

INSPECTION REPORT

THORPEDENE INFANTS SCHOOL

Delaware Road, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend-on-Sea

Unique reference number: 115265

Headteacher: Mrs A M Meek

Lead inspector: Chrissie Pittman

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th September 2003

Inspection number: 258196

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infants school
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	276
School address:	Delaware Road Shoeburyness Southend-on-Sea
Postcode:	SS3 9NP
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Fax number:	(01702) 584698
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thorpedene Infants is a Foundation school situated on the outskirts of Southend-on-Sea and draws most of its pupils from the immediate catchment area, which is a mixture of mostly social housing and some owner-occupied homes. The catchment is in one of the most deprived wards in Europe, although pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is bigger than other infants schools. There are 276 boys and girls, aged four to seven years. The population is mixed and although most pupils are white British, the percentage of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is low. Most, but not all, children attend a nursery before joining the school. The attainment on entry is low. Pupil mobility is high. The percentage of pupils thought to be eligible for free school meals is average. The number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is above average but the number of pupils identified as needing extra help and for whom additional money is provided is below average. The school has achieved the following: School Achievement award, Gold Arts Mark, Quality Mark, Healthy School award, Active Mark and the Investors in People standard.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18275	C Pittman	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, religious education.
9708	S Daintrey	Lay inspector	
22657	M Madeley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English, music, physical education, English as an additional language (EAL).
20063	G Slamon	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography.
18936	C Frankl	Team inspector	Special educational needs (SEN)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school, which continues to improve well in challenging circumstances. All pupils progress very well and achievement is high. Pupils are keen to learn and relate well to each other, in what parents think is 'a very good family atmosphere'. Most of the teaching is good and any minor weaknesses are dealt with efficiently. The school addresses the needs of all its pupils effectively. It makes very good provision for its high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Class teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of these children and teaching assistants make a very valuable impact on their education. The headteacher's leadership is very strong and managers are quick to identify and tackle any weaknesses. The school has a strong partnership with its parents, is well regarded in the community and offers **very good value** for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

Strengths

- Most pupils are eager to learn and make very good progress.
- Standards are rising and achievement is high in comparison to similar schools.
- Teaching is good.
- The headteacher's leadership is inspirational.
- Teaching assistants support the learning of pupils very effectively.
- The school promotes very good relationships, including racial harmony among the pupils.
- Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good.

Weaknesses

- Writing through the curriculum.
- The provision for religious education and the standards the pupils achieve in this subject.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection

Five years ago, inspectors found that standards achieved by pupils were good, and the quality of education, the management and efficiency of the school were very good. Since then, the school has maintained its high standards in these areas and improved in a number of other ways. Pupils are now better assessed with individual targets. This has resulted in many more pupils achieving higher levels in science and mathematics. Writing still needs to improve further in all classes. This weakness is largely attributable to the school's very challenging circumstances, such as very low standards on entry to the school and the significant proportion of pupils with SEN. Overall, the school's response to these key issues from the previous inspection has been very positive. Other areas that have improved are the provision for pupils' multicultural understanding, assessment in the foundation subjects and management. Governors are now more involved in supporting the curriculum and knowing the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff development has been much improved and teaching assistants are very well trained. The school has improved well since its previous inspection and, given the very good quality of its leadership and commitment of its staff, it is well placed to develop even further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	D	C	C	A
writing	D	D	D	B
mathematics	D	B	C	A

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

Achievement

Most children, when they start school, are achieving standards that are low for their age. However, provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils achieve well so when they enter Year 1 they are attaining standards in the early learning goals that are in line with expectations in most areas. By Year 2, pupils are achieving highly in reading and mathematics and very well in writing when compared to similar schools. This is very good achievement. When pupils' results are compared with those of pupils in all schools, standards are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. The school exceeded its challenging targets last year in mathematics, met them in reading, but just missed them in writing. There has been an upward trend in the last three years and this is largely the result of the successful targeting and monitoring of pupils. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are developed well. Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour in and out of the classroom are good. Attendance is satisfactory and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good** overall. **Teaching is predominantly good** throughout the school. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. There is a positive ethos for learning in all classrooms. The best teaching is in English and mathematics. Very good planning produces dynamic and inspiring lessons where pupils' learning is very good. Teaching is satisfactory but less effective in some lessons seen in religious education, physical education, history and literacy in Years 1 and 2, where work is sometimes not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and applied across the subjects of the curriculum. Exemplary teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with SEN and EAL.

The **curriculum** is carefully planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills coupled with enriching first hand experiences in the arts, music and physical education. Provision for **pupils' care, guidance and support is very good**. They feel valued and are involved very well in their learning. **The school works well in partnership with parents, other schools and the community.** It is well regarded in the local community and frequently oversubscribed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's leadership is very good. She knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them. **Senior managers are well focused** on improving standards and supporting all pupils. **The governance of the school is good.** Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and monitor the school's performance effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with almost all aspects of the school. A few parents and pupils felt that some children were unkind to others. Inspectors found that the school dealt with any incidences of oppressive behaviour rapidly and effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve writing through the curriculum; and
- improve the provision for religious education and pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. Statutory requirements for religious education are not met as the subject is not taught in enough depth to satisfy the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards, overall, are generally **close to the national average** in most subjects. Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves, and enable them to reach at least the levels expected of them. Pupils' achievement is **well above average**, overall, when results are compared to those of schools in a similar context.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Pupils in reception make good progress attaining the goals expected of children of this age in most areas of learning.
- **Achievement** by the end of Year 2 is very good in reading and mathematics and good in writing. This is very good achievement, overall, considering pupils' low start.
- Pupils' **attainment** in the national tests when compared to all schools is in line with expectations in reading and mathematics but below average in writing.
- **Achievement** of pupils with SEN is very good.

Weaknesses

- Writing through other subjects of the curriculum.
- The standards attained in religious education.

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

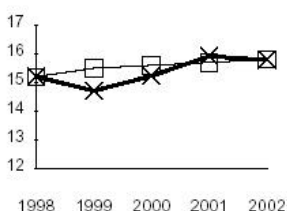
Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.7 (13.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.6 (16.9)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

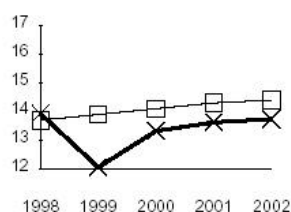
Commentary

1. Most children start school with standards that are low for their age. This is partly due to the socio economic condition of the area. However, teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and by the time pupils have reached Year 1 they have made good progress in their learning, and have reached the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving results that are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. This is largely due to a combination of factors, such as the high mobility of pupils and the high proportion of pupils with SEN. When results are judged against those in schools in a similar context, pupils' standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. This represents very good achievement. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was above the national average in mathematics and in line in reading and writing. The school exceeded its challenging targets last year in mathematics, met them in reading but just missed them in writing. The school's upward trend is largely the result of the successful targeting and monitoring of pupils. The school analyses attainment by gender well showing that there is little difference between the overall attainment of boys and girls.

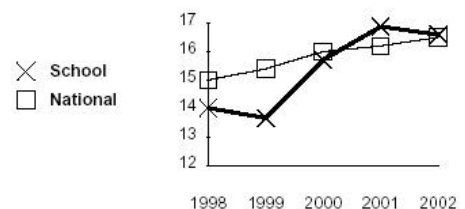
Key Stage 1 trend:
Reading, Average NC points
School vs National



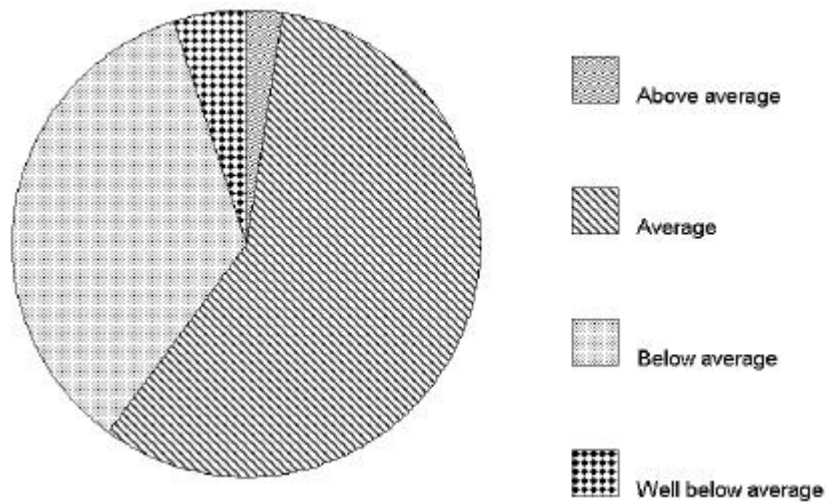
Key Stage 1 trend:
Writing, Average NC points
School vs National



Key Stage 1 trend:
Mathematics, Average NC points
School vs National



2. The chart below shows the percentages of lessons seen in the inspection in which pupils reached standards that were well below average, below average, average and above average from ages four to seven.



3. Provision for pupils in the reception class to reach all six Early Learning goals is good and pupils achieve well in each of them by the time they leave reception.
4. In English, currently standards for seven-year-olds in reading are average. In speaking, listening and writing, they are below average. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 2. In science, teachers' assessments of seven-year-old pupils in 2002 showed that standards were judged to be above the national average. However, in lessons seen and from a scrutiny of pupils' work, standards are average. Attainment at the higher level was estimated to be close to the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Overall, achievement is good in English and science and very good in mathematics.
5. The National Literacy Strategy is well implemented in the school and is making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The emphasis the school places on reading and the opportunities provided for it is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm for books. By Year 2, standards in writing are below average because the opportunities for extended writing in other subjects are restricted. Where it is being used in other lessons there is a positive impact on pupils' achievements. The Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented within mathematics lessons. The use of numeracy in other lessons has been developed effectively. Pupils are beginning to apply different techniques to solve mathematical problems effectively. The pace of their learning is very good throughout the school. By the time they leave school, most are developing good numeracy skills.
6. The provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. Virtually all pupils reach, and some exceed, the standards expected by the end of Year 2. Given that many pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment and a high number have special educational needs, this represents very good achievement. The computer suite is a valuable resource. The use of this room, the training staff has received and the good teaching, as observed in the lessons seen, contribute to the good progress pupils are making.
7. Standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects except art and design, design and technology, and music, where they are above, and religious education, where they are below.
8. All pupils with SEN and EAL achieve well in lessons and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well over time. By the time these pupils leave the school, their progress in literacy and numeracy is very good because they are supported very effectively in lessons by both teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Their attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Children like coming to school.
- They behave and treat each other well.
- They are developing a good understanding of a wide range of cultures.
- The school works effectively to promote their moral and social development.

Weaknesses

- Pupils' spiritual development is not as well promoted as their moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

9. The vast majority of children enjoy their lessons and the activities provided by the school. One of the best things about the school, according to the pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are the teachers and other adults who help them. The pupils' respect for the staff means that they are usually willing to settle down and listen in lessons, to work hard and to do their best. This contributes significantly to the good progress that all groups of pupils make as they move through the school. Older pupils greatly appreciate the range of extra opportunities available to them, such as clubs, trips and learning to play musical instruments.
10. Pupils behave well because all adults clearly and consistently set high expectations of how the children should behave at all times of the school day. Pupils are involved in deciding on the rules for their classroom and they value the rewards they receive for working hard and behaving well. They play constructively at break and lunchtimes because the school provides a wide range of structured activities, games and equipment, and the teaching and mid-day assistants who supervise them are skilled and well trained. Very occasionally, a few pupils forget how to behave to the school's high standards.
11. Pupils are friendly and tolerant of each other. No pupil mentioned, in their questionnaire or in discussion, that bullying or harassment is a problem. Most parents are confident and school records confirm that, when the school is informed, any issues are dealt with immediately and very effectively. Some pupils are concerned about the behaviour of other children, but when questioned they said that they were thinking of much older children outside the school.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	286	3	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Chinese	4	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.

12. One boy with particularly challenging behaviour and personal circumstances was excluded on a number of occasions last year for injuring staff and pupils. This situation occurs rarely. The school has a wide range of strategies and good links with outside agencies which are usually successful in helping pupils with behavioural difficulties to express, understand and cope with their feelings.
13. Many children start school lacking in social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Because of the highly skilled teaching and the rich range of activities provided, they make good progress in their personal development. For example, they learn about how to be a friend and have opportunities to perform in front of others such as in the nativity play. Pupils are more aware of the diversity of cultures in Britain than at the last inspection because provision for multi-cultural education has improved. A very successful multi-cultural week was held earlier in the year with visiting speakers and lots of practical things to do like dressing up in Indian clothes. This provision contributes to the very good racial harmony in the school. However it is insufficiently supported by a religious education curriculum where pupils learn about the religious beliefs of other cultures.
14. Pupils' spiritual development, while satisfactory, is not as well promoted as other aspects of their personal development, nor as strongly as it was at the last inspection. Assemblies make a sound contribution but opportunities for reflection on deeper issues are not always managed well. Religious education is not having a sufficient impact on developing pupils' spiritual awareness. Opportunities in other subjects do occur but are not specifically planned.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

15. The attendance of most pupils is satisfactory and their punctuality is good. The school's attendance rate in the 2001/2 academic year was broadly in line with the national average and an improvement over the previous years, including the last inspection. This was due to the successful efforts of the school, in close liaison with the Education Welfare Officer and the consortium of local schools, to follow up absences and lateness more rigorously and to help parents understand the importance of their children attending regularly. Absence rates rose again in 2002/3 because a very small number of families left the area for a while.
16. SEN pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have very good attitudes to learning and work well both with other children and adults.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. One in four lessons were satisfactory and in one in six lessons teaching was very good or excellent. The rest of the teaching - three in five lessons - was good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Teaching in mathematics is very good.
- Most teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and insist on high standards of behaviour.

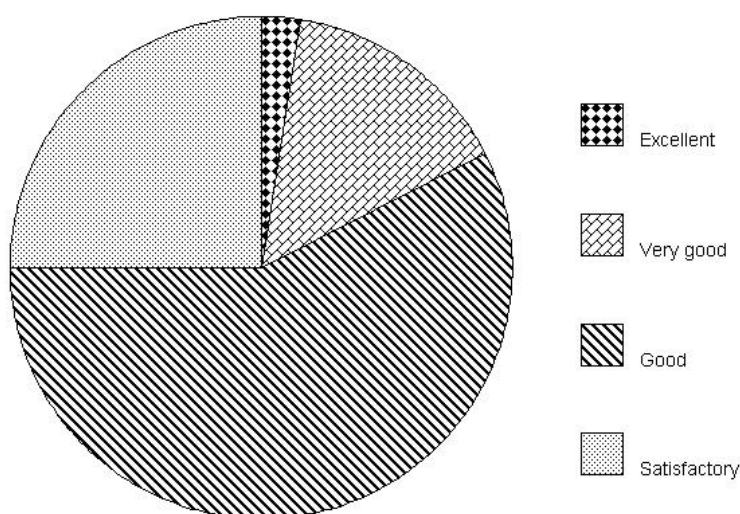
- Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils' capabilities and plan their lessons well. Children consequently enjoy their learning and achieve good standards.
- Lesson objectives are clear and pupils understand them.
- Assessment is usually used well in English and mathematics to inform future lessons. Its is less well developed in other subjects.
- Pupils with SEN are well taught; teaching assistants are exemplary.

Weaknesses

- The teaching of religious education is weak because not enough time is spent on the subject and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is not strong.

Commentary

17. The teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching in most of the lessons was good, in some it was very good and in one it was excellent. A few lessons were satisfactory. The good quality of teaching observed at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and slightly improved.



18. Teaching is very good in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is good throughout the school, and more-able pupils are particularly well challenged in reception and Year 2, in science, art and design, ICT, geography, religious education, music, physical education and history. There are certain features that are common to many of the very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the satisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes pupils think. In mathematics, where many of these lessons are found, there is always a demanding 'mental starter' to engage pupils in thinking about the objectives of the lesson. The teacher is indicating, from the outset, that he or she expects pupils to work hard but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning.
19. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils were obviously confident when challenged to think by the high quality questioning of the teacher. A great sense of fun was inspired by the teacher, and the lesson encapsulated a real love of learning among the pupils. All the pupils, regardless of ability, achieved the objective.

Example of outstanding practice

The exemplary support given to pupils by teaching assistants creates a learning environment where achievement flourishes.

The main strength of the teaching is the outstanding use of the team of dedicated teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Members of the support team are confident and well involved in planning so that they are very clear about their roles. In the excellent lesson in Year 2, for example, the interaction between the class teacher and the teaching assistant resulted in outstanding achievement by pupils with special educational needs. These pupils were challenged by their teacher to take the assistant away and teach her to count. This resulted in a high level of discussion, reflecting the warm relationships established, and pupils considering many different ways of showing someone how to count to 89. By the end of the session, all of these pupils understood that $89 = 8 \text{ tens and } 9 \text{ units}$ and were very proud that the teaching assistant could, too!

20. Once teachers have gained pupils' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks, so that there is no opportunity for pupils' concentration to flag. This was demonstrated in a good ICT lesson with Year 1 where pupils were encouraged to take their learning one step further when they were asked to use their imagination to produce more intricate patterns. Usually, there is little need for obvious management of pupils; behaviour is good and there are good relationships, based on mutual respect, between pupils and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or lack of effort. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and say that the teachers do well to help them become mature and responsible. With the exception of religious education, where provision does not meet statutory regulations, the curriculum is very well planned to match the needs of all pupils. Most teachers monitor and adapt their daily planning in English and mathematics to take account of pupils' progress and capabilities and to change what is taught lesson by lesson.
21. Lessons usually provide a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both the teacher and fellow pupils will be sensitive and supportive. The teachers also use resources very effectively in their lessons. This is best illustrated in the Foundation Stage. Here, the planning encompasses all the areas of learning, and the work children have to do is disguised effectively as 'having fun'. The activities are interesting and the children are totally captivated. Resources are inventive and make pupils' learning more meaningful.
22. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with SEN with very good support and tasks are matched well to their needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) has a very good understanding of special needs within the school and liaises well with teachers and support staff. Class teachers take account of pupils' individual education plans when planning work for the class. Teaching in withdrawal groups is very good. Learning-support assistants are exemplary. They provide very good support for pupils and work well with class teachers, continually assessing pupils' needs and standards. Their teaching is accurately focused on pupils' needs, because they continually assess pupils' progress and use this information to plan the next steps for learning. Support for pupils with statements of special educational need is good and all pupils with SEN are well integrated into the school community. The support given to the very few pupils whose first language is not English is good. They benefit from the same level of support from teachers and teaching assistants but are not as well resourced in terms of bi-lingual books and tapes etc.
23. The good teaching results in good learning and achievement that is usually very good, considering the low starting point and challenging circumstances of most of the children.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.5%)	6 (15.0%)	23 (57.5%)	10 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	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.

Assessment

The school has a clear and comprehensive assessment policy which gives good guidance to staff. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The procedures in place for English, mathematics and information and communication technology are particularly effective and are helping to raise standards.

Weaknesses

- Assessment procedures in all other subjects are less developed.

Commentary

24. The school is currently trialling useful assessment procedures in other subjects and will examine their usefulness at the end of this academic year. There has been good progress made in this area since the last inspection. This is mainly due to well-informed leadership. There is a clear understanding of the purpose and use of assessment. Teachers' plans make clear that they will assess learning in respect of the learning objectives they have set. There is a marking policy in place and teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Good feedback is given to pupils in lessons and they are told how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants make regular notes on what pupils can do and on the quality of their contributions in whole class questioning and answering sessions.
25. Results of various tests are closely analysed to mark the performance of different groups of pupils and individuals, including pupils from different ethnic groups. Teachers identify what progress each group and individual pupils have made and use this information to set specific targets for future improvement. This system also identifies pupils to be targeted for extra help and, more recently, pupils who are particularly gifted or talented. The school's own procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils are good. Assessment for pupils with SEN is very good (see specified feature).

The curriculum

The curriculum is of **good** quality because it is well planned to the needs of all and achieves the school's aim of educating the whole child.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used well.
- Strong emphasis on the arts.
- High quality planning.
- Very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Well-trained staff making good use of ample accommodation and resources.
- The curriculum for pupils with SEN and EAL is good.

Weaknesses

- Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

26. The curriculum is broad and is carefully planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills, coupled with enriching first hand experiences, like visits. The arts are given a prominent place with pupils learning an exciting range of dance, art, music and design skills. Religious education is taught, but there is insufficient time given to it, resulting in poor coverage of the agreed syllabus. Other subjects are regularly evaluated, reviewed and edited in line with recent changes.
27. In the Foundation Stage, provision for the few children with special educational needs is very good. There are strong links with outside agencies, which helps smooth the transition to school. Rigorous but sensitive systems are in place to identify and support the learning of these children.
28. Extra-curricular activities and visits are a major strength of the school and greatly enhance pupils' learning. Pupils and parents also think that clubs are very good. They are oversubscribed, so much so that several clubs are rotated around the three classes to give everyone an opportunity.
29. There are ample well-trained and experienced teachers. They know how to use the literacy and numeracy strategies well to raise standards and have also kept abreast of developments in other subjects, including the use of information and communication technology. The work of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are adequate in number, well trained and appropriately deployed for the pupils to gain maximum benefit from their input.
30. Accommodation is spacious, well cared for and enhanced by bright and cheerful displays of pupils' work. The large classrooms are ideal for teaching. The school is experimenting with the library in a hut away from the main building for this year. Most schools prefer a more central location for this vital learning resource and the school might bear this in mind when it reviews its access, position and use. Playground equipment and markings are delightful, well used and give purpose to break times, supporting good behaviour. Resources are ample for the curriculum. New reading books help maintain interest in this subject and the computer suite is used well by all classes. The Foundation Stage classes have ample resources, including well-planned role-play areas.
31. The curriculum for pupils with SEN and EAL is good. A very strong feature of curriculum provision is the use and deployment of teaching assistants, who are very effective in promoting learning and enabling pupils to participate fully in school life.

Care guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care and support for the pupils. They feel valued and are involved very well in their learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- All staff pay very good attention to ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support for the pupils.
- Parents are pleased with the arrangements for settling their children into school.
- Pupils are very well involved in reviewing their progress and achievements.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

32. The care provided for the pupils is a strength of the school, as it was at the previous inspection. All staff work very effectively as a team, and with outside agencies, to help all pupils feel secure and valued in the school. This means that pupils can benefit from the good teaching they receive and so they are able to make good progress in their learning and development. It is a tribute to the leadership and management of the headteacher that the very good systems and training for ensuring that the school is a safe and caring environment for all

pupils, whatever their backgrounds and circumstances, have been maintained. The site manager and governors work very well together to make sure that the school buildings and site are well-maintained and free from hazards. The mid-day supervisors have been given the skills and equipment and training to make outdoor play at lunchtime a healthy, safe and 'fun' experience for the pupils. An innovative feature of the school's provision is the daily exercises, led by the teaching assistants, which take place at morning break-time as part of a drive to improve the health and fitness of the pupils. The headteacher is very experienced in child protection matters and makes sure that staff and governors are knowledgeable about their roles.

33. Teaching assistants play an extremely effective role in providing continuity of care and support for the pupils throughout the school day. In the reception classes, they help to settle new children in and to comfort them if they get upset. One teaching assistant has particular skills in supporting pupils with emotional or behavioural problems. Teaching assistants make notes on how well the pupils are doing in specific tasks identified by the teacher, and teachers use their knowledge of the pupils very well to help them raise their achievements, especially in English and mathematics.
34. The care and guidance for pupils with SEN is very good. The needs of pupils are communicated effectively to all staff. The school is in the early stages of implementing its strategy for supporting gifted and talented pupils. It has identified a few pupils who are high-achievers in particular areas and they are appropriately stretched in lessons. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language are cared for well.
35. Pupils throughout the school are invited to express their views in circle-time, when they sit with the teacher to discuss a topic such as 'what rules shall we have for our classroom this year'. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are involved in reviewing their progress each term by selecting pieces of work for inclusion in their records of achievement folder and drawing or writing about the things they have enjoyed and what they would like to improve. This is very good practice because it helps them take responsibility for their learning. From questionnaires, discussions and the contributions which last year's Year 2 pupils made at their leavers' assembly, it is clear that the older pupils greatly appreciate the help given them by all the adults in the school and feel ready to move on to the next stage of their education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Most parents provide good support for the school.
- Parents are given good information about the school and their children's progress.
- The school has very good links with charities and international projects.
- The school works closely with local schools and agencies.

Weaknesses

- A small number of parents do not support the school and their children's learning.

Commentary

36. The school is well regarded in the local community and is frequently oversubscribed. The leadership of the headteacher has ensured that links with parents, other schools and the community have been maintained at a similar level to the last inspection, and continue to benefit the pupils and the work of the school.
37. Most parents support the school because they like the wide social mix, the caring family atmosphere and the range of activities, such as clubs. They make a strong contribution to their children's achievements in music and to the school's provision of cultural education. For example, the nativity play is a highly popular event in the school calendar and a significant number of parents pay for their children to receive tuition in musical instruments. A small

number of parents worked with the pupils as part of multicultural week to produce a striking piece of artwork which now serves as a focus in assemblies. The Parents Association is a very active organisation serving both the infant and junior schools which, although it is not fully representative of the whole parent body, does raise significant sums of money, which spent on books and computer equipment.

38. The school provides good channels of communication between parents and staff. Teachers are accessible at the end of the school day, newsletters are clear and informative, and end-of year reports are helpful in identifying the pupils' strengths and areas for improvement in their academic and personal development. Useful guidance on how to help their children's learning is provided in written materials, such as the home-school book, and in workshops and courses run by the school and the adult education service. Despite the school's efforts, a minority of parents do not respond and leave the education of their children totally to the school. This hinders the progress of some pupils, for example, in reading. The school is aware that more needs to be done to try to involve these parents, including those who speak English as an additional language. One suggestion is to consider the feasibility of employing specialist staff to undertake a programme of home visits.
39. The school works very well to help pupils understand that they are part of a wider community. An impressive feature is their fundraising for local, national and international charities so that children learn about the importance of helping others, ranging from the homeless in the local area to school children in South Africa. The school makes good use of resources in the community, local schools and other agencies to enhance its provision for the pupils. For example, pupils have heard a visitor share his enthusiasm for Indian culture and taken part in music festivals and sports days with other schools. The headteacher ensures that the school plays an important part in the local consortium of schools and the local teacher-training agency. This results in useful joint initiatives, effective transfer arrangements and a steady supply of new teachers who are already familiar with the school.
40. The school works effectively with parents of pupils with SEN and EAL and has appropriate contacts with professionals outside school to support their work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governors run the school well. The headteacher's leadership is **very good**. Senior managers are well focused on improving standards and co-ordinators are committed to supporting pupils' learning through a rich and varied curriculum. The school is managed **very effectively**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses; they challenge and support senior managers well.
- The headteacher's clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school are excellent.
- Senior managers are committed professionals who, by creating effective teams, have established a very good learning ethos for both staff and pupils.
- Teaching is very well monitored in English and mathematics, but has only just started to be monitored well in other subjects.
- Senior managers are totally committed to ensuring that every child is challenged according to their individual capability. Inclusion is very good.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. Data is used very well to monitor the school's performance.
- The school manages its finances very well, ensuring it gets the best value for money when committing resources or spending school funds.

Weaknesses

- Monitoring of the curriculum provision and standards in religious education.

Commentary

41. The governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very committed to the needs of the school and its pupils. With the help of regular reports from the headteacher, they monitor the school's strengths and weaknesses well. This gives them a clear insight into the work being done and the progress that the pupils are making. Governors effectively challenge the senior management team to account for weaknesses and plan for success. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The feature that stands out in the leadership of the school is the complete absence of complacency in all areas of its work. Parents say that the headteacher is not easily satisfied and is always seeking to improve the school; this is certainly true. She is respected by her staff and trusted by the pupils. She knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them, and has established a good ethos of striving to improve. This is one of the main reasons for the school's increasingly good reputation in the community.
42. The staff work well together. They believe that they are very well supported by senior colleagues in their efforts to raise standards. Monitoring reports show that the school is self-critical and evaluative of its practices. There are many examples of this approach in action. Each year, there are 'SATs' reviews where co-ordinators are held accountable for examination results in their subjects. In areas where there have been relatively less successful results, such as writing in Year 2, the school is quick to take action.
43. The school's self-evaluation and its use in improving standards is very good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have undertaken a school-wide evaluation, with a focus on improvement. This has given clear educational direction to the work of the school. Curriculum co-ordinators effectively evaluate their subjects and areas for development are included in the school's improvement and management plan, so that priorities can be established over the long and short term. Effective monitoring is clearly defined by the headteacher and governors. It is aimed at helping the school to be clear about how well the teachers teach and how well the pupils are learning. However, although co-ordinators monitor teaching well in English and mathematics, this has only just started to be extended to science and the non-core subjects, and has not picked up the lack of provision and subsequent underachievement in religious education. There is a good balance of expertise amongst the staff, and their good subject knowledge enables them to review the impact each subject is having on pupils' achievements and progress. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. The headteacher and governors staff the school well, including a good supply of well-trained teacher assistants in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils also benefit from the excellent training given to the mid-day assistants.
44. Financial planning is very good and the budget is used very well. The strategic use of resources is very good. The targeting of funds to areas where there is the most need of improvement has been very effective.
45. The impact of the leadership and management is such that, in this school, the highest standards are sought for all pupils according to their capability. Most achieve very well and make very good progress from a very low starting point. The leadership and management have been very successful in establishing a productive climate for learning and promoting inclusion throughout the school. This is despite the school's challenging circumstances, such as very low standards on entry to the school, the high mobility of pupils and the high proportion of pupils with SEN. This is an effective school and provides very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	768,245
Total expenditure	778,112
Expenditure per pupil	2,819

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,558
Balance carried forward to the next year	21,691

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Special Educational Needs assessment

46. Assessment for pupils with SEN is very good. Pupils entering the school are carefully assessed using a wide range of appropriate strategies. Teachers monitor pupils' progress effectively against individual education plan (IEP) targets on a regular basis and use this information to plan the next stages of learning. IEPs identify activities for teaching assistants to do with pupils. Teaching assistants base their work on IEP targets, which are broken down into manageable short-term units. Pupil progress is carefully recorded and intervention programmes are adjusted accordingly. Joint assessment between teachers and teaching assistants is well planned and effective.
47. Although there are currently no statemented pupils in school, previous records show that annual reviews are carried out and both parents and pupils are appropriately involved.
48. The quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is very good. Teachers plan carefully and work effectively with teaching assistants, so that pupils are motivated and engaged. All staff have high expectations that ensures the pupils work hard and remain interested in their work. The teaching assistants are very effective in the daily short individual lessons. Their teaching is accurately focused on pupils' needs, because they continually assess pupils' progress and use this information to plan the next steps for learning. The best teaching occurs when teachers tell pupils at the beginning of lessons what they expect them to learn.
49. Most pupils do know what they have to do to improve their performance. Their work is carefully marked and the most effective feedback to pupils is provided through discussion in lessons, where the adults continually check pupils understanding before moving on.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Foundation Stage is very well managed. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how the classes will be organised. She uses her time well to monitor, evaluate and support the teaching of her colleagues. Children's work is carefully checked and, once they are settled into school, progress is rigorously monitored, though this is much better in English and mathematics than other areas. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The new government guidelines for this age group have been adopted successfully and assessment procedures altered to take them into account. Teaching is good, overall, in every Early Learning area. The teaching assistants have remained at a very high standard and resources and accommodation have been improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is **good** and children achieve well. Most children reach the Early Learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Well-balanced provision promotes good learning.
- All staff are good role models.

Weaknesses

- Long periods spent listening overtax children's concentration.

Commentary

50. Not all children have had playgroup, or similar, experiences and so a high proportion do not know how to behave in class at the start of the year. Opportunities for personal development are interwoven well into every session and children's progress is good. Teachers and assistants promote this area well because they are all consistent in their approach. Children learn how to behave in class early on. Everyone learns to be independent in much that they do, dressing for physical education lessons and getting equipment out AND putting it away again! They learn to help one another prepare the food for snack time or share the play dough cutter and such behaviour is praised by adults. At snack time they learn to eat and drink with reasonable manners, staff correcting unacceptable traits. When they are active learners children behave well but when they are required to sit quietly and listen for long periods some of them become restless.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for the development of pupils' communication, language and literacy skills is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Phonic skills and early writing skills are taught well.
- Higher attaining children reach the national standard.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning.
- Lesson planning is good.

Weaknesses

- Children's speech patterns are not corrected consistently.

Commentary

51. Children come to school with little experience of books and generally weak language skills. From this low starting point they make good progress. Their speech develops gradually through the year, through interaction with adults in small group activities, and their vocabulary broadens because they experience a good range of topics. However, adults do not do enough

to correct children's pronunciation or spoken grammar and this restricts children's writing skills later because many of them 'write as they speak'. Reading skills, particularly letter sounds, are taught consistently well across all classes and most children know that print carries the story. Higher attaining children read simple books unaided and with good accuracy. There is generally good support from home, which helps children learn more quickly. Children learn to identify, and later make, correct letter shapes. They start to 'write' stories, some children on their own, whilst lower attaining children are supported very well by teaching assistants who scribe the child's ideas.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for pupils' mathematical development is **good** and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Counting and recognition of numbers is well taught.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning.

Weaknesses

- Children are not familiar enough with the language of mathematics.
- Pre-number activities are not used well.

Commentary

52. The majority of children reach the national standard. Children start school with very little knowledge of mathematics, though many of them can count from one to five successfully, often without understanding what they are saying. Teachers build on this knowledge well and number activities are emphasised. Children learn to recognise numbers and to count successfully. Higher attaining children count comfortably with numbers beyond 20 and correctly complete simple addition sums. Everyone gains familiarity with flat shapes by using them to print in paint but knowledge of shape names and words of comparison like longer and shorter are not always retained and used with fluency. Pattern making, bead threading, sorting and sequencing, activities that often precede number work, are not used sufficiently well to lay the foundations for the understanding of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world is **good** and children achieve well. Most children reach the Early Learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Theme and lesson planning is good.
- Stimulating themes extend children's experiences.
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to children's learning.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

53. Children bring little knowledge of the world around them to school. Following a stimulating programme, higher attaining children reach the national standard, but the majority do not. Interesting and lively topics, like teddy bears, fascinate the children and help them learn about families and materials. Walks around the school and immediate locality help them learn the vocabulary of place. Experiences with the computer and other equipment are well planned and integrated into every session. High quality teaching allows the children to take pictures with the instant camera on a 'text' hunt around the school, as well as raising children's self-esteem. The computer is regularly in use with topic-specific software, for example, 'Dressing Teddy' and children learn how to operate the mouse. A smaller mouse would help tiny hands get better control. .

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for pupils' physical development is **good** and the majority of children reach the Early Learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Teaching is well planned.
- Children achieve well.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

54. Children come to school with reasonable control over their movements. They hop, skip and run fairly well and good teaching helps them improve their control. They quickly become more skilled at riding bicycles outside or jogging inside. Small tools are handled reasonably well, for instance, children join construction apparatus together to make an aeroplane, but some children find this hard and need help. Brushes, pencils, jigsaw pieces and play dough cutters are not handled accurately but teachers provide extensive practise over the year in stimulating situations so children improve steadily. The co-ordination of a few pupils when working with small apparatus remains weak when they go into Year 1 so that, for instance, their pencil control is shaky.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for pupils' creative development is **good** and most children reach the Early Learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Children achieve well.
- Good lesson planning.

Weaknesses

- Staff do not interact enough with children during role-play.

Commentary

55. Children experience a good range of creative activities based on the class themes and their skills rapidly improve. They mix basic colours for effect or blow bubbles through paint to gain a mottled effect during well-planned activities. Making teddy bears allows children to learn to choose appropriate materials from a selection and cut and stick accurately. The role-play areas are used well by both boys and girls, for instance, two boys offer the inspector imaginary tea and cakes. Children enjoy singing and do so regularly. Musical instruments are usually available for the children to experiment with and learn how to get different sounds from them.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Pupils achieve well in order to reach average standards in Year 2 because teaching is consistently strong in all classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The teaching of reading skills, especially the challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Assessment, including the pupil tracking system, is used very well.
- High quality support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Management of the subject is of high quality.
- Literacy skills are used well across the curriculum.

Weaknesses

- Overuse of worksheets restricts the development of writing skills.
- Insufficient opportunities to develop speaking skills.

Commentary

56. Standards are broadly average. The school's national test scores, which have been rising steadily over the last three years, confirm that standards for 2002 are average compared to all schools and slightly above average when compared with similar schools. Reading is marginally stronger than writing. Because pupils start Year 1 with limited knowledge and skills, these standards represent good achievement.
57. Teaching is consistently good, enabling pupils to learn well and make good progress. Teaching assistants are very well deployed, often to support small groups or to assess pupils' contributions during whole class sessions. Planning is very detailed, though learning objectives are often taken directly from the National Strategy, rather than being tailored specifically to the class.
58. Pupils' speaking skills are weak when they join Year 1 and, though they make progress, are below national expectations in Year 2. Short phrases or one-word answers are the norm despite staff using open questioning well. Skills gradually improve, but pupils consistently write as they speak, and thus sentences are grammatically incorrect and spelling is variable. Teachers and assistants were rarely heard to correct pupils' speech or model responses. Pupils generally listen in a satisfactory manner. Most take in what is said to them but a small minority allow their attention to wander, which limits their learning.
59. Reading is a particular strength. Pupils enjoy reading and are motivated to learn because the teaching is lively and books interesting. Reading is taught well, with appropriate emphasis on phonic skills in all classes. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read with fluency and good understanding. They talk about their books in detail. Lower attaining pupils do not do this well. They also hesitate over words when reading aloud but use picture clues well to decode them. Most parents support their children at home and remain in regular contact with the teacher via the useful 'Home-School Link' book. Where there is little support at home, teaching assistants provide additional help.
60. Pupils make progress in their writing but in Year 2 standards are below the national average. This is mainly because too few reach the higher levels and too many are just within the Level 2 range. The school is very aware of this and has appropriate plans in place to tackle the weakness. Work in books shows a good range of writing styles and is constructively marked but otherwise too much work is on worksheets. Writing in other subjects is very well developed. On every topic plan there is emphasis on the use of literacy skills and this leads to displays of high quality writing. For instance, Year 1 wrote factually about Owls whilst Year 2 used a narrative style to write about a multicultural experience at Aklowa Village.
61. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported and helped to achieve their targets. They are often taught in smaller groups, which allows for more individual help, and teachers regularly provide work at the correct level for them. Pupils occasionally go out of lessons to receive further support.
62. Pupils in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language make good progress. They often receive additional, patient support from assistants. Teaching is strong.
63. Resources are of good quality and are used well to provide interesting learning experiences. Good displays of literacy work help raise pupils' self-esteem and celebrate the quality work going on in many subjects.
64. Management is very strong. Teaching and pupils' work are regularly monitored and evaluated. The high quality tracking system sets high standards for all pupils and teachers are well

supported in trying to achieve these goals. Careful consultation always precedes purchases of new resources. There is a positive relationship between the co-ordinator and the literacy link governor, which enables the governing body to be fully informed about developments in English. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection especially in challenging the higher attaining pupils and tracking pupils' progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Literacy skills are used well in many subjects. Teachers encourage pupils to extend and improve their literacy skills in all situations. Children grow in confidence as they write simple reports of experiments in science or carry out simple research work in humanities. Because of this, reading and writing skills improve more rapidly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum which covers all aspects of mathematics with a strong emphasis on basic numeracy. The mainly very good teaching, supported by confident, well prepared teaching assistants, allows pupils to achieve very well in the subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The very good teaching pupils' receive.
- The use of teaching assistants to support learning.
- The school's commitment to raising standards.
- Very good planning based on what pupils know and understand.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.

Weaknesses

- Use of worksheets deprives pupils of opportunities to present their work in an organised way so that they can discuss their findings and articulate their thinking.

Commentary

66. The overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average. No difference was apparent during the inspection between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in basic numeracy are above those expected for pupils aged seven, because there is a strong emphasis on this aspect of the subject and it is very well taught. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils understand how the place that a digit occupies alters the value of a number. They choose appropriate operations for addition and subtraction and recognise sequences such as odd and even numbers. Higher-attaining pupils are further challenged to add and subtract two-digit numbers mentally, explaining their own strategies for working out $14 + 85$, for example, and to work out number problems using all four arithmetic rules.
67. Overall, pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in communication and literacy and, as a result, they find it hard to explain their work or to give extended answers. There is also a high number of pupils with special educational needs which affects their ability to use and apply mathematics. Despite these difficulties, pupils achieve very well and do a lot better in national tests than they did at the time of the last inspection. The school is justifiably proud that more pupils are now achieving at the expected level and at a level above that normally expected for their age than previously, despite the increasing numbers of pupils with SEN.
68. The school is strongly committed to raising achievement and is very well placed to succeed. This commitment is exemplified by the thorough analysis of its test results to identify any areas for development. The school has identified the weakness in using and applying mathematics, for example, and there is now a greater emphasis on this area. The co-ordinator is aware of

the need for pupils to be challenged to present their work in an organised way in exercise books rather than on work sheets, so that they can discuss their findings, articulate their thinking and see the progress they are making. Very good procedures are in place to measure the attainment and track the progress of individual pupils, and teachers use assessment information very well to plan future work for individual groups of pupils. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who monitors teaching so as to achieve consistency of practice. The school is very well supported in its work by the numeracy governor, who visits the school regularly so as to have first hand knowledge of how the curriculum is delivered. All of these initiatives, including improved teaching, good use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and improved provision for higher attaining pupils, have resulted in better achievement for all pupils. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are well supported to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are always very carefully planned and most move at a brisk pace because they are well structured to maintain a very good pace of learning. In the very best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils benefit from a high level of direct teaching as they work so that their thinking is challenged at all times. The warm relationships established by adults and their high expectation result in very good behaviour and attitudes to the subject.
70. A thorough analysis of the work covered by pupils over the past year shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention. Pupils are given a range of practical activities to consolidate their knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They are given opportunities to measure length, time, mass and capacity using non-standard and standard measures. Data handling skills are being well developed and there is an increasing use of information and communication technology to support this aspect and other areas of the mathematics curriculum. Programmable toys, for example, are well used to support pupils' learning in shape, space and measure.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Mathematical skills are well supported in other subjects such as science, geography and design and technology. Pupils are encouraged to borrow mathematics games from school, which increases their interest in the subject and encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Good teaching enables pupils to achieve **very well** by the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Teaching is good. Investigation is taught well.
- Pupils are taught in sets so work is well matched to their capabilities.
- Teaching assistants are very effective.
- Good curriculum links.
- Pupils with SEN and EAL make good progress.
- Leadership and management of the co-ordinator are very good.

Weaknesses

- Too many worksheets; difficult to track progress.
- Quality of marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

72. Standards are in line with expectations and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Teachers' assessments in Year 2 suggest that the number of pupils achieving at a higher level is well above average. Pupils with SEN and EAL achieve well. All pupils, including

those with SEN and those with EAL, make good progress because of the good quality of support they receive. There is no apparent difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

73. Standards on entry to the school are well below average and there is a high proportion of pupils with SEN. Nevertheless, pupils are achieving very well, and at the end of Year 2 they are becoming familiar with the experimental and investigative approach to science. They are starting to develop the skills of scientific enquiry, observing carefully, making predictions, testing and recording their results. For example, they have investigated how heat affects things like a candle, chocolate, sand and bread, and what happens when a force is exerted on objects like elastic bands, sponge balls and tissues. A scrutiny of their work shows that their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties is sound. Their study of light sources is well linked to electricity and the construction of simple circuits.
74. The quality of teaching and learning, including that for pupils with SEN or EAL, is good overall. Teachers' planning is excellent. Resources are always well prepared in advance so that the pupils proceed with the work unhindered. Teachers have a secure and confident subject knowledge, which is used well to extend pupils' thinking. They provide clear instructions so that pupils know what they are supposed to learn, which enables them to achieve well. The setting arrangements allows teachers to provide work which is well matched to pupils' capabilities. An investigative approach in lessons adds to interest and excitement in finding out. Questions are used effectively and carefully targeted to check and extend pupils' learning and to make them think for themselves. Pupils are well managed and, as a result, they behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. They work well together in groups, helping one another and showing real enjoyment in their lessons. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to maintaining pupils' high achievement. ICT is used well in science to support pupils' learning.
75. The subject is very well managed. There are, however, areas for improvement. For example, the co-ordinator does not monitor teaching sufficiently to share good practice.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

The provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. The computer suite is a valuable resource. The use of this room, the training staff have received and the good teaching, as observed in the two whole class lessons seen, contribute to pupils' very good achievement. The curriculum is well planned and enables the pupils' skills to be developed and to be refined as they move through the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils achieve very well.
- Valuable support by teaching assistants.

Weaknesses

- Not enough planned use of computers in the classrooms. This has been recognised by the co-ordinator and included in the school's current development plan.

Commentary

76. Virtually all pupils achieve very well. Most reach, and some exceed, the standards expected by the end of Year 2. Given that many pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world, and a high number have special educational needs, this represents very good achievement.
77. Teachers are becoming competent at using the recently purchased projector and large screen as a focus for pupils' attention during whole class teaching sessions. This enables them to demonstrate the characteristics of new software while checking that pupils understand the

features that are being taught and the tasks that they are to undertake. In the Year 2 lesson seen, the class teacher demonstrated the functions of the space bar, the backspace, the shift key and enter, and how to access a drop down menu. Because of the class teacher's confident knowledge of the subject and her good quality demonstration, pupils made good progress in developing their keyboard skills.

78. Pupils are taught to use other devices, such as the programmable roamer and digital camera. Valuable teacher assistant support here and at other times in the computer room significantly enhances pupils' achievements. Pupils enjoy computer work, boys and girls of all abilities work well together and all respect the equipment. Their good behaviour in response to teachers' very high expectations allows all pupils to learn without disruption.
79. The co-ordinator provides very high quality leadership and has clear plans for future development. Her expertise in the subject allows her to give very good support to staff, and the detailed scheme of work she has developed effectively guides teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has monitored all teaching in the computer suite so as to ensure that pupils are being taught at the right level and to offer teachers advice when required. The computer club enhances the curriculum and allows pupils to apply the skills they have been taught in lessons. The school employs a part-time technician to keep computers in running order so that no teaching or learning time is lost.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Teachers are becoming more adept at linking the activities that pupils undertake in the suite with work in other subjects. Examples of this were seen in a Year 1 mathematics lessons where pupils with special educational needs were using a program to reinforce their understanding of numbers to ten. Similarly, in another whole class Year 1 lesson, pupils were using a paint program to draw fish related to their topic on 'Water'. Good examples were seen in the analysis of past work of pupils using computers to research work in history and geography and their word processing skills to write up their findings, thus supporting their literacy skills.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

Provision in history and geography is **good**.

History and geography are well taught and pupils attain average standards, as at the time of the last inspection, and they achieve very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Good schemes of work which meet requirements.
- Research skills are developed.
- The contribution the subjects make to pupils' writing skills.
- Use of information and communication technology for research.
- The contribution the subjects make to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Use of visits and visitors to support the curriculum.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

81. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements, only two geography lessons and one history lesson were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons, an examination of pupils' work from the previous year, and discussions with co-ordinators and pupils. All evidence indicates that the average standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been well maintained and, in light of the increased number of pupils with

special educational needs, and the well-below average attainment on entry, pupils achieve very well.

82. Teaching and learning was good in two of the lessons observed and satisfactory in one. All indications are that teaching in both subjects is good throughout the year. Teachers' planning is supported by good schemes of work which meet National Curriculum requirements. Simple research skills are well developed through an interesting range of topics, such as *Homes and Buildings, Communication, Water and Our School*. Teachers make effective links between history and geography so that both are taught in sufficient depth. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are also well used as, for example, when pupils write up their findings about *The Wright Brothers* or measure rainfall over one week. A special feature of teachers' marking is the way they correct spelling and punctuation in pupils' work so that the subjects contribute well to pupils' writing skills. Pupils are encouraged to research topics at home during holidays and some very well presented work on subjects such as *The Beatles* and *The 1953 Floods* demonstrate pupils' interest in the subjects. Information and communication technology is well used by pupils to research their work both at home and in school.
83. The co-ordinators provide good leadership and manage their subject well. They are given time to monitor teaching to ensure progress in pupils' learning year-on-year. Assessment procedures have been recently developed so as to measure what pupils know and can do and so that teachers can plan appropriate work for pupils of all abilities. These procedures will be discussed by teachers at the end of this year and further refined if necessary. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to support the curriculum and pupils' learning. Visits to the local environment, the beach, Southchurch Hall Museum and Langdon Hills, as well as role-playing a Victorian school day and talks by adults about visits to countries such as South Africa, do much to enrich pupils' experiences. The subjects make a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural awareness. The pupils are made aware of the similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of children in other countries. As a result, they sponsor a pupil in Kenya and have been involved in sending unwanted books and videos to children in a South African township.

Religious Education

Provision is **unsatisfactory**.

Standards are **well below expectations** and pupils of all abilities are underachieving. Standards have declined since the previous inspection.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- None.

Weaknesses

- Standards are well below average.
- There is no assessment policy and consequently assessment does not inform curriculum planning. Some teachers have insufficient knowledge of the subject.
- There is no monitoring of the teaching and learning.
- Provision for the subject does not meet statutory requirements because the subject is not being taught for long enough and in enough depth.

Commentary

84. From the evidence available in books, discussions with pupils and the one lesson seen, it is evident that standards in religious education are well below average and their achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment in religious education has declined since the last inspection.
85. By Year 2, pupils are attaining standards that are below the expectations of the county agreed syllabus for this age. Reception children have drawn pictures of the Indian festival of Diwali. Pupils in Year 1 are just beginning to explore and consider their own activities and compare them with simple moral codes. However, very few pupils in Year 2 can express their ideas in

any religious sense. Most understand the concept of friendship and can talk generally about caring for others. A scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year shows that a few knew what took place at the Jewish festival of Sukkoth and could recount one or two stories about Jesus. However, the majority of pupils now in Year 2 have very little knowledge and understanding of religion and their achievement is unsatisfactory. In most classes, pupils do not have religious education books to draw and write in. Although a few teachers make an effort to produce work in books, written work is minimal throughout the school. The quality of the small amount of written work seen is well below average. Pupils with SEN and EAL are not achieving satisfactorily in relation to their capability and are making unsatisfactory progress.

86. Teaching and learning was satisfactory in the one lesson seen in Year 2. It is not possible from this limited evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
87. The management of the subject has just been allocated to the new deputy headteacher and she has not yet had time to address any of the weaknesses. There is no assessment policy for staff to use when assessing pupils' attainments or to ensure that lesson planning is systematic and makes progressive demands on pupils. Some teachers have insufficient knowledge of the subject to enable them to use the agreed syllabus to the pupils' best advantage and there is little in the way of monitoring of the teaching and learning. Although there is some formal provision for the subject, the limited amount of time given to the teaching of religious education does not allow for it to be taught in enough depth to meet the requirements of the county agreed syllabus. Statutory requirements to teach religious education are consequently not being met.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

Provision in art is **satisfactory**. (Only two lessons were observed during the inspection.)

Standards are above national expectations in Year 2 and pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Well-planned lessons help pupils make good progress.
- Varied learning activities.
- Good management of subject which supports the teaching.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

88. Pupils' attainment is above expectations at the age of seven and they achieve well. Standards have been improved since the last inspection. From the time pupils start school, they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination, and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Some reception children have created tissue collages of weather symbols, printed shapes and experimented with stencilling for their jungle house. Others have enjoyed creating self-portraits in primary colours and made colourful and effective masks inspired by the Indian story 'Tiger Dreams'. Year 1 has looked at the work of Monet and other impressionist painters. They have also looked at the work of David Hockney and can talk about the straight lines he uses in his pictures. They have used pastels to make a collage of fruit and created silhouette pictures of dinosaurs. The pictures were lively and showed their enthusiasm for the project.
89. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment, especially in drawing and sketching, is above average. This competence in using dry media, pencils, charcoal etc. stands them in good stead when they leave for the junior school. Pupils' attainment in other aspects, such as painting, shows an above average range of skill and understanding. There is good development of practical skills in some classes, although this depends largely on the subject expertise of the teacher; for example, in using a computer software programme such as 'First Artist' or weaving and

using 'wax resist' to paint marigolds and daffodils. The oldest pupils in Year 2 have learnt to use a larger range of materials and show increasing control of tools for their screen-printing on transport. Some children in Year 2 designed effective patches with textile crayons for a wall hanging labelled 'senses.' Pupils with SEN and those with EAL achieve well overall and transfer the skills they acquire to other subjects.

90. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most teachers have a good understanding of the subject, although some lack confidence in certain areas of learning and need more training in how to teach art skills. Teachers' planning is good, and usually gives details of learning objectives and careful attention to the development of skills and techniques. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher's good organisation and use of time and resources enthused pupils of all ability to stay with the task of drawing birds and fish from observation. It also encouraged some to challenge their original ideas and come up with new ways to present their drawings. Examples of good learning and progress include a clear development in pupils' observational skills in Year 2. Pupils enjoy their artwork and are enthusiastic about the practical nature of the tasks. Attitudes are very good. Most pupils demonstrate concentration, collaboration and respect for the work of others. The use of information and communication technology for graphic work is underdeveloped throughout the school.
91. The subject co-ordinator is committed to reviewing the scheme of work and plans the art curriculum well. There is a whole school overview to monitor pupils' progress, although assessment is still informal and does not adequately inform curriculum planning. Although good learning is monitored well, teaching is monitored too infrequently for the co-ordinator to improve how art skills are taught through the school.

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Design and technology is regularly taught as a discrete subject and is well incorporated into topic work. Skills are progressively developed and, as a result, standards are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- The subject enhances other areas of the curriculum.
- Skills are well taught.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

92. As the school was inspected after only three days into the new school year and pupils were settling into their new classes, no design and technology lessons were being taught. However, evidence from discussions with staff, teachers' planning and pupils' completed work from the previous year show that the subject is regularly taught. Teacher assessments show that standards are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection, which represents very good achievement.
93. The subject is well incorporated into the school's topic approach to learning and enhances other subjects such, as history and geography, as well as being taught as a discrete subject. Skills of designing, making and evaluating are well taught. Pupils are given many opportunities to measure, mark, cut out and join different materials. There is good evidence of the development of these skills as pupils move from Year 1 to Year 2. For example, pupils in Year 1 cut and join balsa wood to make a boat that will float and go on to design and make propellers to steer their boats. This project is linked to their history and geography work on water. In their work on Homes and Buildings, they consider the materials to use when designing and making houses. Evidence shows that pupils consider how their products can be improved as, for example, when Year 1 pupils design and make puppets as part of their 'Fun

and Fantasy' topic. Pupils in Year 2 list the tools they will need when designing vehicles with moving parts, using wheels and gears. They disassemble simple products to see how they have been made before designing and making their own. Completed work shows that pupils in Year 2 make realistic plans for achieving their intentions when, for example, they build bridges and use weights to test the strength of these structures.

94. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils are offered a rich and interesting curriculum that meets National Curriculum requirements as well as the needs of boys and girls of all abilities. Where a pupil was seen to have difficulty holding a pair of scissors because of a disability, a special pair of scissors was bought for her. This is a fine example of the school's concern for all of its pupils. The co-ordinator observes teachers' lessons and works alongside teachers to share her expertise, when working on a model village in Year 2 classes, for example. Good use is made of visiting artists and sculptors to support learning in art and design and design and technology. There is a good range of resources and materials to support teaching and learning, and these are regularly reviewed and replenished.

Music

Provision in music is **good**. (Only one lesson and singing in assembly were observed during the inspection.)

Standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and pupils achieve well because lessons are well planned and supported by strong extra-curricular provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Well-planned lessons help pupils make good progress.
- Strong and varied extra-curricular activities.
- Good management of subject which supports colleagues' teaching.

Weaknesses

- None.

Commentary

95. Pupils achieve well because teaching is well planned and resourced. Teaching in the observed lesson was good but no overall judgement on teaching in the school is possible. Teachers who lack confidence are well supported by a knowledgeable co-ordinator, who also makes an extensive contribution to the extra-curricular provision. Pupils enjoy music and parents welcome and enjoy the three major productions their children take part in each year. Pupils willingly participate in lessons and extra-curricular clubs and instrument tuition. The choir is high quality and well-known locally, having performed at the Southend Festival. The school has worked hard to maintain the high standards observed in the last inspection.

Physical Education

Provision in Physical Education is **satisfactory**. (Only two lessons were observed during the inspection.)

Standards are in line with national expectations in Year 2. The pupils have made satisfactory progress over the two years because they experience a well-planned curriculum and have good opportunities to further their learning in extra-curricular clubs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

- Well-planned programme of activities.
- Strong extra curricular provision.
- Ample resources.
- The Active Mark, for physical education, has been awarded to the school.

Weaknesses

- None observed.

Commentary

96. Pupils come to school with energy and reasonable control of their movements, though for a small minority, self-control is unsatisfactory. The school builds on the positive abilities well by teaching a quality programme. The teaching observed was satisfactory, though for both classes it was their first lesson of the year. Lessons teach pupils to follow safety rules and offer good opportunities for them to work collaboratively. Good resources are used well to maintain pupils' interest in the lessons and aid their development and learning.
97. The school offers a wonderful range of activities outside lesson times. Playground staff at break and lunchtime encourage pupils to use the equipment and often join in themselves with the skipping and other activities. This makes break times harmonious and goes a long way to promoting good behaviour. After school, pupils engage in sports and dance clubs with the latter performing a 'Maypole Dance' each summer. This is eagerly anticipated by parents and thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. Standards and provision have broadly maintained the high levels observed at the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

Provision in PSHE is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

98. All pupils have access to citizenship as part of the teaching in religious education, history, geography, science and personal, social and health education. However, schemes of work do not always make it clear how pupils' skills of participation and responsible action can be developed in some of these subjects. Much of this takes place through PSHE, which is taught as part of the Health for Life programme. This is also supplemented by work in class-based assemblies. The school has recently achieved an award for its work on health education. The headteacher has just taken over the co-ordination of the subject and has not had time yet to develop effective assessment. No PSHE lessons were seen to enable a judgement to be made about the impact of this new provision.

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	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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).