

INSPECTION REPORT

TIPTREE HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tiptree, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114733

Headteacher: Mr J Graham

Lead inspector: Mrs J Gill

Dates of inspection: 12th - 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 258213

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	199
School address:	103 Maldon Road Tiptree Colchester Essex
Postcode:	CO5 OPG
Telephone number:	(01621) 815 445
Fax number:	(01621) 819 893
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Puttick
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Tiptree Heath Primary School is situated in the village of Tiptree in Essex. The school is a one-form entry primary school and about the same size as at the last inspection. Numbers fluctuate in each year group and some cohorts are small, as in Year 3. Most of the 199 pupils (106 boys and 93 girls) live locally. Children enter the Reception class with broadly average attainment although there is little higher attainment. Overall, skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics are lower than the Essex average, on entry to school. The pupils are predominately White British with few children from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are two pupils who speak English as an additional language but none who are at an early stage of English acquisition. The recent census indicates that there is a lower percentage of adults in the community with higher qualifications and a slightly lower percentage of children in high social class households. There are far fewer numbers of children from ethnically diverse families (6 per cent) than nationally and less from overcrowded households. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average (4.7 per cent), which has been the case for the last four years. The rate of mobility, that is, pupils moving in and out of the school other than the usual time of transfer, is generally fairly low although in the present Year 6 class, around a third of the pupils did not start in the school in Year 1. At present there are 26 (13 per cent) pupils with special educational needs throughout the school, which is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. None of these has a statement for their special educational needs. However, in the present Year 6 there are around 25 per cent of pupils in the class with special educational needs, and this has an impact on overall standards this year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18706	Mrs J Gill	Lead inspector	English Art and design History The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
8991	Mrs P Goldsack	Lay inspector	
13754	Mrs J Morris	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Special educational needs
6169	Dr M Bradshaw	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Tiptree Heath Primary School is a good school. Standards have risen faster than the national trend at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics. The headteacher is a very good leader and manager, who strongly ensures that every child is fully included in all aspects of school life. A very strong team commitment to promoting high standards, together with effective teaching, good assessment and intervention strategies, ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnic minority, achieve well. Pupils love coming to school; they behave well and have positive attitudes to school life which helps them to learn effectively. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The rate of improvement in core subjects is greater than the national trend.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and manager, who with his team and governors, very strongly promotes inclusion for all pupils; this helps them achieve in all aspects of school life.
- The high quality of pastoral care and support is a distinctive feature of the school.
- Teaching is good. It is very good during booster lessons and when specialists teach pupils.
- The school has good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools which significantly enhance pupils' learning.
- Pupils' work in religious education is limited; there is little recording and few opportunities to study the subject in depth.
- Literacy and numeracy links are not sufficiently well developed across the curriculum.
- Geography is not taught in sufficient depth and pupils' geographical skills are under-developed.
- There are too few opportunities to promote multicultural awareness through the curriculum.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection and is effective. Areas of weakness that were identified during the inspection and subsequently by the local education authority have been tackled well, particularly since the appointment of the present headteacher. The quality of teaching has improved and standards have risen at a greater rate than the national trend.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. In the 2003 national tests, Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science, which was an improvement over 2002. This represents good achievement when pupils' prior attainment is taken into consideration. When compared to similar schools, pupils at Tiptree Heath achieve particularly well in all three subjects. When children enter the Foundation Stage, attainment is broadly average, although often lower in communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. There is little higher attainment on entry to school. Inspection evidence indicates that children achieve well and, by the end of Reception, many children are likely to achieve the early learning goals, with a few exceeding them. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics but rising. Inspection evidence indicates average standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science this year. However, there are a far greater proportion of pupils with special

educational needs than is usual and fewer pupils that have been in the school since Year 1. Higher- and lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those from a minority ethnic background achieve well because all pupils have work that is matched well to their prior ability. Unlike previous years, there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards in the foundation subjects are in line with expectations when pupils are seven and 11, with the exception of above average attainment in ICT in Year 6, and singing which is good (in music) throughout the school.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Their social development is very good, moral development is good and spiritual and cultural development is sound. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have good attitudes to learning and enjoy very good relationships with each other and all members of staff. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers are very skilled at including all pupils in all aspects of school life - higher and lower attainers, boys and girls and those from a minority ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well because teaching assistants provide good support. Assessment procedures are good and very good in English and mathematics. This contributes to ensuring a good match of work so that all pupils are suitably challenged, which helps them to achieve well. The curriculum is satisfactory, with some good features. The school provides good enrichment and enhancement of the curriculum through innovative practices and a good range of extra-curricular activities; this significantly enhances pupils' experiences. Very effective care and guidance contribute towards the positive ethos evident in the school. There are positive links with parents, who are very well informed about school events and their child's progress. Community and other school links have improved and are very good, which significantly contributes to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher is a very effective leader and has given the school a very clear sense of direction and purpose. The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to an improvement in educational standards and promoting inclusion. The contribution of the English and mathematics co-ordinators is very good and is instrumental in the improved provision in these subjects. Other co-ordinators often provide good leadership in their subjects. The school is managed well and runs smoothly. Financial management is very good. The headteacher, staff and governors are clear where their priorities lie and direct funds effectively to ensure continued improvement. Governance of the school is good. The governing body fulfils its duties well and makes a significant contribution to the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very favourable and opinions are welcomed. The pupils' response to the questionnaire showed that they are generally happy with all aspects of the school. Their views are sought, valued and acted upon. In discussion, they expressed positive views about the school, their teachers and lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the provision in religious education so the subject is taught in greater depth.
- Extend the use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Ensure pupils' geographical skills, particularly in map work, are developed in a detailed and logical way.
- Ensure there are planned opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of multicultural education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement for all pupils throughout the school is **good**. Children enter Reception with attainment that is broadly average, with very little higher attainment. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are presently achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science, with higher attainment in reading. However, standards are rising.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs, those from a minority ethnic background and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils make above average progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6.
- The trend for improvement at the end of Years 2 and 6 has been above that expected nationally.
- Literacy and numeracy are not always systematically planned across the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Since the last inspection, there was a dip in standards which was a cause for concern for the governors and the local education authority. The school became subject to extra support from the local education authority and consultants worked alongside the staff to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics. Subsequently, the results of National Curriculum tests showed a good improvement in both Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. The trend for improvement became above that expected nationally for pupils in both Years 2 and 6. However, care needs to be taken when analysing the results year on year because the class sizes are erratic and often the overall abilities of classes can be very different. Therefore the overall trend needs to be considered. For example, the present Year 6 has far more pupils with special educational needs and fewer pupils have been in the school since Reception than is usual, which means standards are not likely to be quite as high as in the 2003 tests. In addition when analysing data with small groups of pupils, overall percentage points can sway considerably, for example if one pupil narrowly misses a level.

Key Stage 1 test results

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (13.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. In the 2003 tests, Year 2 pupils gained well above average results in reading and writing and above average results in mathematics when compared with pupils nationally. When compared to pupils in similar schools, that is, schools with a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, pupils at Tiptree Heath achieved better results in reading and writing and similar results in mathematics. In all subjects, there is a significant proportion of pupils who gain the higher Level 3, particularly in reading, which indicates that higher-attaining pupils are challenged well. Teacher assessment in 2003 showed that the proportion of pupils achieving the average Level 2 in science was very high for pupils gaining the average Level 2, but average at Level 3. The results were very much better than those of 2002.

Key Stage 2 test results

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In the Year 6 2003 tests, pupils achieved above average results in English and mathematics and in line with expectations in science. However, when compared to schools that scored similar results at the end of Year 2, pupils at Tiptree Heath achieved well above others in English and above pupils in similar schools in mathematics and science. In English and science, there was very little low attainment but attainment was around average for those gaining the higher Level 5. This illustrates the good achievement made by the pupils as the entry data shows little higher attainment. On entry data are generally average and below in Reception. From the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6, the school helps pupils to make better progress than that expected nationally. This is because the school uses assessment very effectively and acts upon the findings. Intervention programmes, such as booster classes and an IT mathematics program, are proving successful in rapidly pushing up standards.

Inspection findings

4. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage was broadly average. This remains the case when children enter the Reception class. Data indicate that skills in communication, literacy and language and mathematical development are below average and also below that of other Essex schools. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and by the end of Reception, most children are likely to attain the early learning goals, but a few may not. However, standards are likely to be above average in personal, social and emotional development. This is because teaching and learning are good in Reception but particularly good in personal, social and emotional development. Standards are satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to work which are helping children achieve well and have positive attitudes towards learning.
5. The standards of work seen during the inspection in Year 2 are average, but achievement is rising and is now good. Standards are above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science but rising. The standards of work seen in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science but this represents good progress as their overall attainment was below average in Year 2.
6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school but particularly in English and mathematics where there has been a strong focus in the school. The school is aware that science has not received such a good input as English and mathematics. It is aware that it needs to concentrate more on investigative and practical work in science to ensure that standards will rise in the subject. Standards in English and mathematics are improving because the headteacher and all staff ensure that all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability have work that is matched well to their needs. Data indicated that in previous years, boys were performing better than the girls in the national tests, which is not now the case. There are no differences in the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups or those few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They achieve well in relation to their ability and make good progress. Pupils are identified early and receive effective regular support from well-trained teaching assistants and work that is well matched to their ability. This helps them to be fully included in the full range of school activities.

7. Very good systems to track pupils' performance are in place in English and mathematics and test data are rigorously analysed to identify where pupils had difficulties. This information is effectively incorporated into action plans in the school improvement plan and intervention strategies are then put into place by the headteacher and staff. For example, it was noted that although pupils read well in the school, their ability to comprehend what they read was not always as good. The school has put into place a comprehension programme and it was evident from a Year 4 English lesson that this is proving successful.
8. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies provide the foundation on which the school schemes are based. These schemes provide good support for the teachers and are devised to suit the specific needs of the pupils. Aspects of the subjects are taught throughout the day with good results, for example reading, handwriting and an intervention mathematics computer program. This is driving up standards. Basic skills are taught effectively, which helps pupils achieve well. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are used to support learning in other subjects; they are not always systematically planned, and consequently, opportunities are missed. This is evident from the scrutiny of work and opportunities to promote these skills are not always taken.
9. In most of the foundation subjects, standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, in some subjects such as ICT, music and art and design, standards are being driven up through specialist teaching and good provision. Consequently, standards in ICT in Year 6 are above average. There has been an increased use of computers in the suite and use of laptops in the classrooms. A very good example is the effective use of a program used to support learning in mathematics. In addition, Year 6 pupils go on a residential visit where they spend time working on specific areas of the ICT curriculum, such as control technology.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen learners and they enjoy their lessons and the wide range of extra activities available to them.
- Behaviour in lessons and at play is good and there are no exclusions.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good and contribute to pupils' confidence and enjoyment of the school day.
- Pupils' social development is very good.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop multicultural awareness through the curriculum.

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive punctually each morning. The school monitors attendance well and regularly reminds parents about the importance of prompt, regular attendance. Attendance would be even better if all parents refrained from taking family holidays during term-time. The school is diligent about recording absences accurately. The percentage of unauthorised absences is broadly average. They are the result of parents allowing their children to stay home from school for unacceptable reasons such as shopping or birthdays.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
172	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
15	0	0

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

11. The attitudes and behaviour of the children in the Foundation Stage are good. Staff have very high expectations of the way children behave and how they approach their activities. There is a strong emphasis on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, with good effect. The staff strongly encourage children to become independent which means children are quickly learning to do things for themselves. The majority have settled well, considering that some had only been in school for a few days at the time of the inspection. They are learning effectively and achieving well in a caring stimulating environment. They are all likely to achieve the early learning goals and many will exceed them.
12. Pupils are hardworking and keen to do well. Pupils' good attitudes toward work have been maintained and, as reported at the last inspection, they are often very good. Pupils are at their best in lively and challenging lessons. They respond well to their teachers' high expectations with enthusiasm and commitment. The school's wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities are well attended and sometimes over-subscribed by interested pupils. The school motto, 'Working Together for Everyone', originated with the pupils. All pupils of whatever ability, race or gender are fully included in all aspects of the school. They have positive views of their teachers and lessons and are pleased that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. Pupils with special educational needs, including those who are identified as gifted and talented, are fully included within all aspects of school life. They behave well and work hard to improve. Parents agree that pupils like coming to school and achieve high standards of good behaviour.
13. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other. The very good relationships found within the school help to make lessons lively and productive. Pupils share ideas and opinions and respect each other's efforts. Learning is extended because pupils are confident in expressing themselves and know that their teachers and classmates will value their efforts. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were all engrossed in their assignment and worked together to edit sections of a letter by reading aloud and commenting on each other's sentences and self-correcting their own. Pupils take homework seriously and complete it on time.

14. The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. Particular strengths lie in pupils' social development, which is very good. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to work in social contexts, usually as paired or group work in lessons. Older pupils make books with moving parts as well as compile story shoeboxes, complete with characters, that successfully enable younger pupils to broaden their creative and literacy experiences. The very good programme of termly educational visits by all classes and the planned residential visits for the older pupils successfully introduce pupils to another side of social living. Pupils elect the Pupil Council and put forward ideas as how to improve the school. They also raise funds to put these ideas into action.
15. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Some opportunities exist for pupils to reflect on various aspects of their lives such as "achievement" during assemblies, although pupils are not fully involved during these times. The spiritual dimension is under-represented in other curricular areas, such as religious education.
16. Pupils' moral development is good and they are very well aware of the difference between right and wrong and clearly understand what is expected of them. A very clear ethos and good moral principles reinforce the importance of respecting one another's needs, interests and feelings as well as the environment, because teachers set good examples. Good behaviour and hard work are rewarded with praise and certificates in sharing assemblies. Bullying occurs only occasionally and it is immediately addressed according to anti-bullying guidelines in the school's social policy. The school carefully follows its race equality policy and any misbehaviour with a racist element, such as name-calling, is addressed and corrected without delay. The local education authority is notified as required. Such incidents are very rare and are resolved quickly and amicably. Parents and pupils are pleased with the quality of behaviour found within the school.
17. Cultural provision is satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils learn about Britain's cultural development through history. Although some aspects of world faiths are studied during religious education, these lack depth and are insufficient to provide pupils with meaningful insight into the attitudes, values and traditions of other faiths and cultures. There are some good planned features, however. In Year 6, pupils focused their attention on the music from 'Porgy and Bess' and were keen to articulate their opinions. The good subject knowledge and response from the teacher enabled the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the songs from the musical as well as the way of life of American slaves. Pupils experience a wide range of educational visits, including to museums and places of historical or geographical interest, which further enhance cultural provision. However, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to consider and come to terms with the differences in people's religions, cultural heritage and way of life in a multicultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The curriculum is innovative in parts and improving, but **satisfactory** at present. Links with parents are **good** and with the community and other schools **very good**; this significantly adds to pupils' achievement and their positive attitudes towards learning and school life. There is a positive ethos and pupils are **very well** cared for, supported and guided in school by all staff. There is a very strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. There is now a greater percentage of good and better teaching than previously observed. Often in booster classes and when specialists teach lessons, teaching is very good. Overall assessment procedures are **good**; they are **very good** in English and mathematics.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (17%)	27 (56%)	13 (27%)	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.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and has contributed towards improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The school is proactive in using the expertise of the teachers for the benefit of all the pupils.
- Work is well matched and all pupils' needs are met effectively.
- Consistent and very effective assessment procedures are in place to analyse test data in English and mathematics to track pupils' progress and to identify those that need extra support.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how they can improve, particularly in English and mathematics because targets are set and regularly reviewed with them.
- In addition to English and mathematics, assessment has been introduced in all subjects.
- Good use is made of Foundation Stage assessment – it effectively leads into the school system.
- Teachers do not use literacy and numeracy skills sufficiently across the curriculum.

Commentary

18. The table above indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. Parents and pupils are positive about the quality of teaching and pupils feel that their teachers help them to learn effectively. Teaching and learning have improved since the intervention and support of the local education authority and the current rigorous monitoring of standards by the present headteacher, senior management team and English and mathematics subject co-ordinators. This, coupled with effective performance management and good induction and training, has contributed to the good quality of teaching now evident through the school. Good use of teachers' subject expertise significantly contributes towards improving standards in many subjects. However, insufficient attention is given to planning and using literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The school is aware that this is an area that it needs to improve. The effective deployment of the teaching assistants and the quality of their work make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements both academically and socially.
19. The quality of teaching in Reception is virtually all good. Children learn well and make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. Planning is good and covers all areas of learning well and includes planned activities both inside the classroom and outside in the play area. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and those that children choose themselves. This helps children to become independent and make choices.
20. The headteacher and the staff have a fully inclusive approach to ensuring that all pupils are given the support that they need. These include higher- and lower-attaining pupils, boys and girls and those few pupils from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well by effective deployment of teaching assistants. This helps them to access the same learning opportunities as their classmates. In addition, effective specific intervention programmes are carried out by the teaching assistants who help pupils learn well. This is evident from the national test data as few pupils work at the lower levels and the majority achieve average and above levels. This also indicates the value teachers are adding to pupils' learning, as attainment on entry is generally average and below average.

21. In the very best lessons, particularly those with older pupils and those taught by specialists, challenging activities and a lively approach enthuse pupils and help them move forward quickly in their learning. However, there are occasions in some subjects such as science when teachers do not set challenges for more able pupils or provide enough opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations. Planning is good. Learning intentions are shared effectively with the pupils at the beginning of lessons and reviewed at the end. A good feature of most lessons is the whole-school procedure of a 'Can I' statement. Teachers effectively draw their pupils attention to what is to be learnt during the lesson. Even the youngest pupils successfully review their learning at the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, when the teacher tells the children: *'If you have learnt something new, put a smiley face at the bottom of your work and if you still need help, put in a sad face'*. This ensures pupils are effectively being involved in evaluating their own learning.
22. The use of homework is now good. Homework has a good impact on pupils' learning; it is a regular aspect of school life. It is planned well and links effectively with work being carried out in the classroom. Homework is set throughout the school and pupils tackle it conscientiously with good support from home.
23. Assessment is good overall. The school has established very good assessment procedures in English and mathematics. Test results are analysed carefully and from these, both predictions of pupils' performance and targets are set and shared with pupils. As a result of these procedures, teachers know the abilities of their pupils well and set targets for them in the core subjects. These are shared with pupils; as a result, pupils understand how they can improve and what they need to do next. There are a range of procedures being implemented to assess the progress and attainment of pupils in other subjects. For example, in art and design, each half-term, pupils carry out a specific piece of work, such as a pencil drawing of a bicycle. This will become a record of pupils' progress and their attainment. Marking of pupils' work is generally helpful, particularly in English and mathematics, and relates to the learning intention for the lesson or pupils' individual targets.
24. Good assessment procedures are in place in the Foundation Stage. The school follows procedures based on the recommended guidance. Data are effectively built up over the year through general observations, tick-lists and the staff noting significant achievements. These assessments are used well to plan work so that there is a good match of activities which helps all the children make good progress. The Foundation Stage data effectively lead into the start of the overall school assessment system.
25. Assessment is used well for pupils with special educational needs. They are identified early, either on entry or during their time in school. The school uses assessment systems effectively to identify those pupils who are under-achieving and also those who exceed their expected levels. From this information, work is set according to pupils' prior attainment. All information and targets are shared with the pupils and their parents.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** with some good features. It is now good in the Foundation Stage. The school provides **good** enrichment and enhancement of the curriculum through innovative practices and organisation and a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are **very good** links with partner institutions. Resources are satisfactory overall. The accommodation is used well and is **good** overall. A good number of well-trained teaching assistants effectively support teachers and pupils.

Main strengths and weakness

- Some aspects of the curriculum have improved and a curriculum map provides effective links between subjects and some good innovative practices.

- The school is fully inclusive. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils, those with special educational needs and the few pupils whose home language is not English.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education.
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Some schemes of work have not been suitably adapted to meet the needs of the school.
- Some areas of the curriculum are not studied in sufficient depth.
- There are weaknesses in planning for literacy and numeracy opportunities across the curriculum.
- There have been good improvements to the accommodation although, in part, some remains unsatisfactory.

Commentary

26. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in most areas of the curriculum offered to pupils has improved. This is because the school has refined planning by developing curriculum maps that provide effective links between subjects. This enables pupils to understand more readily how the various areas of the curriculum link together, and contributes to overall improved learning. Schemes of work are now in place which ensure continuity of learning in subject areas. These ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are taught progressively to pupils of all abilities. There are some weaknesses remaining. Some schemes have not yet been fully adapted to suit the needs of the school and are not as challenging as they might be, particularly for more able pupils. An example of this is science. The school has identified the need for review and improvement so that the schemes are more relevant to pupils. Religious education and geography are not taught in sufficient depth to enable pupils to have a real understanding of other world faiths or to develop their mapping skills and geographical knowledge. The school fully meets statutory requirements.
27. The school is fully inclusive and all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or race, are very effectively included in all aspects of the curriculum and what the school has to offer. The school works hard to provide good effective support for pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers, including the gifted and talented. Pupils are identified early and are withdrawn from lessons for short periods on a regular basis to receive help in small groups from the good specially-trained support staff. Gifted and talented pupils receive challenging support in classes for the similarly talented in co-operation with local schools, for example in art and design. This is effective by enabling pupils to reach the highest level of attainment possible. There are other very good links with partner institutions such as the local Sports College whose staff come in and demonstrate physical skills with Year 6 pupils, to good effect. The school has also been instrumental in joining with other schools in forming the Philosophical Society which has been successful in improving the thinking skills of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils leaving the school are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
28. In lessons in English and mathematics in Year 6, pupils are divided into smaller ability groups where work is set to suit the abilities of the pupils. This also aids the more gifted and talented pupils. In the other years, for English and mathematics, work is matched well to take account of the needs of pupils of whatever ability within the class. In the foundation subjects, most work is organised by outcome. Pupils are well supported in lessons by teachers and by the use of good teaching assistants. Pupils with more specific difficulties receive regular individual support in small groups according to their needs.
29. The school has adopted some innovative practices that enable pupils to benefit from specialist teaching through the school, to good effect. One afternoon per week, each teacher with particular subject skills takes a class for the afternoon. This type of organisation is a good experience for pupils and continues throughout the year so that all pupils receive specialist teaching in most of the foundation subjects. It also enables teachers to refresh and enhance their specific subject skills. As a consequence, the quality of teaching has improved, learning

is more enjoyable and effective, and standards improve. The skills of the staff are used imaginatively when a dedicated teaching assistant takes classes for Keep Fit for pupils in Years 2 to 6 to give teachers release time for preparation. Week long activities focusing on art and design, music and books successfully contribute to pupils' learning.

30. Good use is made of external resources and out-of-school activities that enrich pupils' learning well. The school offers a wide selection, including a variety of sports and other opportunities such as computer, pottery and environmental clubs. Very good use is made of specialists from outside the school that improve pupils' skills and enjoyment. Good use is made of visitors to the school, and the termly visits by all pupils and the residential visits organised for the older pupils are strong features of good enrichment provision.
31. The quality of the accommodation and outside areas is good and there have been a number of effective improvements that make the school more attractive and have increased the number of classrooms and teaching areas. Outdoor areas include a fenced play area for children in the Foundation Stage, a swimming pool, pond and wildlife area and activity equipment area. There are two outside timber classrooms currently used for Year 6 and the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Year 6 are shortly moving into the main inside area but the Foundation Stage classroom is well past its useable life. The school has been innovative in maximising the inside building space. Resources are satisfactory overall and are accessible by all staff.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school sets very high standards for health and safety and routines are followed consistently.
- Pupils like school very much and are very well known by staff.
- Pupils have very good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance.
- Good induction for new children into the Reception class.

Commentary

32. The governors' premises committee takes the lead in making sure that the very high standards related to pupils' care and safety are maintained. The school benefits from the professional expertise of governors and also consults with outside specialists. The headteacher participates in regular risk assessments with premises governors and there are no outstanding concerns. Risk assessments are carried out before pupils depart for trips and outside activities. The headteacher is the named teacher responsible for child protection. Arrangements to provide for child protection are very good. All members of staff are regularly informed about procedures and responsibilities in this area. All members of staff were invited to comment on the recently-updated child protection policy. There are good links with outside support agencies. An ample number of staff is trained to administer first aid. A thorough system to highlight the medical needs of specific pupils is in place and ensures that all those responsible for their care are fully informed about their requirements.
33. This is a happy school with a positive atmosphere for learning. The very good relationships between pupils and members of staff ensure that all pupils have at least one adult that they can talk to if they have a concern. The results of the pupils' questionnaire and conversations with pupils during the inspection overwhelmingly confirm this. Similarly, the parents' questionnaire confirms that pupils like school. The school values its pupils' ideas and the Pupil Council is a good forum for them to express themselves. From Year 1 onwards, two elected

representatives from each class meet fortnightly. In response to their classmates' concerns about the flooring near the swimming pool, they organised a sponsored bounce and raised a very considerable amount of funding to replace it.

34. The very good support and guidance given to pupils are based on thorough monitoring of their academic and personal achievements. Pupils benefit from the good assessment that is carried out in all subjects. They are well aware of their targets for improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. Displays highlight pupils' own work and assemblies celebrate their best efforts. Staff members know pupils very well and this is enhanced by the Wednesday afternoon routine where pupils rotate activities and teachers. The headteacher maintains a friendly, high profile throughout the day and pupils are chatty and keep him up to date with their individual activities. Induction arrangements for new children into the Reception are good and include visits before entry and written guidance for parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is popular with its parents.
- Parents are provided with very good information about school life and how well their children are doing.
- Good partnership between home and school supports pupils effectively.
- Very good links with the community enhance learning opportunities.
- Very good links with secondary school ensure smooth transition for Year 6 pupils.

Commentary

35. The school is highly regarded by parents and this is confirmed by the inspection questionnaire results. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus and governors' annual report contain all of the required information in a parent-friendly format. The information pack for new parents is full of useful information about the school and how parents can help their children with learning at home. All parents sign the home-school agreement. Pupils' end-of-year reports are well written and clearly inform parents about pupils' progress in each subject. Reporting on progress in English, mathematics and ICT is particularly detailed and targets for improvement are clear. The quality of end-of-year report has improved since the last inspection. Consultation meetings between parents and teachers are scheduled in the autumn and spring terms and parents are invited to discuss reports at the end of the summer. Meetings are timed to accommodate the schedules of working parents. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns. Weekly newsletters are very well written and their friendly format supports the school's family atmosphere. The 'Term Ahead Sheet' for each class is very helpful and gives parents an overview of work that is planned for their children along with suggestions on how they can help at home.
36. The school values its link with parents and welcomes their views and opinions. All members of staff are friendly and easy to approach. Questionnaire results confirm that parents are comfortable about approaching the school. Their opinions are regularly sought and their efforts to support the school are encouraged. Parent and community volunteers help regularly with reading, swimming, art and class trips. A parent designed the school logo. The PTA has recently expanded its committee and is active in social and fundraising events. Valuable extra funding contributes to extra equipment such as the cover for the pool and playground equipment. Parents approve of the school's arrangements for homework and support from home adds to its completion on time.

37. Since the last inspection, the links with the community have increased and are now very good. The headteacher plays a leading role in the success of the school's participation in the Tiptree and Stanway Schools Consortium. Pupils share activities in musical festivals and sporting events. Pupils benefit from the link with St Luke's School and extra activities include the Philosophical Society and art exchange. The school has raised its profile in the community and is now a well-utilised local resource. An increase in lettings makes the school a busy hub of activity for local residents interested in 'keep fit', motorcycle proficiency, Jujitsu, children's parties and swimming.
38. Pupils transfer to Thurstable Secondary School. The school maintains a very good ongoing link so that Year 6 pupils share in activities throughout the year. This effective link is very productive and means that learning is enriched for Year 6 pupils, and staff at their new school get to know them before they transfer. There are regular visits and a physical education specialist from Thurstable works with Year 6 pupils and shares expertise with Tiptree Heath teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher is a very effective leader and manager. Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors have taken difficult decisions to ensure that the school is able to improve.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to an improvement in educational standards and the principles of educational inclusion.
- The headteacher has given the school a very clear sense of direction and purpose.
- Co-ordinators often provide good leadership in their subjects.
- Financial management is very good.
- Strategic planning is very effective and involves all staff and governors.

Commentary

39. The governing body took very difficult decisions a couple of years after the last successful inspection report. Governors became concerned over a number of matters, including the progress that pupils were making. They approached the local education authority for support, and the authority agreed with their concerns. Immediately, the school was placed on a high level of support.
40. Governors maintained this high level of awareness, challenge and support following the appointment of a new headteacher approximately 20 months ago. The governing body has, therefore, been fully involved in shaping the direction the school should take to improve. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths, the improvements that have been made and the main areas of weakness currently. Statutory requirements are fully met.
41. The new headteacher, who has very high aspirations, has set a fast pace for improvement and provides the school with strong leadership. He leads by example, both in the way he brings a sense of purpose to all the school does and by teaching for a significant amount of time each week. He has taken swift and effective action to establish a determination to succeed and to create an effective team from the individuals working in the school. Despite the fast pace, the sense of teamwork and commitment runs through all that the school does. He has initiated considerable improvements on, for example, standards of attainment, staffing, accommodation, expectations and workloads. These have had a significant impact upon everyone's morale and their desire to work as part of a team. He has created an inclusive culture by involving all members of staff in the drive to improve the school for the sake of each child. This has meant that his example has ensured that all pupils are treated equally, valued

and encouraged to succeed to the best of their abilities. He is quietly supported by the deputy headteacher, who now benefits from a clear role within the school. The deputy headteacher ensures that potential areas of weakness, such as pupils' cultural provision, are brought to the headteacher's attention. All teachers are provided with regular time outside the classroom for planning and for monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and attainment in subjects for which they are responsible. The recent focus has been the need to improve provision and attainment in English, mathematics and ICT. Able co-ordinators manage all these areas. The weaknesses that are evident in some subjects, such as religious education, have been identified and now form targets within the school improvement plan.

42. The headteacher has managed the provision for special educational needs on a temporary basis since before Christmas when the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator went on sick leave. The funding to provide good support for these pupils comes from the local education authority and the rest comes from the school's delegated budget. The funds are spent well as pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. As the headteacher is acting in an interim capacity, his leadership and management of the subject have been too short to make a valued judgment. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has been responsible for the post for the year prior to her sick leave. Discussion and observations, and other evidence from the completed paperwork, indicate sufficient evidence to show that leadership is good.
43. The school is managed well and runs smoothly. Regular staff meetings take place. Strategic planning is very good. All staff and governors are fully involved in the construction of the school improvement plan. This ensures that they all know what the school needs to do and how improvements are to be made. These priorities are then reflected in the improvement plans for each subject and other relevant areas. The senior leadership team has been reorganised to make effective use of individuals in the school and the experience of the deputy headteacher. The school has implemented the principles of performance management, making close links between the needs of individual members of staff with the needs of the school and arranging in-service training accordingly. The headteacher's own targets are reflected in those set for individual members of staff. The improvements in assessment have helped to ensure that the school analyses carefully how well it is doing and uses the information to take action where weaknesses are evident. The commitment to individuals is reflected in the induction procedures established to help all members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers, to settle quickly into the school and become an effective member of the team.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	471,996	Balance from year 2001/2	79,408
Total expenditure	467,840	Balance carried forward to 2003/4	83,564
Expenditure per pupil	2,488		

44. Financial planning and management are very good. The governors and headteacher have a very good grasp of finances and funding issues. They have used the opportunities presented by the appointment of the new headteacher to bring about structural, as well as academic, improvements. The process has been aided by the headteacher's skills in obtaining additional and matching financial resources. The school is very effectively assisted in its financial planning by a support manager who is employed by a large group of local schools. Secure financial management based on very good monitoring of expenditure and income, a very good understanding of the importance of pupil numbers on income levels and the accurate estimate of known financial commitments enable the school to meet its educational priorities from a secure financial base. The school works well to ensure as much money as possible is spent directly to support pupils' work, raise their attainment and improve their working environment. Aspects of value for money principles are applied effectively. Although the balance carried over from March 2003 was high, this is being reduced to an acceptable level as various building and

other work is completed and paid for. The very effective office staff ensure the headteacher and other teachers spend the minimum of time on administrative duties.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. Children enter the Reception class with attainment that is broadly average, but there is very little higher attainment. This is similar to the last inspection. School data indicate that attainment on entry is lower than that usually found in Essex, particularly in communication, literacy and language and mathematical development. At the time of the inspection, 15 children had only been in school for a few days. Ten children started school in September. The majority have settled into school routines well because induction is good and children visit the school and get to know the staff on several occasions. No child at present speaks English as an additional language. Those with special educational needs or in need of extra help to access the curriculum are very effectively included in all aspects of the curriculum through sensitive support. The school had identified the necessity to raise the profile of the Foundation Stage. The co-ordinator is managing the provision effectively and leading new initiatives and revised ways of working with enthusiasm. There is a newly-extended outside play area for the children, which is an improvement. The lack of an appropriate outside area was an issue in the previous inspection. The staff have worked hard to ensure the inside area is an attractive, stimulating learning environment area; however, the classroom needs to be replaced.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning.
- Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and positive attitudes towards work and play.
- There is a strong promotion of independence. Children are encouraged to select their own tasks and try new activities.
- The staff foster a good sense of community. Children learn quickly to take turns and share.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are good. These help children achieve well which leads to above average standards in personal, social and emotional development. The very effective work to promote personal, social and emotional development contributes to the children's good behaviour and positive attitudes toward their learning. Consequently, many children are likely to achieve the early learning goals, with a few exceeding them. Most children have settled quickly and through a good combination of teacher-directed and child-selected activities, they gain in confidence and the ability to concentrate. Sensitive support is offered to a couple of children that are finding settling to school routines a little difficult. All are showing increasing independence and most manage to get on their coats and boots for outside play with minimum help. This is because the school policy is to make the children as self-sufficient as possible, which is working well. A good example is 'snack time' when every day, a group of children prepare snacks for the rest of the class. A group, including several new children, concentrated for a long time while they carefully spread icing onto biscuits. Afterwards children served each other and poured out drinks with care. This is a delightful social time, which strongly promotes children's personal development, particularly belonging to a caring community.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged and supported sensitively to verbalise their thoughts and actively listen to the staff and their peers.
- There is good promotion of basic skills of writing, reading and enjoyment of books through a variety of directed activities and child-selected tasks.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are good for all children, including those with special educational needs. Children achieve well, so by the end of Reception, most are likely to reach average standards in communication, language and literacy, but a few are not likely to achieve the early learning goals. Children are encouraged to speak in sentences and verbalise their thoughts well through such activities as discussing making a dragon and the Chinese New Year. There are gasps of delight when the teacher shows the children a model Chinese dragon – *'he is painted', 'his tongue is sticking out'*.
47. Children love listening to stories. They listened avidly and were keen to answer questions relating to the dragon story. Skilful questioning by the teacher established that the children could recall events in the story well. Good teaching of letter sounds helps children learn individual sounds and two-letter words. From the scrutiny of work, it is evident that the older children have made good progress since September and the higher-attaining and average children are beginning to form their letters appropriately and read simple text.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good use of both the indoor and outdoor environments contributes well to effective learning.
- There is effective promotion of mathematical vocabulary through a good range of activities.

Commentary

48. By the end of Reception, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in mathematical development, but a few may not. Teaching and learning are good, as was evident during observations and in the recorded work of the older children; this helps children achieve well. Numbers 1-10 and beyond for the higher attainers were reinforced skilfully through a wide range of activities matched well to children's needs. This included the teaching assistant working with children in the outside play area, putting large number tiles in order. In the classroom, the children excitedly identified missing numbers on cards and sorted them in order. Good intervention by the teacher encouraged them to *'think in your head'*; this helped them verbalise their thoughts well. For example, a child moved the numbers around - *'I think 3 goes near to 2'* - successfully ordering the number cards.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Limited evidence was obtained in this area of learning. However, from planning and displays it is evident that overall provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on promoting a sense of the cultures and beliefs of others.
- Children enjoy using computers and learning skills quickly.

Commentary

49. Teaching is satisfactory and helps children learn effectively and achieve well. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals but a few may not. Children enjoy using the computers and are beginning to control the mouse well, which helps them fill in stars and other shapes on the screen with a variety of colours. The teacher pays good attention to other cultures. Children learn about fruits from other countries through the story of '*Handa*' and carefully draw pictures of a pineapple. Activities based on the Chinese New Year give children an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others. They enjoy seeing the painted dragon head-dress and hearing about the dragon dance. Using paint carefully, children painted appropriate representations of their favourite toys when learning about old and new toys and placed pictures of family members on a timeline. This is helping them to appreciate a sense of the past.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good** and has improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of the outside play area is good and gives children plenty of opportunities to play and develop their gross motor skills.
- There are many interesting opportunities for children to develop fine motor control.

Commentary

50. There is a newly-extended outside area which is providing a better range of activities for the children. Although there is not immediate access from the classroom, the staff have ensured that activities take place outside, whatever the weather. Teaching and learning are good which helps children to achieve well in this area of learning. There is a good mixture of planned activities and a chance to play with other children on vehicles, with hoops and balls or drawing with chalk. Children ride the wheeled vehicles and steer them with increasing accuracy and have a good awareness of others. They enjoy physical education lessons in the hall and behave very well because the teacher has high expectations of good behaviour and has due regard to health and safety. Children collect mats sensibly and show a good understanding of space so they put them down well away from other mats. A good demonstration by the teacher helps the children to develop their jumping and hopping skills. The vast majority have good control when hopping, but a few find this difficult.
51. Fine motor skills are developed well during a range of activities as children handle pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and knives with increasing control. For example, when making dragons' eggs, they confidently cut out pieces of paper and joined them with sticky tape, also when they used knives to spread icing sugar on biscuits while preparing snacks for the other children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to use a good range of media and explore pattern, colour and shape.
- There is good promotion of role-play, which helps children to use their imagination effectively.

Commentary

52. Teaching is good and many children achieve well. Most are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of Reception. From evidence of children's past work, it is clear that they have lots of opportunities to explore different materials and media. They carefully and confidently apply paint and make zigzag and curvy patterns with good control. Role-play is promoted well both inside the classroom and outside. For example, in the outside play area children use lengths of material as tails, to become dragons, developing the story told by the teacher earlier. Children enjoy singing and although many have only just started school, they join in the action songs with enthusiasm.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and pupils achieve well in English throughout the school.
- Work is planned effectively and matched well to all pupils' needs.
- Intervention programmes, such as the booster classes for Year 6, are very effective in raising standards.
- Leadership and management of English are very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Literacy skills are not always used effectively across the curriculum.
- Some work is not presented carefully enough.

Commentary

53. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards at the end of Year 6 in national tests have risen since 2000 to above the national average. Attainment in Year 2 in 2003 was well above average, which was a significant rise in standards. At the end of both Years 2 and 6, the trend for improvement has been greater than that seen nationally.
54. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are presently working at average standards. However, from work previously completed, it is evident that pupils have made good progress from the start of the academic year. This represents good achievement in Year 2, as children start in Reception with attainment that is generally below average, with little higher attainment. In Year 6, there are more pupils who have special educational needs, more than is usual in the school (25 per cent) but compared with their prior attainment, they are making good gains in their learning. However, the intervention programmes and very focused teaching are already contributing very effectively to pupils' achievement. All pupils achieve well, regardless of higher or lower attainment, special educational needs, gender or ethnicity. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys or girls as in 2003, when boys performed better than the girls in the tests.

55. Teachers offer pupils good opportunities for speaking and listening which help them achieve well. Pupils throughout the school are confident, friendly and keen to discuss all aspects of their work and school life. For example, in art and design, speaking and listening skills were developed well when Year 3 pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work and that of their classmates.
56. Reading is promoted strongly in the school and pupils are encouraged to read widely for different purposes. Standards in reading are rising and overall they are above average. The average and higher-attaining Year 2 pupils are reading well and at above average levels. They tackle difficult text and confidently use a range of strategies to read accurately. They read fluently with good expression and intonation. Year 6 pupils are very confident to read out their attempts at writing letters. They evaluate their own work and that of others with maturity. They suggest ways of improving the text and judge whether they have been successful in persuading the reader to visit the school. Higher standards are due to several effective strategies that have been put into place. Guided reading is carried out each day throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants have been trained by local education authority consultants and are effective when working with the pupils. In addition, there is a good selection of non-fiction and fiction books that have recently been purchased.
57. Writing has been a whole-school priority. The standards of work seen during the inspection in both Year 2 and Year 6 are average and rising. From extensive analysis of test data and monitoring of pupils' books, the co-ordinator identified that pupils were having difficulties with written comprehension. Pupils give good oral answers to a written text, as observed in a Year 4 lesson, but found that it was much more difficult when writing their answers. There have been good attempts to improve handwriting throughout the school. On most days pupils practise their handwriting for a short time. Good teaching of basic skills and high expectations of presentations are contributing to raising standards. Although many pupils are improving their handwriting during these sessions, they do not always transfer their skills into their English lessons or into other subjects as noted in the scrutiny of work, where some work was untidy and poorly presented.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons observed. In the Year 6 booster classes, teaching is very good and is contributing to the rapid learning in these lessons. Planning throughout the school is based on the National Literacy Strategy and work is very well matched to pupils' prior ability. This is because assessment procedures are used very effectively to ensure pupils' needs are met. Effective support is given to those who need it and higher-attaining pupils are sufficiently well challenged, particularly in Year 6. There are very good arrangements in Year 6 to target pupils of all abilities. The class is split into three ability groups for two days a week and work is targeted very closely to pupils' prior attainment. This arrangement is having a positive impact on raising standards. This is evident when higher-attaining Year 6 pupils responded enthusiastically to writing a letter to Tony Blair. They used persuasive language very effectively – *'it is a magnificent school and what better than to take advice from a ten-year-old who attends this school'* *'surely you can find time on your busy agenda to see our excellent school'*. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a significant contribution towards ensuring all pupils are effectively included in lessons, particularly pupils with special educational needs. This helps them to achieve well in lessons.
59. The management and leadership of English are very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and determined to continue to raise standards throughout the school. She has introduced whole-school initiatives such as guided reading, which are helping to raise standards. She rigorously monitors all data, teaching and learning and sets out clearly what needs to be tackled next. Assessment procedures and tracking of pupils' progress and attainment are used very effectively and are instrumental in knowing what needs to be taught next.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Language and literacy skills are not always used effectively across the curriculum as evident from the scrutiny of pupils' previous work. There are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in other subjects; this was not the case in the previous inspection when English was developed effectively throughout the curriculum. At present, these links are not planned systematically. There are some good examples of literacy being used well. For example, in Year 5 history work, pupils wrote in good detail about their visit to Colne Valley Railway. The co-ordinator has identified that this is a weakness and has drawn up suggested English cross-curricular links for each year group; these are to be implemented shortly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement of all pupils is improving and is now good.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, which is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes.
- Assessment procedures and their use are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Insufficient use is being made of numeracy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

61. In the National Curriculum tests in recent years, standards reached by Year 2 pupils have generally been average or below. In 2003, there had been an improvement and pupils' attainment was above average. At the end of Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests, results have generally been similar to or above the national average. In 2003, Year 6 results were above average. In both Years 2 and 6, the upward trend has been greater than that seen nationally. Attainment, however, varies from year to year, and reflects, in part, the relatively low numbers in each year. The standards of work seen during the inspection in Year 2 are average, but achievement is rising and is now good. The standards of work seen in Year 6 are average and this represents good progress as their attainment was below average in Year 2. Since the last inspection, there appears to have been deterioration in the standards reported for Year 6. However, the results of National Curriculum tests demonstrate a good improvement in both Years 2 and 6 since 2000. An examination of pupils' completed work shows that achievement is rising and is generally good. Although in previous years, there has been some evidence that girls achieved lower standards than boys, this reflected the particular characteristics of the children concerned. No significant differences are now evident.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good teaching by the co-ordinator. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teachers display good knowledge of the mathematics curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. They use the strategy well in their teaching. Planning is thorough, based on national guidance, and usually indicates appropriate activities for different ability groups. The setting of suitably challenging work is aided in Year 6 by splitting the class on occasions into three distinct groups according to pupils' current attainment. The mathematics co-ordinator, headteacher and learning support assistant take the separate groups. This arrangement is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and involvement. However, not all lessons provide an appropriate challenge for all pupils, especially the higher-attaining pupils. This was particularly evident in a Year 3 lesson where the focus was to understand the subtraction strategy of 'adding on'. The work for more able pupils was not sufficiently demanding, but, in common with other classes, pupils with special educational needs were supported well and had appropriate work. These pupils are

often well supported by effective teaching assistants and as a result they make good progress in learning, achieving well.

63. Most teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils and assess their understanding. This was a particular feature of the very good Year 2 lesson taken by the co-ordinator. His questions were very effective in getting pupils to interpret block graphs they had drawn and examples that were new to them. The three other adults in the classroom ably supported him. In all lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least good, and often very good. These positive attitudes are also evident when pupils spend about 10 to 15 minutes a day working on the computer following a structured mathematical program. This program is having a positive effect in both consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge.
64. Assessment procedures in mathematics are very well organised. Pupils' work is consistently marked and useful guidance given to help further improvement. Pupils' National Curriculum test data are analysed, optional tests in Years 3 to 5 used and mental mathematical skills tested and analysed regularly. Information is being used to establish where there are gaps in learning of groups of pupils; for instance, issues arose about pupils' confidence in work on time. Inside each pupil's mathematics book is guidance on areas requiring attention to enable the pupil to reach a particular standard according to National Curriculum levels. The pupils' work on the computer mathematics program is analysed using the software. These analyses demonstrate the improvements made by these short sessions.
65. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The strengths previously mentioned have been maintained and improved further. Teaching and learning are almost always good or better, and pupils' attainment is steadily rising. Assessment procedures and their use are much better. The subject co-ordinator is an excellent role model, both in his skilled teaching and his professional leadership and management of the subject. He regularly monitors and evaluates teaching, learning and pupils' attainment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Mathematical and numeracy skills are not being used sufficiently in other subjects. This is a weakness recognised by the co-ordinator, who has plans to develop a grid to support cross-curricular planning for mathematics. This development has been held back, owing to the absence, following an accident, of the Year 2 teacher, and the need for the co-ordinator to teach this class at certain times during the week. The current use of numeracy across the curriculum is not as strong as reported previously and not planned in depth. In science, pupils accurately measure and record findings in charts and tables. In geography, pupils draw block graphs to show temperatures in different cities, and they were introduced to the concept of scale in relation to maps in Year 5. However, the opportunity presented was not extended greatly. The samples of work provided and evidence from lesson observations and displays indicate that insufficient use is being made of numeracy skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching throughout the school has improved, partly due to better monitoring.
- Pupils enjoy science, particularly when undertaking practical work.
- Good use is made of the enclosed pond and wildlife area.
- Pupils carry out too few investigations.
- There are sound links with literacy and ICT but links with mathematics could be improved.
- Formal results are not analysed effectively to identify weaknesses in provision.

Commentary

67. Standards achieved by Year 6 pupils in national tests over the last three years show a gradual overall upward trend; in 2003, they were average which was an improvement from 2002. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with national averages for Year 6 pupils. The trend is not likely to rise again in the 2004 national tests. This is because there are a high percentage of pupils currently in Year 6 with special educational needs. In addition, around one-third of these pupils did not start school in Year 1 and consequently have not had the full benefits of what the school has to offer. Attainment in Year 2 is in line with that expected nationally for their age. Most pupils, particularly the older pupils, achieve satisfactorily regardless of gender or ethnicity, including those few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
68. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teaching and learning of younger pupils are satisfactory but in Years 3 to 6, they are good overall, with a very good lesson seen. Learning is good or better when teachers have good subject expertise, work is matched to pupils' abilities and the best use is made of open-ended questioning to make pupils think for themselves. In a Year 6 lesson, the use of very good examples, brisk lesson pace and light-hearted humour, held pupils' attention, making learning enjoyable and effective. Pupils are enthusiastic about science. They particularly enjoy practical work and, in one Year 6 lesson, they became extremely excited when observing the mini-beasts they had collected from the pond. Pupils' moral development is promoted as they are encouraged to respect the environment. They treated the creatures with care and respect, using a lens to observe them more closely and, with the teacher's assistance, returned them to the pond afterwards. All pupils take part in practical work, often supported by good teaching assistants, and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress. However, pupils' scientific skills and understanding of the scientific method are not yet firmly established. This is because many teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations, set challenges for more able pupils or sufficiently emphasise subject-specific vocabulary during lessons.
69. The school is aware of these shortcomings in planning and in the current scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines. The co-ordinator, together with the staff, is evaluating a new scheme. Once this is in place, it should help to ensure pupils undertake more practical investigations and provide them with better progression in the development in skills acquisition and challenge so that attainment can be raised.
70. There are satisfactory links with ICT which is used to compile, record and analyse data and the use of sensory devices. Literacy skills are developed through teachers' questioning and discussions between pupils but links with mathematics is an area for development.
71. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in assessment and currently the school is compiling a portfolio of levelled work to support teachers. Resources are sufficient to deliver the curriculum and are easily accessible. Analysis of formal tests so that weaknesses in provision can be identified and addressed, in order to raise attainment further, is not yet fully established. Since the last inspection, monitoring of teaching and learning has improved and this has been identified on the school improvement plan as an area for further focus.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations for older pupils.
- Pupils are confident and competent users.

- Resources are used well and have been updated and improved.
- Management of the subject is very good.
- Staff have undertaken additional training but some still lack confidence teaching the subject.

Commentary

72. Achievement throughout the school is good. Standards of pupils in Year 6 are above national expectations, particularly those of the more able pupils. This was the finding in the last inspection, although the expectations for pupils in Year 6 are much higher now than previously. Standards of pupils in Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. Last year, the school was successful in receiving a National Technology Award and came third in Essex.
73. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils start to develop their information technology skills in Reception when the effective teaching assistant takes small groups on a regular basis. They learn to develop their hand/eye co-ordination and use of the mouse well. By the time they are in Year 1, they click and double-click and enter information correctly to make sentences. Pupils learn well because the teacher sets work at an appropriate level and pace that enables them to become confident users. Pupils extend their skills in Year 2 because the teacher provides clear explanations. They use an appropriate art program to produce examples of portable radios or televisions, complete with picture and controls. Most can shut down the computer unaided. More able pupils in Year 6 are working above national expectations when they use a presentation program incorporating digital photography. They use ICT to structure and refine and present information in different forms and styles for specific purposes and audiences. Many Year 6 pupils are confident when accessing the Internet for research purposes. They log on and quickly use a variety of search engines to gather specific information for their history work. While their ICT skills are well-established, currently, their level of skimming and scanning to identify appropriate literacy information is, as yet, at an early stage of development.
74. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and leadership of the subject is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has made considerable progress in the advancement of the use of ICT throughout the school. All teachers and support staff have undertaken further training and are now more proficient and confident in teaching the subject, although a few still lack some confidence. The majority of teachers have their own laptops and all support staff have use of a computer when they wish. The suite has been updated by the replacement of the old computers and the purchase of some additional ones. The use of the suite is timetabled and it is in constant use throughout the day. Interactive whiteboards are also a useful addition to the suite and to one of the classrooms. They are used well, particularly by the co-ordinator to support teaching, create an active learning environment and to extend learning. There are plans to gradually install these into other classrooms once individual teachers receive appropriate training and become confident users.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Computers in the classrooms are used well and continuously, on a rota system so that pupils at all levels of ability have the opportunity to reinforce and improve their mathematical skills, operations and concepts. The time is well used and it is having a positive effect on attainment in mathematics. The Internet is used well as an information source, for instance to gather information on other subjects such as history.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in depth but **history** and **geography** were sampled because too little evidence was gathered and very few lessons were observed. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their work, checked planning to ensure the subjects were being covered appropriately and looked at pupils' past work.

Geography

76. The school's geography provision was not an inspection focus and there is insufficient evidence to make a detailed judgement about pupils' attainment. However, evidence available indicates that provision is **unsatisfactory**.
77. In geography, there was little evidence of pupils' work. Written work recorded in books was irregular and often sparse. That available lacked detail and was often rather superficial. Displays in rooms rarely featured geography, although some maps were displayed which raised pupils' awareness of their use. In Year 6, pupils had undertaken their own research about mountains. This was a useful exercise but the resulting work was not of a consistently high enough standard. The work also showed confusion by including comparisons that featured particular named mountains mixed within detail about various mountain ranges. Discussion with pupils also revealed lack of detail in their recall of previous work. The school's planning ensures that the requirement to teach aspects of geography is met, but the programme lacks coherence and specific detail. Pupils' geographical skills are under-developed, in particular in relation to map work or the detailed comparison of the local area of Tiptree with contrasting locations in Britain and overseas. Much of the planned work relates to aspects of the local area and issues such as improving the environment, but this does not develop pupils' skills sufficiently in a detailed or logical way. The lack of relevant detailed planning and recorded work mean that geography does not make sufficient use of, or extend, pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The subject does not have as secure a place in the curriculum as the previous report indicated. The school is well aware of the weaknesses in geography and it is an identified area for development.

History

78. From the evidence available, it would appear that provision in history is **satisfactory**. In discussion with pupils, it is evident that they enjoy learning history. There is a good programme of educational trips which greatly stimulates pupils' interest and helps them remember what they have been taught. Year 2 pupils learnt effectively about the causes of the Great Fire of London through a visit to the Museum of London. They are developing a sound understanding about the use of historical sources and enthusiastically discussed entries in the diary written by Samuel Pepys. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding about changes that have taken place since the 1940s. They particularly enjoyed using a variety of historical sources, such as the Internet, visits and talking to visitors about their experiences in World War II.
79. Year 5 pupils are beginning to show an empathy with the feelings and situations of others when they write about the conditions of Victorian children. History is effectively contributing to pupils' social, moral and cultural development. Links with literacy were used particularly well following the Year 5 visit to the Colne Valley Railway. However, from the scrutiny of work, opportunities to use literacy skills are insufficiently developed throughout the school.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' complete little recorded work and their knowledge of religious education lacks depth.
- A new policy and detailed planning have been introduced.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The co-ordinator has developed a useful assessment system, which has just been introduced.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Writing skills are not sufficiently well promoted.

Commentary

80. At the end of Years 2 and 6, achievement is satisfactory, though pupils do not complete sufficient written work. Discussions with pupils indicate that attainment is in line with the expectations of the syllabus, but there is insecurity in their understanding and lack of detail. Pupils show satisfactory attitudes in lessons, although pupils in Year 6 do not listen closely enough when the teacher is talking or when other children are answering questions. Religious education does not have a high focus in the school and few classrooms had displays related to the current work. New and well-organised curricular planning, which includes detailed lesson plans, has been introduced. If these are introduced fully, there is the potential for significant improvement. However, insufficient attention has been given to extending the work for able pupils. The use of literacy skills to encourage pupils to think about religious issues and record their own, and different views, is rare. Teachers often lead suitable discussions which consider particular religious concepts, but work rarely extends beyond this. Pupils hear about the customs, festivals and symbolism of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. They begin to consider moral ideas associated with religious belief. However, there is a lack of detail in which pupils have compared, for instance, the fundamental beliefs of different faiths. The planned work makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, such as learning to appreciate and respect the followers of different faiths.
81. Teaching of the subject is satisfactory, but often lacks depth and its impact can be limited by previous weaknesses in pupils' knowledge. This occurred in a Year 4 lesson in which the teacher was encouraging pupils to examine the structure of the Holy Bible. He created a respectful atmosphere when he brought out his own, old and very handsome, family Bible. He explained why it was precious to him, and this engaged the pupils. However, the pace of learning that followed slowed because pupils could not find their way around the Bible easily. This weakness was also evident in Year 6 when the teacher asked pupils to find references to 'Covenants' made by God. The teacher used a good demonstration of the meaning of 'Covenant' when she made her own pact with the class. In the best lesson, the Year 3 teacher took pains to build a quiet and reflective atmosphere in which pupils could respond thoughtfully and explore their own feelings and ideas about birthdays and who they would invite to their party. The teacher successfully steered pupils to think beyond the simple receiving of presents. Pupils with special educational needs are included and able to contribute fully to discussions in lessons.
82. The co-ordinator of the subject leads it well. She has introduced the new Agreed Syllabus and planning effectively. She has developed a useful assessment system that will record pupils' religious knowledge and allow teachers to record examples of pupils' appreciation of how religious belief can influence a person's life. Written work is, however, limited and does not promote writing skills well, nor does it allow teachers to challenge and extend the work of able pupils. She has monitored planning and examined pupils' books which has alerted her to the sparse written work for all years. There is little evidence of ICT being used to support the subject. The overall situation is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. The school is well aware of the weaknesses in religious education and it is an identified area for development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and physical education were inspected in depth but design and technology was only sampled and was not part of the focus for the inspection.

Design and technology

83. This subject was sampled and was not part of the focus for the inspection. One Year 3 lesson was observed where pupils were seen undertaking challenging work. As a result, teaching and learning were very good, due to the very effective teaching. However, this lesson is insufficient to make a firm judgment about teaching throughout the school. Planning and discussions with

Years 2 and 6 pupils support the evidence that design and technology is sufficiently covered. Observation of completed work on houses, complete with electrical circuits, is a good illustration that the subject is sometimes linked with other curriculum areas such as science.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory** but it is improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is now a good scheme of work in place.
- Teachers receive good support and encouragement from the co-ordinator.
- Teaching is good which contributes to pupils' positive attitudes to the subject.
- An innovative curriculum ensures that during the school year, a specialist teaches all pupils.
- Visitors and 'Art Week' significantly enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and their needs are being met well.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to experience art and design from other cultures.

Commentary

84. Standards in art and design are similar to those found at the previous inspection. They are in line with national expectations in both Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall at present; this includes pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups. However, the breadth of the curriculum has been broadened with a good scheme of work and pupils' learning is enhanced through an exciting range of visitors and specialist teaching. During the 'Art Week' - *'What a wonderful world'* - pupils were introduced to an interesting range of new experiences, such as willow-weaving, batik, and machine embroidery. It is evident from photographic evidence and discussion with Year 6 pupils that these experiences considerably enhanced pupils' enjoyment of the subject.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Good teaching is characterised by the effective teaching of skills, use of technical vocabulary and an opportunity for pupils to experiment with new ideas. Teachers use sketchbooks well. In the Year 1 lesson, pupils had good opportunities to investigate and explore the properties of a range of textiles through discussion and use of magnifiers. They then carefully recorded their observations. There are occasions, as in the Year 5 lesson, when pupils work at a fairly basic level when using clay. This is because they have had limited experiences in the past. Nevertheless, through effective teaching, they gained sufficient skills to make and decorate a thumb pot by the end of the lesson. There are good examples of literacy and numeracy skills being used effectively in lessons. For example, in the Year 3 lesson, pupils successfully used their knowledge of repeating patterns and symmetry to extend a pattern from a small sample of material or paper. Very good relationships and good humour ensured pupils responded to questioning well. They are confident to evaluate their own work and that of others – *'he worked well to get the squares in the right position'* stated a pupil with maturity.
86. Leadership and management of art and design are good. The co-ordinator has considerable expertise and is enthusiastic about her subject. She has rewritten the scheme of work to ensure it provides a wide variety of activities suitable for each age group and has many ideas about how teachers can be supported, which are helping standards rise. Regular assessment has been introduced throughout the school. Each half-term, pupils carry out a specific piece of work in their Progress Books, such as a pencil drawing of a bicycle. This also showed progression of skills from Year 3 to Year 6. Through the school's innovative use of specialist teaching, the co-ordinator has the opportunity to work with all the pupils in the school during the academic year. During these lessons, she has the opportunity to identify those pupils with particular talents in art and design. There are very good links with local schools and together they provide an exciting programme for these talented pupils to work together. Pupils are

introduced to a range of artists and designers, although they are mainly Western in background. There are, at present, too few opportunities for pupils to experience art and design from other non-Western cultures and to visit art galleries.

Music

Provision for music throughout the school is **good, particularly in singing and performing**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards seen are good in singing, particularly in lessons with the music specialist.
- Teacher expertise has improved.
- Pupils enjoy music lessons and achieve well.
- There are good links with literacy and the multicultural aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

87. Since the last inspection, a permanent music specialist has been appointed and this has had a positive effect on overall provision in the subject which is now good. Many music lessons are planned as part of the weekly activity afternoons, an innovative area of the curriculum introduced since the last inspection. All pupils have the benefit of specialist teaching for a whole term while class teachers take lessons the rest of the time.
88. Standards of music in Years 2 and 6 are in line with that expected nationally, but improving. When the specialist undertakes the teaching, it is very good. Lessons undertaken by class teachers are good overall. Specialist lessons begin and continue at a brisk pace. All pupils are always engaged and, because the teacher has very good expertise, as well as a dramatic flair, they achieve very well. Pupils enjoy the lesson because the planned activities are always appropriate for their age group and consequently they memorise and learn new songs well. During assemblies and lessons, all pupils sing with clear diction, showing good control of pitch and rhythm. The school provides an opportunity for them to experience a wide range of classical music and further their knowledge of famous composers. In lessons, younger pupils clap to the beat and use a number of untuned instruments to accompany their singing, keeping time well. Older pupils also achieve well. They sing in unison, breathing correctly, controlling pitch and showing a sense of phrase and musical expression. Pupils experience a wide range of instruments and listen carefully to instructions. They further improve their contributions, which result in good learning. By the time they leave school, pupils' ability to listen to music and to evaluate aspects of it in an informed way have developed well. In Year 6, the good teaching and subject knowledge enabled pupils to enhance their awareness of some of the multicultural music from around the world and of the way of life and history of the American slaves. They behaved well, listened carefully and expressed their opinions and ideas in a mature manner. Pupils articulated their thoughts and were offered a variety of descriptive words applicable to the music, enhancing their literacy skills and indicating good literacy links.
89. It was not possible to have an in-depth discussion with the music co-ordinator but judging by the level of attainment and good provision, subject leadership is good. The school follows a commercial scheme of work which is adapted to suit the needs of the pupils and covers all areas of the national curriculum.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is aided by pupils' good attitudes and behaviour.
- Keep fit sessions, taken by a teaching assistant, are enthusiastically received.
- Good links have been established with the local secondary school.

Commentary

90. Pupils have access to a satisfactory physical education curriculum, which covers all necessary areas. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach the expected standards in Years 2 and 6. Residential trips extend the opportunities provided, especially in the area of outdoor pursuits such as abseiling and archery. Although not in use during the inspection, the pupils benefit from having access to the school's own swimming pool. Good links exist with the local secondary school and Year 6 pupils enjoy the lessons taken by the specialist physical education teacher from the school.
91. Satisfactory teaching helped pupils develop their throwing skills in Year 2 and balance and movement in Year 4. A recent successful introduction to the physical education programme is the keep fit sessions taken by a teaching assistant. The Year 5 session observed was well organised and conducted at a good pace. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the session, with both boys and girls being fully involved. Most pupils enjoy their physical education sessions and show good attitudes, although the attention of Year 2 pupils falters on occasions and they do not always listen carefully to the teacher. Not all teachers set a good role model for pupils because they do not change for physical education lessons. Extra-curricular activities, the involvement in sporting events and the use of outside specialists for cricket and football add further to pupils' skills. A judgement has not been made regarding leadership and management of the subject as a discussion did not take place with the co-ordinator. Provision is similar to that reported previously.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Personal, social and health education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the previous inspection.
- A formalised scheme of work has been introduced.
- There is a very good programme of cross-curricular activities.
- The programme is very good preparation for Year 6 pupils moving into the next stage of their education.

Commentary

92. The provision for personal, social and health education is now good and has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are timetabled and formalised, and complement the implicit personal, social and health education included in other areas of school life. The school has adopted a scheme of work, which ensures progression in learning for all pupils and meets their personal, social and health education needs well. The comprehensive programme of activities includes healthy living, relationships and personal safety as well as sex and drugs education, and is well supported by visits from outside agencies. There are very good links with other subjects such as science and religious education. Pupils are helped to develop and maintain confidence, interact with others, and follow a healthy life style. Discussions with Year 6 pupils

indicate a very good knowledge and understanding of these areas of the curriculum. As only one very good lesson was seen, this is insufficient to make a judgment about teaching overall. However, younger pupils were almost “spell-bound” when one of their classmates demonstrated her asthma inhaler during the lesson. This provided an opportunity for pupils to display the extent of their interest, voice their opinions and to develop their speaking and listening skills. The teacher’s manner and sensitive approach highlighted the positive side as well as the dangers of taking substances into the body. Very good use was made of other resources and the lesson continued at a brisk pace, resulting in very effective learning.

93. Pupils are able to develop their social skills during both daytime and residential visits. Through the recently formed Pupil Council, pupils discuss school issues and participate in good teamwork and have raised funds to improve the facilities in the swimming pool changing rooms.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

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

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

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

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