56. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory and the school provides sound value for money. Spending is targeted on raising standards and governors work hard to ensure that the principles of best value are achieved in all of their spending. They have been largely successful in this aim, although more consideration needs to be given to the impact of having a teacher who is not deployed in a classroom. The impact of this provision on levels of attainment is not always clear, and release time for co-ordinators has not been used effectively to monitor all aspects of provision in the different subjects. The large underspend at the end of the last financial year had been appropriately accumulated over time to pay for the costs of building work. The school has suitable plans for maintaining provision when funding from the Education Action Zone ceases in 2005.
57. The school is very successful at seeking additional funding to support initiatives such as the out-of-hours learning project. These activities significantly extend provision.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in listening and reading.
- Standards in spelling, handwriting and presentation are too low.
- Writing tasks are interesting, with substantial emphasis on creativity.
- Targets set for individuals are helping to guide their improvement.

Commentary

58. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The results of the Year 6 national tests have varied considerably in recent years, though they have shown an improving trend. This is because the subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. She is a good role model in her own teaching and has made good use of test results to identify and tackle weaknesses in pupils' performance. For instance, teaching has increasingly centred on topics with strong appeal, and this has improved the motivation of boys in particular. As a result, they performed better than girls in the most recent tests, and the school's overall results were above the national average. Standards in the present Year 6 are not as high, but pupils are achieving well overall compared with their low attainment on entry. Standards in listening and reading are average, and this represents very good progress since Year 3. They have made good progress in speaking and writing though standards are below average and there is room for improvement.
59. Standards in the present Year 3 are well below average. Some pupils use a very limited range of vocabulary and sentence patterns in their speech. A few pupils read at the expected level but most read simpler books than usual for their age. Standards of writing are well below average. Handwriting is often poorly formed and spelling is generally weak.
60. Pupils make good progress through the school in listening because teachers work hard to focus their attention and involve them in class discussions in all subjects. Nevertheless, many older pupils do not speak clearly or at length, particularly boys. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher boosted confidence very effectively by letting pupils talk about their ideas with a partner before answering key questions. As many boys as girls then offered answers. In other lessons, jotting ideas on a small whiteboard helped pupils to think out what to say, with notable increases in the quality of their ideas and expression. By Year 6, pupils are generally confident in speaking informally in Standard English, though many find it difficult to explain formal processes, such as cause and effect in scientific processes. The school has made good progress in building drama into the curriculum, though at present there is no scheme of work or assessment procedure to guide and monitor the development of speaking skills.
61. Pupils make very good progress in reading because fiction books have been carefully graded for difficulty. This allows pupils to choose books likely to interest them from a good range, confident of success. As a result, boys and girls alike enjoy reading, and daily time for quiet reading in each class is used well. All are expected to choose challenging books, and higher attainers have good experience of reading at above the expected level for their age. Pupils with special needs in Years 3 and 4 are withdrawn each day for brief sessions of intensive instruction. The teaching assistant who plays a key role in teaching the programme keeps up

a brisk pace that makes repetition interesting while an element of competition makes these pupils want to do well. Teachers, assistants and parent helpers regularly hear individuals read aloud, coaching their comprehension skills. Pupils across the ability range in Year 6 are confident in explaining plot, character and style to an adult.

62. A good curriculum means that topics for writing have a high interest level, so pupils willingly write for different purposes in a range of styles. Teachers use examples of good writing effectively to show pupils how to express their ideas. Creative writing develops well, including poetry, drama and story. Pupils have sound skills in creating atmosphere through word pictures and dramatic dialogue, correctly punctuated. Higher-attaining pupils use a good range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Most pupils use paragraphs to structure their ideas in news reports and factual accounts. By Year 6, most pupils write in a joined style, though presentation is generally untidy. Handwriting and spelling are significantly weak in all years. These skills are taught separately but pupils make unsatisfactory progress because teachers do not insist on high standards in daily work. Pupils do not use a dictionary or thesaurus often enough, and they need to be trained more rigorously in checking their work for accuracy. Teachers' marking is usually well aimed to give encouragement, but pupils are not given enough opportunity to learn from marking through corrections or further work on their weaknesses.
63. Teaching is good overall. Half the lessons seen were good or better, and others were satisfactory. Strengths in teaching include:
- High expectations for behaviour and clear routines that ensure pupils are receptive.
 - Vigorous questioning, prompting careful thought and demonstrating good speech.
 - Clear explanations of language features in shared texts.
 - Interesting tasks for writing, with a strong stimulus to creativity.
 - Good support by teaching assistants for lower-attaining groups.
64. Weaknesses of otherwise satisfactory lessons include:
- Too little use of the final review (plenary) to check pupils' progress, to give regular practice in formal speech, and to coach speaking skills.
 - Lack of focus and unclear expectations in checking the quality of pupils' writing during, and at the end of, lessons.
 - There are misspellings and incorrectly formed letters in some examples of teachers' writing on the board.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to use non-fiction books and the Internet to find specific information. The school borrows books for study topics from the local authority, but the school library has too little non-fiction to develop pupils' personal interests and independent study skills. The range of writing opportunities planned into other subjects is satisfactory, though not enough emphasis is placed on correct spelling and neat presentation. Pupils achieve well when they plan, improve and correct writing for display, for example the good results achieved by Year 6 in word-processed accounts of life during World War II.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FRENCH)

66. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision as work was only sampled during the inspection, with one lesson seen.
67. Good use is made of a specialist teacher to work with pupils in Years 3 and 4, and this has a good impact on learning. There is a good focus on teaching simple vocabulary through a range of games and songs. As a result, pupils are already becoming confident at responding to simple questions in French. In the lesson seen, interesting activities built well on a Christmas topic, with pupils learning to sing 'Jingle Bells' in French. Pupils had good attitudes

towards learning although some less able pupils found it hard to concentrate for a whole lesson, even though it was only 20 minutes long.

68. The opportunity to learn French enriches the curriculum and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well, especially in developing skills in shape, money, measuring, time and data handling.
- The quality of teaching is good, with very good teaching in Year 6.
- Teaching assistants give very good support in lessons, especially to low-attaining pupils.
- Good use is made of test data to identify pupils who need more support.
- The co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum, although they still lack confidence in applying their mathematical knowledge to practical applications.
- There are occasions when work is not matched at the right level for all pupils.

Commentary

69. There has been good progress since last inspection. The school has introduced more effective assessment procedures and there is now a better balance to the curriculum, with a greater emphasis being placed on developing practical skills. Teaching has improved and, as a result, pupils are now achieving well. Pupils start school with attainment that is well below average and they generally make good progress from year to year. There is good challenge for more able pupils in most lessons and there are a good number of well-trained teaching assistants who give good support to pupils with special educational needs. They often work with these pupils on different tasks from the rest of the class, helping to ensure that needs are met well.
70. Pupils' attainment varies significantly from year to year, due to differences in the capabilities of year groups. In 2003, although test results showed that attainment was below national averages, when account is taken of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, progress over time had been satisfactory.
71. Inspection findings show that attainment in the current Year 6 is higher than in 2003 and pupils are making better progress. The school has analysed test data to identify these key weaknesses and is placing a greater emphasis on developing investigative skills in the current year. This is having a good impact, although there are still occasions when work is not closely enough matched to pupils' needs, slowing the pace of learning. Pupils are now developing a sound knowledge of basis concepts such as shape, money, time and data handling. However, their investigative and problem-solving skills and their understanding of some number concepts such as subtraction and division continue to be less secure. Work is not always presented neatly, leading to careless errors being made in calculations.
72. In 2003, test results showed that there was a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls, with fewer girls reaching the level expected for the end of Year 6 (Level 4). This is not evident in current work, with both boys and girls responding well to teaching. Inspection findings also show that there is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of pupils from different backgrounds.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very good teaching in Year 6. Key features of teaching are:
- Teachers have good expectations of behaviour. This means that there is a good working atmosphere in most lessons, with pupils behaving well and working hard.
 - Very good use is made of ICT to engage pupils and make explanations clear. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do.
 - Questioning is used effectively and there is a very good emphasis on ensuring that new mathematical vocabulary is developed and used correctly. However, teachers do not place enough emphasis on ensuring that key vocabulary is spelt correctly, leading to bad habits being repeated.
 - Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a good range of teaching methods. They expect pupils to explain their strategies when working out calculations and then use this information to address weaknesses and extend learning.
 - Planning shows clear expectations for different groups of pupils. However, there are occasions when planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' previous learning, meaning that work is not matched closely enough to need. This happens especially when numeracy objectives for a particular year group are followed too rigidly, without being adapted to reflect the below-average attainment of pupils.
74. Teaching is very good teaching in Year 6, where there is a very good balance between direct teaching and learning through practical activities. Teachers provide high levels of challenge for all pupils, helping them to apply their knowledge to practical applications. There is a very good pace to learning, with pupils working quickly and purposefully.
75. There are good assessment procedures. A new marking policy is helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve, although all staff are not yet applying it consistently. Good use is made of assessment data to track attainment, set targets and identify those pupils who need additional support. This has been a key factor in the good achievement now being seen in most lessons.
76. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Self-evaluation is well established and there has been useful monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning, as well as some lesson observations. This means that the subject leader has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses, including the need to continue to focus on developing pupils' practical skills. The subject leader is a very good role model in the quality of her teaching, and successfully supports colleagues in developing their own skills. She is very receptive to new ideas; for example, she is currently working on a national project designed to develop pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in different subjects. This is helping to improve their attainment as it makes learning purposeful. Pupils measure in science and design and technology. They apply their mathematical skills in the ICT suite, for example using spreadsheets to carry out calculations and data-handling programs to draw graphs and pie charts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on interesting and relevant practical work that helps pupils to learn quickly and achieve well.

- Teaching is good overall and specialist teachers are used well to teach pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Important scientific vocabulary is promoted well.
- Teachers do not always meet the differing needs of all pupils when providing recorded tasks.
- Expectations for the way pupils present their work are not consistently high enough.

Commentary

78. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. As at that time, pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Year 6. This is confirmed by the results of national tests. Attainment is below average in national tests in most years. There is a slight difference in test results between the attainment of boys and girls, with more boys attaining the higher level in tests. However, this difference was not apparent in the lessons or work scrutiny seen during the inspection, and the co-ordinator has identified the need for teachers to focus particularly on encouraging girls to ensure that they maximise their potential.
79. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average and almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, given their low starting point. Pupils also made good progress at the time of the last inspection. Pupils learn quickly because teachers share their good subject knowledge well by explaining important concepts clearly and by promoting the use of correct scientific vocabulary. Lessons include good opportunities for pupils to use their investigative skills and they develop these securely. Pupils are less confident about explaining their predictions or findings from an investigation and teachers do not always help them to deepen their understanding of scientific principles by asking them to include possible reasons in their written work. Teachers are successful in encouraging good behaviour and most pupils have good attitudes towards learning. Occasionally, some pupils in Year 5 become inattentive when not supported by an adult.
80. Teaching and learning are good overall because two specialist teachers work regularly with all pupils in Years 5 and 6 and other teachers plan together well, developing activities that inspire pupils to concentrate well and collaborate with each other sensibly. For example, pupils in Year 3 enjoyed testing which materials would stretch the furthest. The purpose of each lesson is explained well and this helps pupils to see the relevance of what they are learning to everyday life. Teachers use questioning effectively to promote discussion and make good use of ICT to make whole-class teaching interesting. For example, in one lesson in Year 5, the teacher helped pupils to see how sound waves on the computer screen change when pitch is altered. In a lesson in Year 4, the teacher used a projector to show results taken from temperature probes attached to the computer. The school has identified correctly the need to increase the opportunities for pupils to make use of computers in their work. Lessons have a good pace so that pupils' attention is held well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution towards ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are included in practical tasks and understand what they are expected to do.
81. A weakness in teaching is the inconsistent approach towards encouraging the good presentation of work, and pupils do not always take care with their spelling, making some written work difficult to read. In addition, teachers do not always provide enough support with written tasks for lower-attaining pupils or expect enough from higher-attaining pupils so that they are given suitable challenge. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make although some agree that higher-attaining pupils should be challenged more. Teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection when half the lessons seen were good. Most lessons now provide good opportunities for pupils to learn.
82. Some good newly developed procedures for assessing what pupils have learnt are beginning to be used to involve pupils in evaluating their own work and setting their own targets for development. Assessment procedures are better than at the time of the last inspection when they were satisfactory, though their impact on improving standards has not had time to become established.

83. As at the time of the last inspection, the subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well. Strengths and weaknesses in provision have been identified correctly, following the thorough monitoring of test results and the sampling of lessons. Clear plans to develop the subject are in place and are being implemented successfully. For example, teachers are planning more opportunities for practical work, and booster lessons to teach concepts that pupils find especially difficult to grasp have been organised. The broad and balanced curriculum includes good opportunities to learn through practical work and to make use of numeracy skills by taking measurements during investigations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality leadership and the support of the Education Action Zone mean that the school has made very good progress since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching is good, helping pupils to achieve well and make good progress in developing basic skills as they move through the school.
- There is a well-resourced ICT suite, but it is not fully utilised.
- The school does not have enough software to support learning in the 'control and modelling' aspect of the curriculum.

Commentary

84. There has been very good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Good leadership has brought about a good rise in standards of pupils' attainment, which are now broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Since the last inspection, the school has significantly improved resources and teaching, developed the ICT suite and is now making effective use of a nationally recommended scheme of work to help teachers in planning activities. This has significantly improved the rate at which pupils learn new skills, with particular strengths in word-processing skills and in the pupils' understanding of the wide range of applications of ICT. These aspects are well supported by teaching and resources. Attainment is weakest in the control and modelling aspect of the curriculum, where a lack of resources restricts progress. The school development plan identifies how this weakness is to be addressed over the coming year.
85. Pupils are now achieving well throughout the school. They start school with very weak basic computer skills but these improve significantly as they move through the year groups, with differing needs met well. Pupils with special educational needs are helped by a good number of well-trained teaching assistants in ICT lessons and they also get additional opportunities to use computers when they are withdrawn for additional literacy support. This means that their achievement is also good.
86. Teaching is good overall. Half the lessons seen were good or better, and others were satisfactory. A strength of teaching across the school is the teachers' very good subject knowledge, which means that they are confident about introducing new topics in imaginative ways. Teaching is effective because learning is made purposeful and skills are broken down into small parts to help pupils understand what they have to do. Pupils co-operate well when working in pairs in lessons but they sometimes lack concentration. This is not helped by the layout of the ICT suite, which is in a corridor and is L-shaped so that when the teacher moves out of the 'sight-line', some pupils become inattentive. In most lessons, work is generally well matched to need, taking good account of the weak skills of pupils when they start school. However, there are occasions when more able pupils could be extended further, with the pace of their learning slowed by the less secure skills of some pupils.

87. There are good assessment procedures with pupils being tested regularly and awarded certificates to show how well they are achieving. Parents particularly like this, as they feel it helps to boost their children's self-esteem. Nevertheless, the school is now reviewing assessment procedures to make them more manageable and provide information that can be used to plan work from lesson to lesson. This is a very good example of the school's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement.
88. There is a satisfactory curriculum with a weakness being the limited opportunities available for pupils to practise their skills in different subjects. There are strengths in the range of applications that pupils experience, for example using the Internet to carry out research or send emails, preparing PowerPoint presentations and using the website to keep parents informed about life in school. Older pupils also benefit from the well attended 'media-club', which takes responsibility for maintaining and updating the school's website.
89. The subject has benefited enormously from high-quality leadership and management since the last inspection. Developments have been very carefully planned, with extensive support from the educational action zone helping to improve resources and provide training for members of staff. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, has very high aspirations and is very open to new ideas, for example trialling the use of interactive white boards and 'e-portfolios'. This means that the school is well placed to develop the subject further.
90. There are well-established strategies for evaluating provision and effective monitoring through a range of strategies, such as looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning, meaning that there is a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. A new monitoring policy has identified the need to give the co-ordinator greater opportunity to observe pupils at work. This will help to ensure that the co-ordinator has a full picture of provision across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. Teachers work hard to ensure that the teaching of ICT skills is made purposeful by linking it with work in other subjects. This is effective, and pupils make use of ICT in subjects such as science, history and mathematics to make graphs, carry out research using CD-ROMs or the Internet or to word-process their writing. However, there are missed opportunities to develop links across the curriculum. Available resources are not fully utilised and younger pupils, in particular, are not given enough opportunity to practise skills.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach the expected standards by Year 6.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities.
- Pupils are given good opportunities for independent research.

Commentary

92. Three lessons were seen. Evidence from these lessons and samples of work show that pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well. Pupils' interest is increased through practical experiences and visits. Standards have been sustained at a satisfactory level since the previous inspection.

93. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well prepared and resourced, giving pupils good opportunities to learn from direct experiences such as handling objects from the past and finding clues in pictures. There is good scope for pupils to carry out research, for instance into recent history through talking to older people and by searching the Internet. Year 6 have covered a wide range of topics in their current unit on recent history, showing good recall of facts in discussion and sound understanding in written work. Higher attaining pupils achieve well, explaining cause and effect accurately. Tasks are appropriately adjusted so that pupils with lower attainment are able to record their learning without being handicapped by weak writing skills.

Geography

94. Geography was sampled but not enough evidence was available to make secure judgements on the quality of provision or standards at the end of Year 6. No lessons were seen. Standards of work in Years 3 and 5 are lower than generally found, but pupils with average attainment or below achieve well. Year 3 pupils show sound understanding of the likely impact of a new road on the locality, but their diagrams and labels lack precise detail. Pupils in Year 5 use a good range of symbols in map work, with sound improvement in the detail of diagrams, but their written accounts lack a clear structure. More challenging work could be set for pupils in Year 5 with the potential for higher attainment, though the standard of their work is satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach the expected standards by Year 6.
- There are good links with assemblies and the programme for pupils' personal development.

Commentary

95. Three lessons were seen as well as samples of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the main features of other world faiths. They identify significant similarities and differences between the customs and beliefs of these faiths. Their factual records are accurate and often show insight into the spiritual significance of religious practices. However, presentation is generally untidy, and the work of lower-attaining pupils is often brief. Pupils with the potential for higher attainment are not consistently set more difficult work than other pupils, year on year. Standards by Year 6 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as at the previous inspection.
96. Teaching is good overall. It is well planned and resourced. Questioning at a brisk pace is used well to probe earlier learning at the outset. Year 6 pupils performed well in the challenging task of identifying differences between different versions of the Nativity story told in the Gospels and by historians. Their attention was held effectively by a well-focused introduction in which the teacher showed good subject knowledge. Other teachers similarly give a clear lead in instruction and discussion. Pupils show positive attitudes, respect and sound understanding. It was a weakness in a lesson seen in Year 4 that all pupils were set a simple drawing task. This left higher-attaining pupils too little time to give their best efforts to tackling the more challenging work set as an extension.
97. The co-ordinator is new in post but provision is soundly guided by the new locally agreed syllabus. There is no established assessment procedure or means of monitoring pupils' progress. School assemblies make a good contribution to understanding, mainly of Christian worship but with reference to the beliefs of other faiths. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

This aspect of the curriculum was not an area of focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form judgements on overall provision in these subjects.

Art and design

98. No lessons were on the timetable during the inspection. Sketchbooks and displays of work were scrutinised. Sketchbooks show that whilst pupils have appropriate opportunities for evaluating their own work and that of famous artists they do not develop painting and drawing skills well enough. They demonstrate limited knowledge of how to mix colour and their work is not well observed. Work on display around the school does not show how pupils communicate their own ideas and develop creativity.

Design and technology

99. Two lessons were observed and a few samples of work were scrutinised. Teaching and learning were good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. In the good lesson in Year 6, the teacher provided clear guidance, enabling pupils to evaluate their structures made from art straws and to consider how joins could be improved. Pupils made suitable step-by-step plans for their models, though they did not show dimensions on their intended designs. In the satisfactory lesson in Year 4, pupils had made satisfactory frames for a photograph, though shortages of equipment limited the accuracy and quality of their work. For example, brushes provided were too thick for pupils to make the delicate decoration shown on their plans, too many pupils were sharing one water pot leading to several accidents, and it was not possible to mix all colours or tones from the paint supplied. The lack of a sink in the classroom made the organisation of the lesson difficult. Pupils in Year 3 learn appropriate skills in joining different materials together.

Music

100. One lesson was observed, along with hymn practice and orchestra club. In the satisfactory lesson, in Year 6, good links were made with pupils' literacy work as they wrote lyrics for a song based on a book they had read in class. However, the theme did not inspire some pupils who found it hard to concentrate and complete the task.
101. Well-attended clubs for orchestra and choir make a good contribution to the learning of girls and boys involved. The choir sings sweetly with good diction and the orchestra keeps together well when pupils play simple parts on the recorder, violin, guitar and tuned percussion. Whole-school singing during hymn practice is satisfactory.

Physical education

102. Two lessons in dance, a gym lesson and part of a netball practice were observed during the inspection. Teaching and learning were very good in one lesson and good in the other two. Teaching and learning in dance were also judged to be good at the time of the last inspection. In the very good lesson in Year 4, very good use was made of pupils to demonstrate good sequences of movements; other pupils and the teacher provided supportive advice, enabling them to improve their performances further. By the end of the lesson, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, demonstrated very good concentration and greatly improved skills in performing twisting and rolling movements. All three lessons were well structured and clear guidance was provided, enabling pupils to persevere, co-operate with each other well and enjoy taking part.
103. A netball club provides good opportunities for girls and boys to improve ball skills and to learn to play as a team.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing personal and social skills through a range of activities, including specific lessons.
- Good quality teaching helps pupils achieve well, with learning made interesting and relevant.
- Provision is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator.

Commentary

104. Standards of attainment are as expected for their age in Year 6 with pupils achieving well. As they move through the school, pupils become more responsible and more responsive to the expectations of the school. By Year 6, pupils understand what is meant by a healthy lifestyle and they happily explore their feelings and talk about issues that concern them in lessons and circle time. The school council meets regularly and is effective in teaching pupils about some of the key features of a democracy. Older pupils are able to take part in a media club, which has responsibility for maintaining and updating the school website. They have to apply for the role by writing a letter of application. This helps them to appreciate how large organisations work. Pupils take these different responsibilities very seriously and carry them out very sensibly.
105. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are confident about teaching the subject and have good expectations of how pupils should work and behave. They plan an interesting range of activities to support learning. For example, in a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher planned an exciting activity where pupils interviewed each other about what it means to be a friend. They did this very sensibly, identifying key features of 'friendship' and then sharing their ideas with the rest of the class. The school has successfully introduced a programme of 'thinking skills' which was used effectively in this lesson to help pupils to explain how they were expected to respond in different situations.
106. Leadership and management are good and, as a result, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The most important development is that specific PSHE and citizenship lessons are now timetabled. This has raised the profile of the subject across the school. Resources have also been improved and a new scheme of work is being developed to support teachers in their planning. The co-ordinator effectively monitors provision, including seeking pupils' views on what they know about drugs so that the school could identify in which year group they should start the drugs' awareness programme.
107. There is a good curriculum which makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop personal and social skills through a range of activities, including lessons, visits and visitors. Teachers constantly reinforce personal and social skills in the way that they deal with problems and give pupils opportunities to talk about issues that concern them. The school takes part in a number of award schemes, such as the Healthy Schools' Award and the Essex Schools' Award. These focus on how personal and social skills are fostered and reflect the emphasis the school places on ensuring that pupils develop good values and are well prepared for their experiences in later life.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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