

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST THURROCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Thurrock, Grays, Essex

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114906

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Cook

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Evans

Dates of inspection: 19th - 21st January 2004

Inspection number: 258361

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: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 178

School address: The Rookery
London Road
West Thurrock
Grays
Essex
Postcode: RM20 3HX

Telephone number: (01708) 866 743
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Linda Looker

Date of previous inspection: April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

West Thurrock Primary School is a smaller than average primary school providing education for 178 children, 75 boys and 103 girls. At the time of the inspection 30 children attended the school's nursery part time, 9 in the morning and 21 in the afternoon. The area the school is situated in is in the lowest five per cent of the national deprivation index. The proportion of children identified as being eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There is a high level of pupils in the school for whom English is not their first language. Some of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above the national average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The vast majority of pupils live within the area surrounding the school, although some live outside the immediate area. There are regularly large numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times of leaving or transfer. In the past two years, apart from one teacher, there has been a complete change of teaching staff, including the headteacher and the deputy-headteacher. The school was in special measures for five years until 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20737	Mr P Evans	Lead inspector	Foundation stage curriculum Science Information and communication technology Music Religious education
9420	Mr D Martin	Lay inspector	
20560	Mr P Adams	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education
20534	Mrs N Perry	Team inspector	English Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of West Thurrock Primary School is satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money and offers a sound and improving level of education to most of its pupils. This is a happy and improving school with a good ethos. The quality of teaching varies in different areas of the school and, in a small number of lessons, less than satisfactory teaching means that pupils do not achieve well or build on their previous good and very good experiences. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with much which is good, and pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is much ground to make up as pupils' standards have not been promoted well for a number of years. The school has now begun to put this right. The very good vision and leadership of the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher are promoting improving leadership and management in the rest of the school. The governing body plays its part in leading and managing the school well. The school promotes good attitudes and behaviour among all its pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- There is very good provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes and good provision for pupils who have special educational needs or who are in the early stage of learning English.
- The headteacher leads her team and manages the school very well. She has a clear vision of how to improve the school further.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is less than satisfactory.
- The development of literacy requires improvement across the school.
- The governing body is good and plays its part in guiding the school well.
- The commitment to equality of opportunity and the needs of individual pupils is good.
- More-able pupils are not always fully extended.
- Information and communication technology is not used enough in other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is now good overall.
- Very high staff turnover, pupil movement and poor attendance are barriers to pupils' learning.

Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement. All of the key issues have been addressed and most have been dealt with well. The most notable improvements have been in the rising standard in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, and the leadership, management and governance of the school. The building of the new team of teachers is almost complete, lesson planning is generally good. The care and welfare of pupils has been improved. Procedures for the assessment of their progress are good but this information is not well used in Years 1 and 2. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language or special educational needs is good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

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

Children **achieve well** in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. **Overall achievement at the end of Year 2 is less than satisfactory.** However, because of the very good support that they are

given, pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs **achieve well** throughout the school. The attainment of children joining the school is **very low**. Their standards in language and mathematical development are **well below expectations** by the end of the reception class. In their personal, social and physical development they are in line with expectations. In all other areas of learning they reach standards which are below expectations.

At the end of Year 2, standards in English are **well below expectations**. Standards in most other subjects are below expectations and **many pupils are underachieving** because of the less than satisfactory quality of teaching. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in English, maths and science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations in Year 6 but below expectations in Year 2. Standards in art and design are above expectations throughout the school, but standards in history and geography are below expectations. A very high proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times every year, and this presents a constant barrier to learning and achievement.

The department for educational standards (DfES) recently agreed changes to the results of the 2003 national tests which show a significant improvement at the end of Year 6. When compared to those in similar schools, West Thurrock's results at Level 4 and above were average in English, well above average in mathematics and in the top five per cent in science. This represents significant improvement and standards are rising.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** throughout the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and is **satisfactory with some good teaching** in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is **less than satisfactory**. Most teachers throughout the school establish high-quality relationships with pupils and generally provide interesting activities. The ethos of the school is good. Pupils respond well and generally have good attitudes to their work. Except in Years 1 and 2, the quality of learning is good throughout the school. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not use assessment information well to match work to pupils' growing levels of attainment and in some cases they do not manage pupils' behaviour well.

The quality of the curriculum offered to pupils is **good**. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for and receive **good support and guidance**. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are **good**. Links with parents, the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher are **very good** and her partnership with the acting deputy headteacher is very good. The headteacher has a very good educational vision for the school and is already promoting **good** leadership and management amongst the new staff. However, a high level of staff change and some staff illness have slowed this improvement. Financial management and monitoring are good and governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. All aspects of governors' contributions are good and governance is good overall. The school is well set to show further good improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school. In questionnaires, at their meeting with the lead inspector and when spoken to during the inspection, parents were complimentary about the school. Some were concerned about the behaviour of some children. Whilst incidents of inappropriate behaviour were seen, this was the result of teachers' lack of management skills in less than

satisfactory lessons. The great majority of teachers manage pupils very well, with the result that behaviour in the school is good.

Pupils are pleased with their school. They have great confidence in all adults working in the school. The small number of questionnaires returned (30 per cent) show that a small minority of pupils, both older and younger, do not think that lessons are fun or that other children behave well. Inspection evidence shows that behaviour is good and that lessons in most classes are interesting.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise achievement and standards for all pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. ¹
- Develop even more effective strategies to impress on parents the importance of the regular attendance of their children. ¹
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. ¹
- Improve the use of assessment information to guide the planning of work for pupils of different levels of ability. ¹
- Improve the quality of writing throughout the school and in all subjects.
- Develop and implement strategies to fully extend more able pupils. ¹
- Further develop the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of other subjects.

¹ These issues have already been identified, by the school, as areas for improvement. Strategies are being developed or implemented to effect improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

All groups of pupils in the **Foundation Stage achieve well**. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is less than satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average in mathematics, science and ICT. Standards in reading and writing are less than satisfactory because of some unsatisfactory teaching of literacy. **Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and improving**, based on pupils' levels of ability and their previous achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high turnover of teaching staff and the high mobility of pupils have had a detrimental impact on standards.
- The attainment of children on entry to the school is very low.
- The new headteacher has established a climate of improvement.
- At the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national tests, the school's results were in the lowest five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests, standards in English and science were below average and standards in science were average. This was a significant improvement on previous results.
- All children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all six areas of learning.
- Standards in art and design are above expectations throughout the school.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to teach other subjects is not yet well developed.
- The school's priority to raise standards in literacy and numeracy is having a positive effect in almost all classes.
- There are high expectations of pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour. Clear improvement is evident.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (23.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.4 (25.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment is **very low** when they join the school. Their communication, language, literacy, mathematical skills and their personal and social skills are all very low and are main areas for improvement. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress because of very good teaching. They achieve well in all areas of the Early Learning Goals for their age (ELGs) because of good provision, high expectations and very good teaching.
2. The 2003 national test results show that by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics pupils' standards were in the lowest five per cent nationally when compared to the results of all schools. In comparison to those in schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals, these results were again in the lowest five per cent nationally in all three subjects. Teacher assessments in science showed that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 and above was in the lowest five per cent nationally. The percentage who reached the

higher Level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science was well below the average for similar schools.

3. This low level of attainment is caused by the fact that children joining the school have very low attainment as a group. Their communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical skills are very low, with many children being very restricted in the ways that they can communicate. Their personal and social skills are also very poor, and consequently they are not ready to learn when they join the school. During the inspection children were observed, who even after exposure to very good teaching, were still learning to count beyond two. The school has an above average level of pupils with special educational needs and of those for whom English is an additional language. Standards have also been severely affected during the school's five years in Special Measures, when there were constant changes of headteacher and other teaching staff. In the past two years there has been a total change in the teaching staff, including the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher. Only one teacher remains from two years ago. Pupils move in and out of the school during term time at a rate, which is almost double the national average. This has a significant, detrimental effect on their learning and achievement. The school also has a proportion of pupils with special educational needs, which is above the national average.
4. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is higher than average. Also, it is a relatively recent trend and one which is growing. These pupils are often in higher-attaining groups. They enter the school often as casual admissions and at this point they have lower-level English language skills. However, with very good support they achieve well. The provision of English as an additional language has improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Provision is now good.
5. There are a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, much higher than average. This situation makes special educational needs a significant feature of school life. There is clear evidence of pupils with special educational needs making satisfactory and often good progress. In 2003, of Year 6 pupils on the register of special educational needs, two achieved the expected level in English, some achieved the expected level in mathematics and all achieved the expected level in science. The provision for special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory.
6. The new headteacher joined the school in 2002 and set targets for the improvement of pupils' attitudes and behaviour as well as raising standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy, whilst establishing a broad range of subject teaching. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are now both fully in place and, although standards are not yet as high as they should be, significant improvement has already taken place. These improvements, implemented by the headteacher and the new team of teachers, are reflected in pupils' achievement in these areas, but time has been too short for standards to reach the levels that the school is aiming for.
7. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards in English and mathematics were below average and in science were average when compared to those in all schools. This shows clear improvement in all three subjects on the results of previous years. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in 2003 was below the national average. The school came very close to reaching its targets for Levels 4 and 5 in both English and mathematics in the 2003 tests. This is a significant improvement and shows how the headteacher's strategies are already having the effect of raising standards and pupils' achievement.
8. When account is taken of pupils' standards on entry to the school, pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, but achievement in Years 1 and 2 is less than satisfactory. There is very good commitment to equality of opportunity throughout the school, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, make the same progress as their classmates in the Foundation Stage and in Years

3 to 6 because of the good work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO), the very good support offered by teachers and teaching assistants and the use of the well-written individual education plans in lessons. Because the school's priority is to raise basic standards for all its pupils, it has not yet focussed on consistently extending more able pupils, which means that not all of them reach the standards that they could.

9. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with expectations at the end Year 6, but below average at the end of Year 2. ICT is used in the teaching of other subjects, but this is not yet as well developed as it should be. ICT is not yet raising pupils' standards and promoting their achievement across the curriculum. Standards in art and design are now above expectations across the school. Standards in music, design and technology and physical education are in line with expectations. Standards in history and geography are below expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in religious education throughout the school meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good overall**, although attitudes are only satisfactory in Years 1 to 2, where they are affected by less satisfactory teaching. Their personal development and their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are **good**, with the social and moral aspects strongest. Attendance is **very poor** and punctuality is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very poor.
- Pupils' behaviour is generally good throughout the school, as are their attitudes in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Commentary

10. A main priority for the headteacher and her team has been the raising of standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to their work. This has proved a significant success. Pupils have rising levels of self-confidence and self-esteem because they are more involved in decision-making and feel that they are trusted. In most lessons they show good attitudes to their work, and behaviour around the school is good. This has the effect of raising their rate of progress and their achievement. However, in some lessons in Years 1 and 2, when teachers' skills in managing pupils are not at the usual high level, some pupils do misbehave and this adversely affects their progress and achievement.
11. The improving standards and growing confidence of pupils are having the effect of promoting attitudes and behaviour, and this in turn promotes greater achievement. However, more able pupils are not sufficiently extended. A greater depth of study and increased rates of work produced by all pupils are required to further promote learning and achievement.
12. The school's published attendance figures are very poor and mean that, for the pupils who are regularly absent, their education is seriously affected. Authorised and unauthorised absences are both well above national averages. The overall attendance rate has declined significantly since the last inspection. The latest, unofficial, statistics produced by the school for the period between September and December 2003 show an overall improvement, but they are still substantially below the national averages. These latest figures indicate a decline in authorised absence but a leap in unauthorised absence. Poor attendance is one factor in some pupils' low levels of attainment.
13. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although on one of the days of the inspection a significant number of pupils were late for the morning session and did not show a great sense of urgency

as they entered the school grounds. The school does not operate a late register, although late pupils are marked as such in the class registers.

14. The school suggested several reasons for the very poor attendance, including pupils who have left the school but remained on the roll for some time, and particular pupils with very poor attendance records. However, they were not able to produce the evidence to support these suggestions. The school rewards good attendance with certificates and regularly reminds parents of the importance of good attendance in newsletters. An analysis of attendance for each pupil, sometimes together with a booklet, is sent to parents each term. Parents of pupils with persistently bad records are referred to the Education Welfare Officer for possible enforcement action. Pupils with poor attendance records do not progress as well as their peers.
15. Registers are well maintained and correctly completed, and registration times are used well to provide an orderly and purposeful start to the school day.

Authorised absence	
School data	9.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.7
National data	0.4

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

16. The attitudes of pupils towards learning are good, except in Years 1 and 2 where they are affected by the less satisfactory quality of teaching, which they receive. They like school, appreciate the after-school clubs, and are active participants in assemblies. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 staged a slick and exhilarating presentation, to an appreciative whole-school assembly of several playlets, which reinforced messages including the need for good attendance and religious tolerance. Pupils believe that they work hard, but understand that this is necessary if they are to benefit from the teaching. Older pupils show consideration to younger ones and were observed offering impromptu guidance and advice regarding behaviour. Pupils demonstrate mature social skills when in large groups at lunch and break times. This enables them to become self-confident, which promotes their learning well.
17. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language try hard. Consistently, they show interest and enthusiasm. As a result they all make good progress. The school values every pupil and develops their self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result, relationships between pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language and their support staff are good.
18. In the best lessons pupils settle quickly to the different activities and concentrate, even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. They listen attentively and generally follow instructions well. These positive attitudes are a result of the quality of teaching. For example, the good pace and variety of activities help to maintain the pupils' interest. They show confidence in their own abilities and are eager to contribute their own ideas. This contributes well to their learning and the progress that they make.
19. The behaviour of pupils is good and most parents and all pupils readily acknowledge this as a marked improvement since the arrival of the head teacher. Pupils are aware of how their behaviour affects others, and the great majority show self-discipline, which results in an orderly school. The Yo-Yobs (You Own Your Own Behaviour) scheme is understood and appreciated by pupils as a means of controlling their own behaviour. Pupils are open, polite to adults and to each other, and welcoming to visitors. Instances of bullying or other aggressive behaviour are rare and pupils know that these are not tolerated and are dealt with promptly and effectively. Last year there was only one exclusion. Pupils feel secure in the school and this has the effect of making them confident in their learning and contributes well to their achievement.

20. In the Foundation Stage, the attitudes and behaviour of all children are priorities for development from the time they start school. Because of very good teaching and high expectations, they quickly develop an understanding of how they should behave and they learn to concentrate on their tasks even when the teacher, teacher assistants or nursery nurse are not close by. Attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage Unit are good and this contributes well to the good progress and achievement that children make.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	127	1	0
White - any other White background	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British - African	15	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	2	0	0
Information not obtained	2	0	0

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

21. Pupils' personal development is good, with those from different cultures mixing well together. Pupils demonstrate that they are acquiring many of the elements of good citizenship. They act responsibly when undertaking classroom duties and fulfilling their roles as buddies to new entrants or as mentors, monitors or members of the School Council. Pupils also show a clear knowledge of what is right and wrong.
22. Pupils' cultural and spiritual development is good. Many subjects provide them with a fuller understanding of the world around them. The study of world faiths in religious education helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. Art and design helps to develop aesthetic awareness. The school makes use of the different cultures in the school, including a parent who came in to talk about aspects of her religion. Pupils therefore know about the multi-ethnic and multi-faith nature of our society and the larger world. For instance, during a group discussion, a younger pupil made it very clear that skin colour was not a distinguishing feature of nationality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is now **satisfactory overall and is improving**. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is less than satisfactory. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good in core subjects but, in Years 1 and 2, the information gathered is not well used to set appropriate work for pupils of varying levels of attainment.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and children learn well. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. This shows **good** improvement since the last inspection, when they required improvement. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is **less than satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. This has sharply focused the teaching and improved pupils' learning in most lessons.
- Improving the quality of provision in literacy and numeracy has been a priority.
- The quality of teaching in lessons in the Foundation Stage is now very good. Children learn well.
- There is too much less than satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, with much that is good.
- In most lessons, behaviour is well managed and pupils concentrate and work hard.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.
- Short-term planning is now established, and the school is using national guidelines to provide a framework for medium and long-term planning in foundation subjects.

Commentary

23. When the headteacher joined the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were identified as a barrier to learning and thus in need of urgent attention. All the staff in the school understand and support the school's high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work. Pupils are involved in developing rules which they agree with and support, and the ethos of the school is now good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in most lessons are now good and this has a significant impact on their learning and achievement. This represents a good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection. However, difficulties detailed below have caused a regression in the provision in Years 1 and 2.
24. However, in Years 1 and 2, teachers do not demonstrate good enough skills in managing pupils' behaviour or have high enough expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils produce. From looking at pupils' past work, it is clear that in Years 1 and 2 the quality of marking is not good enough and some work is unmarked. Whilst good assessment procedures are used to monitor pupils' progress, the information gathered is not well used to match work to pupils' levels of attainment. Too much work is given to all pupils at the same level. This has the effect of lowering achievement and fails to build on the very good work going on in the school's Foundation Stage Unit.
25. There are several reasons for this weaker teaching. The school had already identified some weaker teaching and is working with advisors from the local education authority to rectify this. However, these efforts have not yet proved successful. There has been unavoidable staff absence due to illness, and the school has great difficulty in attracting supply teachers, partly because of the area in which it is situated and partly because of its past reputation as a poor school. There is an emergency strategy being developed, which will have the headteacher teaching regularly in Years 1 and 2 in order to rectify this weakness.
26. The headteacher has promoted a high level of staff development in literacy and numeracy. However, teachers in Years 1 and 2 are still not delivering the National Literacy Strategy to a high enough standard to promote pupils' learning and achievement.
27. Teachers work with a range of methods and resources; for example, pupils use individual whiteboards, and work in pairs and groups as well as using conventional written methods. These different methods engage the pupils' interest and give them the opportunity to be practically involved in learning, helping them to concentrate and work productively. Homework supports work done in class and provides sound preparation for future work. However, the use of homework is not yet fully developed and some families do not provide the support that pupils need to work at home.
28. Teachers skilfully use questions which help pupils understand their work and give opportunities to reflect and talk about learning. Sometimes, the questioning and work set are not accurately

matched to the ability of individual pupils and this means they are not working at the correct level.

29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of those who have English as an additional language is successful because teachers, working with support staff, build on the specific and achievable targets of individual education plans and plan lessons to match those needs. Teaching is effective for these pupils, because teachers plan and prepare work with them in mind. They make reference to different groups in their lesson plans; thus work is differentiated effectively and matches pupils' needs. Teachers are committed to including pupils with special educational needs in their lessons and make demands that promote their learning and progress.
30. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, and pupils feel confident about 'having a go' at answering questions. This helps them think carefully and apply themselves, and has a very positive effect on learning. Behaviour is well managed throughout the school and in most lessons, and pupils understand expectations, so they mostly work hard and do not waste time. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers, and the support that they give pupils, especially those of lower ability, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, promotes their learning and achievement very well.
31. The tracking of pupils' progress is at an early stage in the school. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that the marking and assessment of work are inconsistent between key stages and therefore do not always provide guidance for pupils or inform planning for future teaching. This has the effect of slowing pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2.
32. The planning of individual lessons is good, but medium- and long-term planning in foundation subjects has not yet been fully developed beyond the use of national guidelines. This means that it is difficult to track pupils' learning and achievement or to assess their progress in foundation subjects such as history and geography. The school's development planning shows this as a priority area for development.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	7	6	3	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

Overall curriculum provision is **good**. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision in the Foundation Stage.
- The school's curriculum framework details how and when all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught.
- Short-term planning has been improved through the provision of detailed unit plans in mathematics and in some other subjects.
- Improvements in the use of assessment are effective in tracking progress and identifying areas of development.
- There is good extra-curricular provision in sports, arts and crafts which enriches pupils' learning experiences.
- The quantity and quality of teachers and support staff are well matched to the school's needs.

- Support staff make a valuable contribution to the work of the school, particularly in supporting inclusion practices.
- Good use is made of accommodation, and good displays reflect the curriculum.
- In some subjects, pupils do not work at sufficient depth or at a fast enough rate.
- The curriculum does not give sufficient emphasis to support for more-able pupils.
- Marking of pupils' work continues to be inconsistently applied in some classes.

Commentary

33. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile curricular opportunities, and all statutory requirements are met. The adoption of a detailed curriculum framework now assures appropriate progression and continuity in the development of knowledge and skills in all subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education.
34. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The environment, resources and displays of children's work support this very good provision. Staff carefully plan a variety of activities following the Stepping Stones that lead to the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. This provides them with a firm base for their future learning. This promotes children's learning and achievement very well.
35. The school has developed good curriculum overviews, with action plans for all areas of responsibility. Subject co-ordinators are developing their monitoring of the quality of teaching and of the standard of pupils' work. However, this development is in the early stages of implementation and has not had time to fully impact on pupils' learning. The school now gives more attention to the detail in teachers' short-term planning. The medium-term planning is beginning to reflect the growing cultural diversity of the school, but does not yet include sufficient references to higher-attaining pupils or the use of literacy or ICT in other subjects.
36. Improvements in the use of assessment in English and mathematics are being used effectively to track pupils' progress and identify areas for development. The manageable use of assessment in foundation subjects is being introduced. The marking of pupils' work continues to be inconsistent; too often comments are the same and not sufficiently evaluative, and some work is unmarked.
37. The curriculum is enriched through extra-curricular provision in sports, arts and crafts; these opportunities for learning outside the classroom are good. The school makes some use of local resources.
38. The recruitment of permanent and qualified teaching staff has created stability and improved standards in teaching and learning. There is a good match of trained and experienced support staff to the needs of pupils. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in supporting lower-attaining pupils, those with English as an additional language or those with special educational needs.
39. As curriculum co-ordinator, the head teacher has overseen changes to the school day. These have had a positive impact, creating better blocks of teaching time and improved pupil attitudes. The school makes the best use of the accommodation, making it a welcoming and stimulating environment that adds positively to pupils' desire to learn. Overall, accommodation is good. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum, and subject co-ordinators consistently review needs and make appropriate purchases. The level of resources for teaching and learning has the effect of raising pupils' achievement and the standards that they reach.

Care, guidance and support

The care provided for pupils is **very good** in the Foundation Stage and good for all other pupils. The provision made by the school to ensure pupils' welfare is **very good** and provision for their health and safety is **good**. The school also makes **good** provision for seeking and acting upon the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision made for the care of pupils in the Foundation Stage. Induction procedures are good.
- There are very good child-protection practices.
- Racial incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Pastoral support is very good.
- Behaviour has been improved significantly.
- There are effective measures to seek and act upon the views of pupils.

Commentary

40. The school's procedures for identifying and acting upon child-protection matters are very good. All staff have recently received training and the school is diligent in following up concerns and taking the necessary action. There is very good provision for the medical needs of pupils. The school premises provide a very safe environment, with secure fencing and external doors controlled by entry systems. Regular property checks and risk assessments are carried out, including before residential trips. All required statutory testing is carried out and closely monitored. This ensures that pupils learn in a secure and safe environment. Some minor deficiencies were noted during the inspection and made known to the school.
41. All children in the Foundation Stage are very well guided, cared for and supported. All staff in the Foundation Stage Unit show real care and concern for all their children and monitor and review their personal, social and emotional development on a regular basis. All are very aware of any difficulties outside school and offer very good pastoral support. All are trained in the school's child-protection procedures. This results in children working in a safe, secure and supportive environment, which promotes their self-esteem and self-confidence.
42. For pupils with special educational needs there is effective assessment and monitoring of their performance and progress. This support and guidance are raising achievement and these pupils make good progress. All statutory requirements for pupils with statements of special educational need are well met.
43. All pupils with English as an additional language are included in lessons. Pupils enjoy their work. Activities promote learning, enable the pupils to achieve success and raise their self-esteem. There is effective assessment and monitoring of pupils' performance and progress. This support and guidance are raising achievement and these pupils make good progress.
44. The school provides equal access for all pupils to all aspects of its work, and standards are improving. There are high levels of special educational need, and high pupil and teacher mobility. These factors impact significantly upon the life of the school and require good induction processes. Additional support is provided for pupils who join during term time, who often arrive with low-level English language skills. These pupils are all fully included in all aspects of school life and achieve well.
45. Most pupils are well guided on their progress in core subjects, where assessment information is used well to track their progress and to set targets for further improvement. There is some inconsistency in the use of these strategies in Years 1 and 2. Similar systems for assessing progress in foundation subjects are being trialled. When assessment information is used well it

has the effect of improving pupils' understanding of how they learn and thus promotes their learning and achievement.

46. The school provides sex education for older pupils, and pupils are also taught about helpful and unhelpful drugs.
47. All staff, including classroom assistants and mid-day assistants, show compassion in their dealings with pupils. On several occasions during the inspection, staff were observed offering gentle consolation to distressed children. As a consequence of this support, pupils have trust in the staff and report that they would have no hesitation in seeking help from them, even about problems not directly related to the school. However, the school only makes sporadic use of techniques such as Circle Time, and pupils report that they would appreciate more such opportunities.
48. The school has invested a great deal of effort in improving behaviour, including recent whole-staff training, and this has resulted in a marked improvement, which is acknowledged by most pupils and parents. A number of strategies have been introduced and the sanctions and rewards systems are well understood. Pupils are aware of the expectations and, through contracts and the Yo-Yobs (You Own Your Own Behaviour) scheme, are provided with support to bring about self-improvement.
49. The Breakfast Club provides a structured and effective start to the day for those who attend and greatly assists their personal development as well as their learning. The residential visits are also very effective in helping pupils to mature.
50. There are very few incidents of a racial nature, but those that do occur are dealt with quickly and thoroughly, including appropriate advice to the pupils concerned and discussions with the parents where necessary.
51. Induction arrangements for new entrants to the reception class are good. A meeting is held for all parents concerned and they are provided with helpful information. Parents also have an opportunity at the start and end of the school day to discuss matters with the appropriate staff. Pupils who join the school during later years are paired with a buddy, but this system is currently only informal and the school has stated its intention to further develop this arrangement.
52. The school council, which has members to represent all but the youngest pupils, is a great asset to the school. Not only does it aid the personal development of those involved, but it is also an effective introduction for all pupils to elements of citizenship and provides a good means of communication between the school and its pupils. The council conducted a survey to find out pupils' likes and dislikes, as a result of which certain changes were made, and also voted on how to use a grant from a local community group. This promotes pupils' feeling of being valued by the school and raises their self-esteem and self-confidence, which has a positive effect on their learning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Some elements of the information provided for parents are **good** and the school maintains **good** contact with parents as a means of satisfying any concerns and resolving any problems. Only a few parents are directly involved in the work of the school. There are **good** arrangements for the transfer of pupils out of the Foundation Stage. Links with the local community and other schools are **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good flow of information from the school to parents about events and the work their children are doing.
- Few parents are involved in the daily life of the school.

- The approachability of the school and the manner in which it resolves any concerns or problems are good.
- Relationships with the local community and with other schools are sound.

Commentary

53. Parents are provided with good information about the work their children will be doing, the homework they can expect and how parents can help with this. They are also given regular reports on pupils' attendance. Other activities, such as assemblies for parents, are also well publicised.
54. Annual reports for pupils generally give targets for pupils' learning and personal development, but these are sometimes rather generalised or vague. There were some minor deficiencies in the latest copies of some of the statutory information provided for parents and the school has been informed of these.
55. Parents are satisfied with the arrangements for the annual meeting to review their children's progress, although only approximately a half of parents attend. A higher proportion attended the last termly meeting for parents, and attendance at the lively parent assemblies is satisfactory.
56. Parents are well informed about their children's special needs and are aware of their children's inclusion on the register of special educational needs. Where individual education plans are prepared, there are consultation opportunities and regular reviews of progress. Detailed assessments inform these reviews so that targets can be revised appropriately.
57. The parents of pupils who have English as an additional language are also well informed about their children's needs. If individual education plans are prepared, parents are consulted and regular reviews of progress are provided.
58. Previously pupils with English as an additional language were withdrawn for support, but now the overall aim is integration through support in the classroom. There is a good number of trained and experienced support staff, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in supporting inclusion practices. The co-ordinator for ethnic minority achievement provides good leadership. Whilst funding is limited, training has been provided for the relevant staff.
59. The school carried out a survey last year to establish the views of parents and another is planned shortly. The school also maintains close contact with parents, when necessary, to address any concerns or resolve problems. Parents feel that the school is approachable and that it deals with their concerns well.
60. Very few parents are actively involved in the life of the school, either by assisting in the classroom or at lunchtimes or by talking to the children about their culture, faith or careers. There is reluctance among parents to undertake this role and the school would welcome their greater involvement. Parents have very little knowledge or information about the governors and their activities.
61. The school has derived some benefits, such as improvements to the library area and funding for the Breakfast Club, from its contacts with the local community and there is some use of the school's facilities by outside organisations. However, this is not a strong aspect of the school.
62. The school is a member of a grouping of local schools and has taken part in shared training in behaviour management. Established links with local secondary schools are used to provide parents with information relating to the transfer of pupils to secondary education, and opportunities are provided for pupils and parents to learn about prospective schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good overall**. Governance is **good**. Since the previous inspection, standards have shown some improvement and the school is continuing to pursue effective strategies to maintain this upward trend.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher has brought into sharp focus the need to improve.
- The governing body has become increasingly effective, and it is successful in monitoring and holding the school to account for its performance.
- High levels of change in teaching staff in the past two years and regular high levels of pupil movement have been barriers to learning and achievement.
- Identified priorities are being addressed systematically.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The leadership and management of provision for special educational needs are good.
- The roles of subject managers have not yet been fully developed.

Commentary

63. Since the previous inspection, the school has devised and implemented effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its performance and for diagnosing its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher is a very effective leader. She has ensured that identified priorities are linked to teaching, learning and curriculum leadership, which are reflected in staff performance-management objectives. This has brought about good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has high expectations of herself and has a very clear vision of where the school needs to be. Her self-confidence and ability to motivate staff have contributed greatly to school improvement, both since her appointment and since the previous inspection. Her strategy of cautious delegation of curriculum responsibilities to staff has been very effective in enabling them to gain experience and confidence in learning how to be a subject leader without unnecessary overload. She uses individual strengths well and recognises where further support and guidance are required. As a result, leadership and management of English, mathematics, science and ICT are now good. Continuing professional development and the induction of new staff have a high status and are well regarded by all staff. As a result, the staff work very well together, value each other's strengths and liaise effectively. This promotes a good learning environment and impacts positively on pupils' achievement.
64. The governing body operates efficiently through its system of committees and as a result governance of the school is good. Governors work closely with the headteacher and are well informed and knowledgeable about the school's performance. As a result they are able to identify confidently how the school has improved since the last inspection as well as areas requiring development. They are aware that they have yet to develop effective links with subject leaders so that they work with staff to monitor and evaluate aspects of the school. The school had to deal with a deficit budget and plans were agreed with the authorities for dealing with this. Although the deficit has not yet been completely eliminated, there is a realistic plan for reducing and eventually eliminating the deficit. Finances are now well managed and the governing body ensures that financial resources, including specific grants and additional funding, are allocated in accordance with the school's identified priorities. The school implements the principles of best value effectively, through its use of data, its methods of consulting those connected with it, its challenging aims and its targeted use of the budget. Because of this, pupils' learning is promoted well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
65. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The co-ordinator shows clear understanding of the needs of pupils who are in need of additional help and support in their learning. Support staff are appropriately deployed and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Procedures, including arrangements for reviews and annual reviews, are managed properly. The governing body is kept fully informed through

regular liaison meetings with the headteacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. This promotes the learning of pupils with special educational needs well.

66. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Previously, pupils with English as an additional language were withdrawn for support, but now the overall aim is integration through support in the classroom, which is working well. There is a good number of trained and experienced support staff, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in supporting inclusion practices. The co-ordinator for ethnic minority achievement provides good leadership. Whilst funding is limited, training has been provided for the relevant staff and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.
67. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The acting deputy headteacher has successfully developed a Foundation Unit so that pupils are now receiving a high-quality learning experience when they enter the school. She has an excellent understanding of how young children learn and has planned the curriculum very well to support their development. She is effectively promoting the development of other staff who work with children in the unit. This is strongly contributing to improvement in pupils' achievement throughout their time in the nursery and Reception classes.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	426,018
Total expenditure	575,073
Expenditure per pupil	2,766

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	32,705
Balance carried forward to the next	-116,350

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all six areas of learning².
- The quality of teaching in all areas of learning is very good. The quality of children's learning is good because children are very well supported by experienced teachers' assistants and a nursery nurse.
- Assessment procedures are very good and the information gathered is used very well to ensure that children progress well, and to plan the next stage of their learning.
- The quality of teamwork in the Foundation Stage Unit is very good.
- The setting of children for literacy and numeracy, according to their abilities, promotes their learning very well.
- Good resources help children to learn well and the very good accommodation is used imaginatively.

Commentary

68. At the time of the inspection, there were two nursery groups, 17 in the morning and 13 in the afternoon. The 24 reception children are taught separately most of the time. However, the more-able nursery and reception class children are grouped together for communication, language, literacy and mathematical development, while those who are still developing early skills in these areas are also taught together. This ensures that all children build skills steadily and do not miss anything. It also ensures that their personal, social and emotional development is also promoted steadily. This is a priority for the school and is already becoming a strength. When children join the school there are a large number with special educational needs and of low ability, and many have very poor skills in communication, language, literacy, and mathematical, personal, social and emotional development.
69. By the end of the reception year, the children attain the Early Learning Goals in their personal, social, emotional and physical development. There is excellent progress in personal, social and emotional development and good progress in physical development. They make good progress and attain well in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development, but standards in these areas are still well below expectations when they join Year 1 because of the poor levels that they join the school with. Children also make good progress and achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Standards are below expectations in these areas when children join Year 1 because of their poor pre-school experiences.
70. The quality of teaching is very good and has many very good features. For example, the assessment systems enable the staff to track the children's progress and achievement, and to match work closely to their needs when planning the next stage of their learning. The school works closely with parents to ensure that all children have a smooth start to their education, and has introduced high-quality introduction days for parents whose children are joining the nursery class and the reception class. The Foundation Stage Unit accommodation is very good, comprising two large airy rooms which are set out according to the areas of learning that are undertaken in them. The unit leader, who is also the acting deputy headteacher, leads a

² The six areas of learning for Foundation Stage children are communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and personal, social and emotional development.

very good team of one teacher, one nursery nurse and 3 full- or part-time teaching assistants. All the staff know the children very well, and have very good teaching skills and a very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for young children and how they learn. The outside area for Foundation Stage children is very good. It combines paved and grass areas, has been very well developed by the staff to cover all areas of children's learning, not just their physical development, and is regularly used for teaching and learning throughout the day.

71. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good in the Foundation Stage. They are identified early and their needs are very well met because of the care, understanding and skills of the staff. They achieve well in all areas of learning. Children with English as an additional language are also provided for very well. Not only do all the teaching staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of these children, but other children are also encouraged to help them to understand English. A significant proportion of these children have average and some above average ability, and achieve well in all areas of learning.
72. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and the overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage shows an improvement since the last inspection.
73. In the area of **personal, social and emotional development** the children achieve very well and teaching is very good. The nursery children benefit from working alongside the reception children, who set a good example through their own behaviour, which the nursery children copy. This level of behaviour is reached at an early stage because of the very high expectations of all the staff, their very good skills in managing children's behaviour and their high levels of care and patience. The children steadily develop good levels of confidence in tackling new learning, make choices and decisions about their work and develop good attention. Some in the nursery class are already showing that they can remain focussed on their work, even when they are not directly supervised. All children learn to work well together in groups, and have a good understanding of the need to listen to the contributions of others, to take turns, and to share resources.
74. The children achieve well in **communication, language and literacy**, and the teaching is very good. There is a good combination of activities that are led and directed by the staff, such as the use of a "Big Book" when learning about "The Three Little Pigs". Children learn to follow the text from left to right and also learn the sounds of letters. Most learn to read their own name, although the reading skills of most of them are well below what is expected for their age because of their poor attainment on entry to the school. Speaking and listening skills are developed steadily, and staff are very effective in the way in which they pick up incidental opportunities for extending the children's vocabulary. By the end of the reception year, the children have a good appreciation of books, and understand that writing conveys meaning. They join in well with well-known stories, and during the inspection some children showed good levels of confidence when they "read" their favourite stories to inspectors. They recounted stories well and used pictorial clues, even though they have not yet developed the skills of decoding text. Children have their own reading books which they take home regularly. Frequent opportunities for them to practise in class ensure that they achieve well in this aspect of their learning from a very low base. The promotion of early writing skills is very good, and children are regularly encouraged to 'write' in a variety of contexts, developing from early mark-making to being able to form a variety of letters.
75. In terms of their **mathematical development**, the children achieve well and the quality of teaching is very good. When they enter Year 1 their attainment is well below average as a group. By the end of the reception year a small number of children have a good understanding and knowledge of number. Higher-attaining children recognise numerals, and count up to and beyond twenty with good levels of confidence and accuracy. However, there are few who reach this standard because of their poor knowledge and understanding of number when they join the school. Others have low levels of ability and learn slowly. For example, in one very good number session, children were making ladybirds with various numbers of spots according to their level of development. At the end of the session, the very good review of

learning revealed that over half of the children had difficulty identifying numerals beyond 2 or 3. The children's learning is enhanced by the good range of counting songs that they sing regularly and which help them to understand the idea of 'one more' and 'one less'. Very good ongoing development of the children's vocabulary by the class teacher and support staff helps them to develop early skills in explaining their mathematical ideas accurately and clearly. For example, during the inspection, the children confidently discussed the relative sizes of 'The Three Bears'. The accommodation is used well to promote mathematical development, and there are regular opportunities for the children to explore mathematical concepts through sand and water play, and for them to learn through first-hand experience and from working outside.

76. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are below expectations by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teaching is very good and children are enabled to learn through structured play activities and first-hand experience. They have regular 'free-choice' activities, which enable them to find things out for themselves. They are steadily developing a satisfactory awareness of the passage of time, and through taking part in activities such as re-enacting the story of 'The Three Bears', they begin to learn how to use a spoon properly or lay a table. Religious education is taught regularly, and the children listen to religious stories from a range of major faiths. A parent visited to show how she celebrated the festival of Diwali, and children watched fascinated as she painted Rangoli patterns. However, many parents are reluctant to help with children's learning in this way and the school continues to work hard to develop this area of provision further. Children's computer skills are below expectations, but they do have access to computers throughout the day and lesson planning includes the use of computers to aid learning. The children become enthusiastic learners who develop good levels of interest in all activities.
77. In terms of their **physical development**, the children achieve well and teaching is very good. When they join Year 1 their attainment is in line with expectations for their age. Children's attainment and achievement are promoted well through the use of the very good outside area where they play with large pieces of apparatus and equipment, including wheeled toys. Basic and fine motor skills are taught well, and the children learn how to use scissors and cutting tools. They develop an appropriate control of brushes and pencils, and most manipulate small objects such as building bricks well.
78. In the **creative** area of learning, teaching is very good, and children are often taught in small groups. They often make good progress when they are provided with a range of activities from which they can make their own choice, because of the very good support that they are given. They have regular access to painting activities, which are undertaken throughout the day. They regularly use dough for modelling, and take part in a good range of craft activities. They learn a good range of songs, which they sing with real enjoyment and a growing ability to sing in tune and to maintain a regular rhythm.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision for English is **less than satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of English across the school has improved since the previous inspection but provision is still less than satisfactory.
- There is still under achievement in Years 1 to 6.
- There is less than satisfactory teaching and inadequate subject knowledge in Years 1 and 2.
- The use of literacy skills across other subjects is not well developed.
- Teachers' expectations are too low.
- Pupils have low-level listening, attention and concentration skills.
- The good assessment and pupil tracking systems are not yet influencing planning.

- The leadership and management of English are good.

Commentary

79. Leadership and management of English are now good. The priority to raise standards in English and literacy across the school is being well led by the headteacher. This has brought about clear improvements in teaching and learning across the school since the previous inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6. As a result there is clear evidence of pupils' achievement improving over time. However, there has not yet been enough time for her leadership and management of English to have its full impact and standards remain below average in all aspects of English across the school.
80. The subject manager has ensured that staff have received appropriate advice, support and training so that their subject knowledge and confidence have improved. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been effective in bringing about improvements in teaching in Years 3 to 6 through regular feedback on performance as well as targets to bring about further improvement through performance management. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not receiving a satisfactory quality of education because teachers do not have appropriate subject knowledge or the skills to ensure good learning. The curriculum is not yet developing pupils' basic literacy skills, especially in writing, in either English or in other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities to make important links within other subjects are not planned for and are therefore missed.
81. Pupils do not write confidently because they are not being taught the necessary skills. In Years 1 and 2, teachers are not sufficiently clear about how to teach guided writing effectively. Their expectations of pupils' ability to write at length are far too low and as a result, pupils have the same low expectations of themselves. Activities lack challenge, particularly for more able pupils, and work for those with special educational needs is not sufficiently well planned to meet individual needs. Too often work is copied and identical in all books, which is preventing pupils from making progress in their writing. The presentation of work is not yet good enough and handwriting is still not taught effectively through a whole-school approach in order to enable pupils to develop a consistent, neat, cursive style of writing. Staff demonstrate the agreed style. Homework is given to all pupils but is not always completed as required, due to a lack of support from home.
82. There has been significant improvement in the behaviour of pupils since the previous inspection. However, their listening and concentration skills remain an issue for good learning. Teachers are not yet placing a sufficiently strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, through planning in lessons, across all subjects. Many pupils struggle to express themselves clearly or with confidence because of large gaps in their earlier learning and poor attainment on entry to the school. Drama and role play are not being used effectively to help pupils develop confidence in using language as a means of communication and expressing their ideas and feelings, especially in Years 1 and 2.
83. The school has been successful in its efforts to improve the status of reading. The library is vibrant, motivating and computerised. Reading resources are good and well organised so that books are easily accessible to staff and pupils. There is a clear expectation that reading books are taken home regularly and reading skills practised at home. The use of home-school reading records is variable and there is little evidence of teachers and parents using them to communicate. In many cases they are little more than a list of books read. The school's strategy for teaching reading is generally clear, although not all teachers demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of how to teach guided reading, and this is a barrier to effective learning. Time in some lessons is not used well to help pupils learn the strategies they need for decoding unfamiliar words. Less-able pupils struggle with all aspects of reading. They lack confidence and do not have the phonic (letter sounds) knowledge to help them to improve because they have not been taught this in a systematic way. More-able pupils are generally accurate and fluent readers, some of whom use expression well to bring meaning to their

reading. Reading targets, although evident in some pupils' records, are not yet being used to raise achievement. Most pupils are unaware of them until asked.

84. Assessment and pupil-tracking procedures are good and are assisting the school in identifying pupils who need additional support as well as enabling staff to predict with confidence how well pupils are achieving. However, these procedures have not been in place long enough to have the required impact on raising achievement. Planning has improved significantly, but does not yet consistently conform to a whole-school approach so that planned activities properly meet individual needs, either for those who are more-able or those who have special educational needs. Marking is not well developed, especially in Years 1 and 2, so that pupils are not clear how well they are doing or how they can improve their work. Work is often unmarked. There is no evidence of opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work or of literacy targets being used in lessons. This means that pupils are not fully involved in their own learning, and parents are unaware of how they are performing. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

85. Opportunities to develop pupils' basic literacy skills in other subjects, especially writing, are unsatisfactory. There are weaknesses in the use of ICT in English. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because both teachers and teachers assistants call attention to new or unusual words and teach key words well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 6 are below average.
- Good teaching, especially in Years 4 to 6, contributes to satisfactory achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Thorough assessment procedures are used well to plan work for pupils of different abilities and identify those who need specific support.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well.
- Teachers' marking is not always informative and pupils do not always know how to improve.
- There is insufficient use of numeracy across the curriculum.
- A lack of challenge means that more-able pupils are not achieving as well as expected.

Commentary

86. Standards in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. There is evidence of continued improvement and, given their low level of prior attainment and the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is good. The standards attained by more-able pupils are well below those expected in both key stages. Evidence from the inspection indicates that these pupils are not given sufficient challenge. Recent adjustments made to statistics in the school's PANDA places the school in line with national expectations and above the average for similar schools. Some inspection evidence from lesson observations confirms this view.
87. Standards in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 were well below both the national average and that for similar schools. Current standards in Year 2 are below those normally expected for their age, because pupils are not confident with their number facts. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are progressing as well as their peers.

88. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is slightly better in Years 4 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2 as it is more consistently good and sometimes very good in the classes for older pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it and use the National Numeracy Strategy well. The large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the low base from which the school is working, have an impact on pupils' learning. Work is sometimes offered to all pupils at the same level, and whilst more-able pupils produce more work which is better presented, it is not always at a challenging level.
89. In many lessons, teaching assistants are used well and provide good support. Because of their expertise and the guidance provided by the teacher, the support offered to the groups of pupils they work with, often those with learning difficulties or low-attaining pupils, is good. They enable these pupils to be fully included in all aspects of a lesson and to achieve well. This is because they are aware of their needs and question them skilfully.
90. In a very good Year 4 mathematics lesson the teacher gave all pupils, irrespective of their gender, ability or ethnicity, the chance to explain their work. Through her careful questioning, she continually reinforced their understanding and they were able to respond with explanations, showing accuracy and understanding. As a consequence, all pupils appreciated the importance of place value in their work. A significant proportion estimated mentally and, using different paper and pencil methods, added two three-digit numbers. They were aware of the relative efficiency of these methods.
91. The assessment of pupils' attainment is undertaken systematically and their progress carefully monitored. Pupils not making sufficient progress are therefore quickly identified. There is a well-structured intervention programme developed through individual education plans, so that pupils get the most appropriate support and can achieve their best.
92. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and manages the subject well. However, time has been too short for this to fully impact on pupils' achievement. Whilst new to the role, she has worked with the LEA numeracy consultant to introduce better short-term planning. Also, she has maintained the continuity of monitoring and evaluation, and is therefore able to respond quickly and effectively to issues as they arise.
93. Since the last inspection, there has been a steady rise in the standards of mathematics across the school. This is because the school has developed better short-term planning and makes more effective and detailed use of assessment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

94. In the last few years the school has appropriately focused on raising pupil achievement in English. Therefore there have been few opportunities, either planned or incidental, for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects. Where this takes place it is effective, but the school does not plan well enough for the development of these opportunities. ICT is not well used in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment and levels of achievement are being raised steadily in Years 3 to 6.
- A consistently planned curriculum provides improved opportunities for pupils to carry out their own investigations and explorations.
- Standards of attainment and levels of achievement are not being promoted sufficiently well in Years 1 and 2.

- Systems for assessing pupils' progress and the setting of targets for future improvement are used well in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

95. In Years 3 to 6, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment as a group is on target to reach average levels overall. This is reflected in the school's results in national tests in 2003, which were in line with the national average. However, whilst these results showed a higher than average proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected Level 4, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was below average. This is because whilst assessments are made of pupils' progress, this information is not consistently well used to plan work, which meets the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. Consequently, more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Achievement in science at the end of Year 6 is now good and is being raised steadily in Years 3 to 6. Average National Curriculum points have risen each year since 2001, and in the 2003 national tests, the school's science results were in the top five per cent of schools whose pupils scored similar levels when they took Year 2 tests in 1999. This is because science is now taught consistently and teachers have a clearer understanding of pupils' needs in the subject. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.
96. The curriculum has been reviewed and there is now a sound balance of provision across the different areas of science. Scientific investigation is satisfactorily developed. Occasionally, in lessons, teachers demonstrate experiments to whole classes rather than giving pupils the opportunity to investigate and experiment themselves. Consequently, some opportunities to promote good learning and achievement are missed.
97. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average. They have declined, falling rapidly from a high point in 2001 when they were judged, in teacher assessments, to be above the national average for that year. Standards in the 2003 teacher assessments, at the end of Year 2, were in the lowest five per cent both nationally and when compared with those in similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms this low level of attainment in Years 1 and 2. Most work is given to all pupils at the same level without regard to their differing levels of knowledge and understanding. Assessment is carried out, but the information is not used to match work to the abilities of individual pupils. Too often, pupils do not record their own discoveries and findings but copy results from a common source. This constitutes less than satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 and many pupils are underachieving.
98. The system for assessing pupils' progress is good. Results of these assessments are used well in Years 3 to 6 to track pupils' progress as they move from class to class and to target improvement. This development is in its early stages and is not yet used well enough to extend more-able pupils. The school has identified this as an area for further improvement and is developing strategies to correct it.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have been improved.
- The teaching of ICT skills is good in Years 3 to 6.
- ICT is not yet used as well as it should be to teach other subjects.
- Standards are below expectations in Years 1 and 2 and in line with expectations in Years 3 to 6.
- Resources for teaching and learning are now satisfactory.

- Planning and assessment in ICT are not sufficiently developed to be sure that pupils make progress appropriate to their abilities.
- The subject leader supports her colleagues well.

Commentary

99. The subject knowledge and understanding of teaching staff have been improved through professional development under the National New Opportunities Funding (NOF). The school has a good ICT suite and there are computers in all classrooms, including the Foundation Stage Unit. The level of resources for teaching and learning in ICT are now satisfactory. Overall, this is good progress since the last inspection. However, teachers' confidence in using ICT as a resource is still not fully developed. During the week of the inspection, very limited use was made of the ICT suite and computers were not always used in classrooms. Consequently, although there is evidence of some use of computers in English, mathematics and art and design, ICT does not yet contribute sufficiently to pupils' learning in other subjects.
100. Standards are below expectations in Years 1 and 2 as skill levels develop slowly from a low base. Even though computers are now regularly used in the Foundation Stage Unit, this has not yet impacted throughout the school. When older pupils are seen using computers they demonstrate skills in line with national expectations, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They can log on, use a mouse satisfactorily and follow icon-driven menus to access programs. On occasions, they show that they can save and recall their own work.
101. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and are able to discuss and explain their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as their classmates because they are well supported.
102. The assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is not well developed. Consequently, tasks are sometimes planned which do not match their levels of development. When this happens the pace of their learning is slowed.
103. The subject leader is providing good support and guidance for other teachers. As subject knowledge develops, she is planning to monitor lessons. This is intended to raise standards of teaching, learning and achievement further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. Some use of ICT is evident in some other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have word-processed poems about different aspects of the school. Others use straight lines, geometric shapes and the flood-fill facility to draw pictures based on the work of Piet Mondrian. However, ICT is not yet used well enough in the teaching and learning of other subjects. This is slowing the pace at which pupils learn and achieve, but is targeted by the school for further improvement.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations in Years 1 and 2 and in line with expectations in Years 3 to 6.
- The locally Agreed Syllabus is being changed.
- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 have reasonable expectations of the amount of work that pupils do.

- On a small number of occasions, learning is slowed because the same work is presented to all pupils, irrespective of their level of ability or their achievement.

Commentary

105. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good. These lessons promoted pupils' achievement well. Teachers' plans show that the subject is taught regularly and that the national guidelines for religious education are being followed. The locally Agreed Syllabus is in the process of being changed and the materials for the introduction of the new Thurrock Syllabus arrived in the school during the inspection. Plans are in place to introduce this fully as the curriculum for religious education in the school.
106. In Years 1 and 2, whilst lessons are regularly taught, there are very low expectations of pupils' ability to write about what they learn. When they do so, they do not write in their own words but copy the same text from a common source. When talking to pupils, it is clear that this does not promote good enough learning or achievement and their recall of what they have learned is low. The marking of work is too often the same for all pupils. It does not help them to improve their work; for example, 'Thoughtful ideas' was written in all pupils' books as marking for one piece of work. The pupils had not been required to 'think' or 'develop ideas' as all their work was identical and obviously copied from a common source.
107. In Years 3 to 6, most lessons provide a sound level of learning and achievement. Standards are in line with the expectations of the National Guidelines for religious education. Teachers have sound expectations of the amount of work that pupils will complete and its presentation. They almost always mark pupils' work, and much of their marking contains written comments which praise pupils' efforts or give clear guidance on how they could improve their work. The same level of work is sometimes presented to pupils of all abilities and this does not bring about good achievement for each of them in all lessons.

History and Geography

108. History and geography were sampled during the inspection. No overall judgement is made about provision since there is insufficient evidence. Only one lesson was observed, which was less than satisfactory. There was limited work in pupils' books, most of which was copied and identical in all books. Pupils' individual needs are therefore not being planned for effectively. There was a very limited display of work that could be evaluated, indicating that both subjects have a low status across the school, due to other priorities.
109. Long-term planning shows that the scheme of work follows national guidance, but there has been no amendment of this to reflect the needs of the school. Overall standards are below expectations in Years 1 to 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are good.
- The attitudes of pupils are good throughout the school.
- There is good subject management and leadership.

Commentary

110. Standards and achievement in art and design are good. There is evidence of progress across the school. In Year 2, pupils can take an example of a portrait by Picasso and suggest convincingly what the painting is trying to achieve. They use crayons, chalks and pastels well to experiment with making marks and textures. In Year 6, pupils can produce very good paintings in an Australian aboriginal style, using vivid colours with strong lines and a pointillist effect. This broadens pupils' cultural understanding and they have developed an awareness of the distinctive style of this aboriginal art.
111. Pupils show good attitudes. In the lesson observed, Year 4 pupils concentrated and showed interest. They undertook the difficult task of considering the purpose and design of the Bayeux Tapestry, as well as Victorian paintings, to begin designing a tapestry for the school's 125th anniversary. In the same lesson the teacher encouraged the contribution of a less-able pupil, and the others listened well.
112. In the lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Good features involved the teacher using effective questioning and a lively pace to develop pupils' critical thinking; for example, they began to think about using different materials to represent form.
113. In Year 6, very good links with science were demonstrated as pupils examined parts of the body in detail. They practise in pencil, pen and ink and paint, re-working their sketches and identifying suitable colours. Finally, they produced very good two- and three-dimensional representations of parts of the human body.
114. Pupils are using sketchbooks and their use promotes learning and achievement soundly. In Years 4 to 6 they are used effectively, allowing pupils to record their observations, practise and improve skills, as well as collect visual information that will develop their ideas. There is little evidence of famous artists' work being used to develop critical awareness in lessons and around the school.
115. A well-qualified and effective subject manager is working well with the head teacher, who also teaches art and design across the school. Their good practice is a model for their colleagues, who are growing in confidence and developing their subject knowledge.
116. At the time of the last inspection, provision in art was satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection is judged to be good, as pupils' standards and achievement are now good.

Design and technology

117. No lessons were observed during the inspection so no overall judgements about provision can be made.
118. The evidence from books provided by Years 4 to 6, as well as discussion with pupils, showed that they achieve satisfactory, and sometimes good, standards. In food technology, pupils in Year 4 are able to assess different breads for a range of qualities, scoring and recording their results in a suitable format.
119. Pupils' achievement in these classes is good because, starting from a low base, they are achieving satisfactory standards. The lack of consistent teaching of design and technology in the past and currently, means that pupils have not built up the skills and understanding needed for their age groups.
120. From the scrutiny of work observed, the quality of teaching is judged to be good in Years 4 to 6. Year 6 pupils provide evaluative comments on the properties of different fabrics, explain their suitability for various purposes and say why one is a better choice than another.

121. There is a curriculum plan in place to cater for the mixed year groups in some classes and this avoids repetition. However, a lack of prior learning has created a skills deficit which can only be dealt with through a revision programme that adapts the curriculum plan to the school's current needs, thus moving pupils on to appropriate levels.
122. Understandably, design and technology has not been a priority for the school as it seeks to raise standards in core subjects, but the new subject co-ordinator is a good role model for her colleagues. The school intends to raise staff confidence and subject knowledge in design and technology through professional development.

Music

123. Music was sampled during the inspection. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils throughout the school achieve well.
124. Music sets the mood as pupils enter assemblies and contributes to their spiritual and cultural development. They listen carefully to classical and religious pieces, as well as music from other countries. During assemblies in the inspection week, singing was tuneful and pupils showed good involvement. They perform songs to parents at Christmas and during the Harvest Festival. These opportunities promote their self-esteem, self-confidence and achievement. Elements of composing and the recording of pupils' reactions to music are seen in displays. For example, they recorded their feelings in their own form of non-standard notation when listening to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata.
125. Staff have benefited from training in music. This, coupled with the provision of good teaching resources, has led to increased staff confidence to deliver the music curriculum. Teachers' planning communicates clearly what they want pupils to learn in each lesson. Pupils enjoy music and as they move through the school they are given a series of worthwhile musical experiences which contribute to the standards that they reach.
126. Pupils benefit from special events that enrich their musical experience such as recitals from visiting musicians. These opportunities promote good learning and achievement for all the pupils who take part.

Physical education

127. No overall judgement is possible about the provision for physical education because only two lesson observations were possible, one dance lesson in Years 1 and 2 and a further games lesson in Years 3 to 6. No examples of gymnastics were seen. Standards are in line with expectations overall.
128. In the lessons observed, standards were satisfactory; in Year 2 most pupils can run, jump and change direction, starting and stopping on command. In Year 4 pupils demonstrate passing skills and can say why they need to pass ahead of a moving partner.
129. Teaching and learning were good in a Year 4 lesson because the teacher had a suitable lesson plan; pupils were challenged to develop their skills, allowing them to reflect on their performance and suggest improvements.
130. Pupils' attitude and behaviour are much improved since the last inspection, so teachers are more confident in maintaining a controlled and safe environment.
131. The physical education timetable and the extra-curricular activities provided are such that the school meets its commitment to the School Sports Co-ordinators' Programme. This is aimed

at raising the profile of physical education and aiding the school in its development of teacher expertise and confidence.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

132. No direct teaching of citizenship was seen. The schools plan shows that it does provide a suitable curriculum covering sex education and that it develops in its pupils an appropriate awareness of the dangers of the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Personal and social development is strong, as recorded in other parts of this report. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship are provided in their participation in the school council and in some lessons, for example, in religious education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	7
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

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).