

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Grays

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114860

Headteacher: Mr E Caines

Lead inspector: Mr M Capper

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> April 2004

Inspection number: 258498

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:	332
School address:	Grangewood Avenue Grays Essex
Postcode:	RM16 2GJ
Telephone number:	(01375) 372 513
Fax number:	(01375) 394 516
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R A Robinson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large community primary and Nursery school, which admits pupils between the ages of three and 11. There are 321 pupils on roll and they are taught in eleven classes as well as a Nursery, which children attend on a part-time basis for either a morning or afternoon session. New children are admitted to the Nursery each term and some pupils in Years 1 and 2 change classes in the middle of the school year. Pupils come from an area where a large number of families have low incomes, although the percentage eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Pupils' mobility is average. There are 64 pupils on the register of special educational needs. This is similar to the percentage found nationally. Most of these pupils are identified as having moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. There are five pupils with statements of special educational need. This is similar to the number normally found in schools of this size. When they start school in the Nursery, children's attainment is below average. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are of white British origin and only a small number have English as an additional language; none of these requires additional support. There are three pupils from travelling families.

In 2003, the school received a School Achievement Award and Investor in People status. The headteacher was appointed in September 2003. At the time of the inspection, a temporary teacher was teaching a Year 1 class due to the long-term absence of the permanent teacher.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23239	Mike Capper	Lead inspector	Science Music Religious education
9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector	
32021	Andy McClean	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design English as an additional language
23658	Stephen Parker	Team inspector	English Geography History
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** where pupils benefit from good quality teaching, achieving well in many subjects. Members of staff work very hard to ensure that pupils enjoy school and, as a result, they develop very positive attitudes towards learning. The headteacher provides good leadership and has high aspirations for the school, with a clear focus on raising attainment further. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body is good.
- Pupils achieve well overall, especially in mathematics, where standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attainment is not high enough in writing.
- More able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, slowing their progress.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards the school and work hard.
- The school has successfully established effective links with parents.
- There is good support and guidance: the needs of less-able pupils and pupils with special educational needs are met well.
- The school very successfully extend the curriculum through a wide-ranging programme of clubs, visits, visitors and special events.
- Subject co-ordinators have an insufficient role in monitoring the quality of teaching.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good. Weaknesses found at that time have been successfully addressed and pupils' attainment is higher, especially in mathematics, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT). The leadership and management of the school is more effective and there is a clear understanding of where further improvement is needed.

### 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	B	E	C
mathematics	C	A	C	A
science	E	B	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.*

**Pupils' achievement is good overall** though there is some variation across the school, with the achievement of lower- and average-attaining pupils generally being better than the achievement of more-able pupils.

Children's achievement is good throughout the Nursery and Reception classes in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development and creative development. In these areas of learning, children are on target to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, language and literacy though many are not on target to achieve the expected levels, particularly in writing.

Standards of attainment are improving in Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with nationally expected levels in mathematics and science but below them in reading and writing. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is above nationally expected levels in mathematics and in line with them in science. In English, reading is stronger than writing and in the current Year 6, attainment is in line with nationally expected levels. In contrast, standards of attainment in writing are not high enough. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is good overall, with the best progress made in mathematics, where additional support from the deputy headteacher is having a very good overall impact on learning.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils develop very good attitudes and values and they behave well. Attendance is unsatisfactory, though it has improved in the last two terms due to the school's good efforts.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good teaching** means that pupils are able to learn well. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes supports children's personal development especially well and teachers provide a good range of interesting activities. Throughout the school, members of staff help pupils to learn well by managing their behaviour very effectively and by engaging their interest. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, particularly for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The teaching of mathematics is especially effective in developing knowledge and skills, with good challenge for more-able pupils. In contrast, whilst the teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, teachers' expectations for the quantity and quality of pupils' writing are too low. In other subjects though, pupils with the potential for higher attainment are not consistently challenged with more difficult work.

There is a satisfactory curriculum, with a strength being the way that it is enriched by a very extensive range of additional activities. These very effectively stimulate pupils' interest and widen their experience. There are good links with parents, schools and the local community, which contribute well to school effectiveness.

The school effectively promotes the pupils' welfare in a secure and caring environment. The school is good at taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** The headteacher provides good leadership and he is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school provides successfully for pupils who do not respond well to school or have difficulties in learning. The headteacher has monitored thoroughly most aspects of the school's work. He has set a clear agenda for school development and to overcome the two significant barriers to improvement, namely: the limited available budget due to high staffing costs and the current admission numbers for the school, which means that some classes have two years groups in them. However, the role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning is limited and this makes overall management of the school satisfactory. A hardworking governing body ensures that governance is good and that statutory requirements are met in full.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils are very positive about the work of the school. Parents are pleased that their children's needs are met well and they like recent improvements in communication. Pupils like school. They feel that they are given good opportunities to take responsibility and they especially enjoy the wide range of clubs organised by members of staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise attainment in writing.
- Ensure that there is consistently high challenge for more-able pupils in lessons.
- Carry out plans to involve co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall though there is some variation across the school, with the achievement of lower- and average-attaining pupils being better than the achievement of more-able pupils. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in mathematics and average in science. In English, whilst attainment is average by the end of Year 6 in reading, attainment in writing is below. No differences between the attainment of boys or girls were evident during the inspection, although girls achieved significantly less well than boys in tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children achieve well in most areas of learning.
- Pupils' achievement is very good in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Writing skills do not develop quickly enough; expectations are not always high enough and pupils do not get enough opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum.
- Pupils' achievement is good in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, in reading in Years 3 to 6 and in science and ICT throughout the school.
- The school meets the needs of less-able pupils and those with special educational needs well.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, slowing their progress.

#### Commentary

##### ***Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception Year)***

1. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Year has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is lower than at the time of the last inspection and is below average for the children's age, with their literacy skills and general knowledge being particular weaknesses. Nevertheless, children's achievement is good throughout the Nursery and Reception classes in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development and creative development. In these areas of learning, children are on target to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, language and literacy though many are not on target to achieve the expected levels, particularly in writing. This is because teachers provide too few opportunities for children to write and develop an understanding of the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. There is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on provision, achievement and attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world, though children achieve well in ICT.

##### ***Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)***

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.4 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that attainment was:
  - in reading, below the national average and that for similar schools;
  - in writing, below both the national average and that for similar schools; and
  - in mathematics, below the national average and well below the average for similar schools\*.

*\*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

3. Test results have been improving over the last four years at a rate better than that found nationally. This improvement is being maintained in the current year, with pupils benefiting from a good percentage of good teaching and in mathematics from additional support for more-able pupils from the deputy headteacher.
4. Inspection findings based on work seen show that, in Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages in mathematics and below national averages in reading and writing. Attainment is higher than at the time of the last inspection, with most pupils now achieving well in mathematics. In reading and writing, achievement is satisfactory overall.
5. In science, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2003 show that attainment was below national averages when compared with all schools and similar schools. Inspection findings show that whilst most pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving well and are on target to achieve the level expected for their age (Level 2), a lack of challenge in lessons means that few pupils are working at the higher Level 3. This restricts the achievement of potentially higher-attaining pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (29.3)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. There are significant variations in end of Year 6 test results from year to year, according to the number of pupils with special educational needs in a year group. Nevertheless, the overall trend is improving at a rate similar to that found nationally. In 2003, test scores indicated that attainment was:
  - in mathematics and science, in line with the national average and well above that of similar schools; and
  - in English, well below the national average and in line with that for similar schools.
7. Inspection findings confirm that standards of attainment continue to improve, with attainment in the current Year 6 being above national averages in mathematics and in line with national averages in science. In English, reading is stronger than writing. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 in developing reading skills, and in the current Year 6, attainment is in line with national averages. In contrast, standards of attainment in writing are too low, with just over a third of pupils reaching the level expected for their age (Level 4) in 2003. Although more pupils are on target to reach Level 4 in the current Year 6, few pupils are on target to reach the higher Level 5.
8. Pupils' achievement is good overall, with the best progress made in mathematics, where additional support from the deputy headteacher for more-able pupils is having a very good impact on learning. However, there is sometimes a lack of challenge in other lessons for

potentially higher-attaining pupils and this limits their achievement, especially in writing and in science. The other key factor in the less secure achievement in writing is the limited opportunities that pupils get to write purposefully across the curriculum.

### ***Whole school (Years 1 to 6)***

9. Although national test results indicate that in the past there have been some differences between the attainment of boys and girls, this is not evident in lessons or current work. There is no difference in the attainment and progress of pupils from differing backgrounds. There is effective provision for the very small number of traveller children, and for children for whom English is an additional language. As a result, they achieve as well as other pupils.
10. In ICT, pupils' achievement is good, with attainment in line with national expectations in most aspects of the curriculum. By Year 6, pupils are confident about using the *Internet* to carry out research and they make good use of multimedia techniques to prepare various presentations.
11. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity, although there continue to be gaps in their knowledge of other faiths due to previous weaknesses in provision. Nevertheless, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

### ***Pupils with special educational needs***

12. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is working effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage, so that more pupils benefit from an individual education plan. Most lessons include good provision for the needs of different groups of pupils, and the additional strategies that are in place support well the needs of the less able in the basic skills of English and mathematics.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and values are **very good**. Behaviour is **good**. Pupils' personal development and the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** and punctuality is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and their learning and take a very active part in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Attendance is below the national average and some parents are not sufficiently diligent in ensuring that their children arrive at school on time.

### **Commentary**

13. Pupils' attitudes and values have been developed since the last inspection and are now very good. From the earliest stages, children come happily to school and are eager and ready to learn. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are eager and ready to learn and achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. They participate fully in all activities, show good levels of independence and persevere well with their work. This early enthusiasm continues throughout the school, as demonstrated by the whole of Years 5 and 6 during their games lessons. They were completely immersed in the very well led session and their enthusiasm was very clear.

14. Behaviour throughout the school has been maintained well since the last inspection and continues to be good. Whilst parents and pupils acknowledge that there are occasional instances of bullying, such as name calling, they are happy with the way these are dealt with by the school and overall behaviour management is very good. Pupils rise to the challenge of very high expectations set by the school and, as a result, their behaviour in lessons is good. When pupils arrive at school, in assemblies, in the dining hall, on the playground and even in the closely confined cloakroom areas, good behaviour is consistently achieved. There have been no incidents of exclusion from the school in the recent past.
15. Personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Spiritual development continues to be properly cultivated, with assemblies making a sound contribution to the way that pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and other's lives. Pupils work with a teacher to support a charity in Nepal. This helps them to learn about another culture as well as to appreciate their own way of life. Moral development continues to be good, with members of staff acting as good role models in the way that they respond to the pupils, consistently showing courtesy and patience. Members of staff have very clear expectations and even the youngest children quickly learn right from wrong. Social development has been improved and is now good, with pupils given many opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. There is an active school council and pupils feel that their views and opinions are listened to. The range of extra-curricular activities develops pupils' awareness of living in a community considerably. Pupils relate well to each other and work successfully as members of a team.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

16. Attendance has fluctuated since the last inspection. In the last full year it was well below the national median and was within the range of the lowest ten per cent of schools in the country. The school has initiated a number of strategies specifically designed to improve attendance and these appear to have had some effect during the current year. The attempts by the school to impress the need for prompt and regular attendance has not yet been fully accepted and supported by all parents. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although a small number of pupils continue to be late for school and the capacity to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day is affected.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment procedures are satisfactory throughout the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes supports children's personal development especially well and teachers provide a good range of interesting activities.

- Throughout the school, members of staff help pupils to learn well by managing their behaviour very effectively and by engaging their interest.
- Teachers are well organised and prepare well for lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support, particularly for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The teaching of mathematics is especially effective in developing knowledge and skills.
- Whilst the teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, teachers' expectations for the quantity and quality of pupils' writing are too low.
- Teachers' lesson planning is not consistently specific enough to ensure that there is enough challenge for all pupils.

## Commentary

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	7 (13%)	23 (43%)	20 (38%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

- Teaching and learning have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now good overall. Ninety-nine per cent of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were pleased with the quality of teaching, and most pupils like their teachers and think they are encouraged to work hard.
- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes are good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning and support groups of children competently. In the Nursery, the teacher and Nursery nurse have formed a strong partnership and are especially skilled at supporting children's personal development and promoting health and safety. All members of staff understand the needs of young children well and endeavour to provide a wide range of interesting activities both indoors and outside. Assessment arrangements are detailed and provide satisfactory information to support children's learning. However, teachers' marking provides limited guidance on how children can improve their work.
- Throughout the school, teachers and members of support staff are very skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. They have very high expectations that are shared clearly with pupils and potentially challenging behaviour is handled firmly but fairly. They form very good relationships with the pupils and provide very good role-models. Pupils' positive behaviour is consistently praised and rewarded and behaviour management is more successful than at the time of the last inspection when there were some weaknesses. Teachers make good use of questioning to involve and maintain the interest of all pupils during discussions and pupils try hard and present their work well.
- There is a good pace to most lessons because teachers are well prepared and make good use of educational resources, though the use of ICT in lessons is underdeveloped. The purpose of each lesson is explained carefully to the pupils, though learning objectives are not always specific enough. Interesting activities engage the pupils' interest well and they are successfully encouraged to co-operate with each other on a good range of tasks. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils learning and is linked successfully to work covered in class.
- As at the time of the last inspection, teaching assistants are well briefed, enabling them to provide skilful and informed support, especially for groups of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The additional strategies that are used to support the needs of

the less able in the basic skills of English and mathematics are effective and particular care is given to supporting this group of pupils' self-esteem and their social development. Effective support is given within lessons to traveller children, and to children for whom English is an additional language.

22. Numeracy is taught especially well, with most teachers having a good knowledge of the subject and providing pupils of differing abilities with challenging and interesting tasks. A swift pace in lessons helps pupils to learn quickly. The deputy headteacher leads the subject very effectively and his own teaching of higher-attaining groups of pupils is inspirational. Literacy is not taught as effectively. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, teachers' expectations are not always high enough. As a result, pupils are given too few opportunities to write purposefully at length or to edit and improve the quality of their work. Writing skills are not specifically taught well enough and the overuse of worksheets in some subjects further restricts pupils' progress and independence.
23. Day-to-day lesson planning varies in quality. Whilst being satisfactory overall, it does not consistently provide specific information on what pupils of differing abilities are expected to learn. As a consequence, in some lessons in science, geography and ICT, all pupils complete similar tasks and higher-attaining pupils in particular are not challenged enough. This was also found to be a relative weakness at the time of the last inspection.
24. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. Whilst the school effectively uses test data to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science, this information is not always used by teachers when planning work. In other subjects, long-term assessment records give a clear picture of how well pupils have achieved at the end of a topic or unit of work. However, it is difficult to measure progress over time because of the way that achievement is recorded. Target setting is underdeveloped and marking varies in quality. As a result, pupils have only a limited understanding of how they can improve.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory** with very good additional opportunities for pupils to learn. There is a good level of well-trained staffing for the number of pupils at the school. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are offered a very good range of experiences outside lessons.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Not enough opportunities are planned across the curriculum to develop literacy and ICT skills.
- There is a good number of teaching assistants who give good support in lessons.

## **Commentary**

25. The school works hard to extend the curriculum through a wide ranging programme of visits, visitors and special events. These activities are used very effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and widen their experience. Good quality work is produced as a result, such as art and artefacts and detailed accounts of visits to museums and environmental centres. Special events such as book weeks and sponsored poetry readings stimulate interest in particular subjects. Residential visits for Years 4 to 6 give pupils extended opportunities to take responsibility and develop social skills. The very wide range of clubs and activities, organised at lunchtimes and after school, is popular and caters for the interests of boys and girls of all ages. This boosts pupils' interest in school and is in turn reflected in their positive attitudes in lessons.
26. The formal curriculum meets requirements, including provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Long-term plans for all subjects are now based on official

recommendations and guidelines, and this has corrected weaknesses noted in the previous inspection. A programme of topics through the year is used to promote links between subjects, and planning over a two-year cycle ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work. The programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship is sound, and values promoted through the healthy schools initiative continue to have a positive influence on the life of the school. Teachers in each year group plan together, so sharing their expertise. Teaching assistants work well as part of the team, giving valuable help in preparing resources, organising activities and helping pupils throughout the day. Pupils are soundly prepared to progress through the school and onto the high school curriculum.

27. Opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills are carefully planned into other subjects, such as science. Pupils have some opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects, but this is infrequent and the range of applications is narrow. Similarly, more needs to be done to co-ordinate the development of literacy, particularly writing, across the curriculum. Topic plans include most subjects but not English, and so current targets of the literacy hour are not carried through into planning for other subjects. This is a weakness that particularly affects opportunities for extended writing. Although pupils write a lot in the course of each week, much is in short unconnected pieces, written lesson by lesson, with too little time for pupils to develop their responses in full.
28. Measures taken to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum are satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are given individual education plans that set out specific targets to guide their progress. These targets are well-informed, clearly focused and regularly adjusted in the light of assessments. The targets guide teaching assistants in giving these pupils well informed help in class or when withdrawn. There are a good number of teaching assistants and they work well with teachers as a team, giving good support to pupils during lessons and through the school day. There has been a good improvement in provision for younger pupils who have difficulties with reading. New resources include a reading scheme, ICT programs, officially recommended programmes of instruction and a rota of parent helpers. These pupils are now achieving well.
29. For higher-attaining pupils, it is a strength that groups in each year are withdrawn for mathematics lessons taught by a specialist. This arrangement allows these pupils to work at a challenging level for their age, and is having a significant impact on their achievement as a result. It also allows class teachers to concentrate their attention on the needs of the smaller number left in the class. In other subjects though, pupils with the potential for higher attainment are not consistently challenged with more difficult work, and they sometimes underachieve as a result. Examples were noted in English, geography and science where structured worksheets expected too little of more-able pupils even though they gave appropriate guidance to pupils of average ability or below.
30. Resources are generally sound and there are sufficient teaching staff for the size and needs of the school. The library has a very small supply of information books and some are out of date. A lack of sinks in some classrooms limits art opportunities, and this weakness was noted in the previous inspection. A very high number of pupils expressed concern about the condition of the school's toilets. The inspection team agrees that despite recent improvements, such as the addition of mirrors, they still need further modernisation. Displays are used well to brighten the school, celebrate pupils' best work and stimulate their interest.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school takes **good** care of the pupils' individual needs. It effectively promotes the pupils' welfare in a secure and caring environment. Support and guidance for pupils is good. The school is effective in taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils trust members of staff, who provide sensitive support for their individual needs.
- The school involves pupils well in its work.
- The school provides well for the pupils' welfare, health and safety.

### **Commentary**

31. The school has maintained the quality of support and guidance for the pupils' individual needs well, and this aspect continues to be good. Led by the learning mentor, members of staff know the children well and are well equipped to offer support when it is needed. All members of staff counsel pupils well, offering high quality support to those most in need. The very good relationships between members of staff and pupils mean that pupils feel comfortable about sharing concerns with staff.
32. There are a number of mechanisms in place to take account of the ideas and opinions of the pupils. The school council is instrumental in providing the opportunity for pupils' views to be considered. Pupils are confident, articulate and keen to be involved. They take the responsibility seriously and have been instrumental in developing a number of initiatives. They are involved in charity work and are actively involved in supporting a school in Nepal.
33. The good quality induction procedures enable the children to feel comfortable from the moment that they first start school in the Nursery. The firm foundation initiative being piloted by the school, gives parents information that enables them to be reassured and in turn to reassure their children. A number of children recently started in the Nursery were well settled and made welcome by the staff and fellow pupils. An assortment of inviting activities was immediately available and all the new entrants were immediately included.
34. Child protection procedures are effective. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in respect of child protection issues. They understand the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety are well monitored. Site inspections are conducted regularly to identify potential hazards and prepare actions plans for correction. Teaching and non-teaching staff are safety-conscious and watch for the security of the children.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **good** links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and its work.
- The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education.
- Parents are kept well informed with good quality information.
- There are good links with the community and other schools.

### **Commentary**

35. The school has worked hard to improve the partnership with parents since the last inspection and it is now good. Parents responding to the questionnaires and most of those attending the meeting were extremely supportive of the school. They believe that it has many strengths. The responses to all points included in the questionnaire were highly positive.
36. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and many respond positively. As well as helping in the classroom and around the school, they also help out on visits. Parents have been invited to focus meetings to improve communication, accessibility and the partnership with parents. Many parents are becoming more confident in their ability to support their children's learning at home. The school makes good use of questionnaires to



seek parents' views and there are good procedures to ensure satisfaction and to deal with any concerns and complaints. Parents report that, on the whole, their opinions are valued and acted-on.

37. The 'Friends of Woodside School' has been recently formed and has started to organise fund-raising and social activities. The school values highly the efforts of parents, visitors and other members of the community for the valuable contributions that they make to the quality of education and the children's learning.
38. The quality of the information for parents about their children's learning has been maintained well and continues to be good. The annual reports give good information about progress, what the children know, understand and can do, and include targets for improvement. Reports also give the children the opportunity to add their own observations.
39. The school also continues to build the links with the community and other schools and colleges. Links with the church are strong. Educational and residential visits are both used regularly and effectively to further extend the range of community support. The link with other local schools in the Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary excellence cluster has been used effectively to extend provision and share good practice.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and he is supported well by the deputy headteacher and other key staff. A hardworking governing body ensures that governance is good. Management is satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear vision for school development based on a quickly established understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governing body supports and challenges the school well.
- The school is organised efficiently; the deputy headteacher has developed good systems for monitoring achievement from year to year.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring that the school provides successfully for pupils who do not respond well to school or have difficulty in learning.
- The headteacher is working hard to develop the responsibilities of co-ordinators, although their role in monitoring provision by observing teaching is not yet fully established.

### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher has provided good leadership for the work of the school since his appointment in September 2003. The effectiveness of leadership has improved since the last inspection, when it was found to be satisfactory. Parents are very happy with the quality of leadership of the current headteacher and feel that communication between home and school has improved significantly.
41. The headteacher is very experienced and has high aspirations for the school, based on a clear understanding of how the school could improve. There is good self-evaluation: the headteacher monitored thoroughly most aspects of the school's work and has begun to introduce clear strategies for school improvement. The recently revised school development plan sets a clear agenda for how this is to be achieved, with a strong focus on further raising attainment.
42. Governance is good and statutory requirements are met in full, helping the school to operate effectively. The governing body are kept very well informed by the headteacher and are very supportive of the school's work. They take a good part in challenging the school and have a clear understanding of most of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have a

clear long-term view of what sort of school they want, with decisions carefully considered. For example, the governing body made a conscious decision to appoint a headteacher who would challenge the school to improve by providing a different style of leadership to that of the previous headteacher.

43. The headteacher is well organised and day-to-day management is efficient. This means that the school runs smoothly. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher well. He has been largely responsible for introducing good procedures for tracking pupils' progress from year to year. This is used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school, although in the case of English, effective action has not yet been taken to improve writing.
44. The role of subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection. Co-ordinators are beginning to be much more involved in both managing and leading provision in their subjects. In subjects such as science, mathematics and religious education, good leadership has resulted in provision being significantly improved. However, at the moment the role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning is limited and this makes overall management of the school satisfactory. The school has identified this as an area for development; members of staff have been working together to devise an agreed format for lesson monitoring before a more thorough programme of monitoring is implemented.
45. The school works hard to provide for pupils who do not respond well to school or have difficulty in learning. Specialist staff such as a learning mentor work hard to meet the social needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, with a focus on ensuring that pupils remain at school. There is a strong commitment to inclusion.
46. Special educational needs provision is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. A rigorous and well-informed audit of provision has led to a good improvement since her appointment in September 2003. Recommended procedures are carefully followed and record keeping is systematic. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent appropriately for their benefit. Additional funding from the local authority's excellence cluster means that the school has been able to provide additional support through a learning mentor, which further contributes to the school's inclusiveness.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	871,586
Total expenditure	893,552
Expenditure per pupil	2,635

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,217
Balance carried forward to the next	8,250

47. There are two significant barriers to improvement. Whilst the day-to-day management of finances by the headteacher, finance committee and school secretary is satisfactory and best value principles are applied appropriately, budgetary limitations restrict the rate at which improvements can be made. The school has only a limited capacity within its budget to target areas that require improvement because of the high level of staffing costs. The current admission numbers for the school means that the school has to have mixed age classes and this also a barrier to improvement.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

48. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Year has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is lower than at the time of the last inspection and is below average for the children's age, with their literacy skills and general knowledge being particular weaknesses. The school admits children from a wider geographical area than at the time of the last inspection and children come from diverse social backgrounds.
49. Children's achievement is good throughout the Nursery and Reception classes in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development and creative development and children are on target to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall in communication, language and literacy, though many are not on target to achieve the expected levels, particularly in writing. There is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on provision, achievement and attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world, though children achieve well in ICT.
50. Most children enjoy school and have very good attitudes towards learning. As at the time of the last inspection, behaviour is mostly good and children are polite and friendly. A large group of children moved from the Nursery into a mixed Reception and Year 1 class at the start of term and at the time of this inspection had been in the class one week and had not all settled fully. Good provision is made for children's personal development.
51. Teaching and learning have improved since the time of the last inspection and are good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to children's learning and support groups of children competently. In the Nursery, the teacher and Nursery nurse have formed a strong partnership and are especially skilled at supporting children's personal development and promoting health and safety. All members of staff understand the needs of young children well and endeavour to provide a wide range of activities both indoors and outside, which engage children's interest. Assessment arrangements are detailed and provide satisfactory information to support children's learning. However, teachers' marking provides limited guidance on how children can improve their work.
52. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is good provision in most areas of learning and the outdoor areas are used effectively. However, there is insufficient emphasis on developing aspects of communication, language and literacy. This places at a disadvantage younger children in the Reception Year in particular. In addition, not all teachers' planning shows specifically what differing ability groups are expected to learn in a lesson, and whilst lower-attaining children and those with special educational needs are supported well, there is not always enough challenge for higher-attaining children. Learning is made meaningful and more interesting by planning work as part of a theme. For example, during the inspection most work was based around the theme of 'water'.
53. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is well organised and understands general strengths and weaknesses in children's attainment. She provides a good role model in her own teaching. However, there is insufficient opportunity to monitor the work of colleagues or for members of staff to meet as a team to discuss ways of developing provision.
54. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. The three classrooms are made bright and cheerful with the careful display of children's work and each classroom leads to a safe outdoor area. However, there is limited space in the Reception classrooms and some

activities have to be set up in the corridor to provide children with a range of choices. Induction arrangements to the Nursery continue to be good since the time of the last inspection and are greatly appreciated by parents. Home visits enable members of staff, children and their parents to meet before children start school. Parents are involved in their children's education and good homework is set for Reception children.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well and are eager to take part in activities.
- Members of staff support learning effectively throughout the day.

### **Commentary**

55. Children's achievement is good and most are on target to meet the expectations for children by the end of the Reception Year. In the Nursery, children learn school routines quickly because members of staff and older children lead by example and instructions are kept clear and simple. Good records are kept of children's personal development. In the Nursery and Reception classes, an interesting range of activities enables children to become independent in making choices and encourages them to be inquisitive and explore their environment. Most activities provide sufficient challenge to encourage children of differing abilities to concentrate and remain on task well. There are good opportunities for children to learn to take turns in various games and to co-operate with each other. As a result, children form good relationships with each other and members of staff.
56. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers, Nursery nurse and teaching assistants are successful in encouraging good behaviour by gently but firmly reminding children of the school's high expectations and by using praise consistently to raise self-esteem.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn to listen carefully.
- Writing and reading skills are less well developed.

### **Commentary**

57. Children's achievement is satisfactory overall, though the reading and especially the writing skills of many children are not on target to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Most children enjoy looking at books and have favourites. Older Reception children talk about the characters in their stories when prompted. Higher-attaining children are starting to read simple words in a sentence. However, many Reception children know few letter sounds and are not writing their names correctly. A strength in provision is the way members of staff teach children to listen responsively during whole-class discussions, and most children are keen to make suggestions and ask questions. Children are keen to speak to each other and adults and communicate confidently when working at various activities and playing together in role-play areas.
58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Whilst teachers read stories with good expression and provide opportunities for children to learn how to share books sensibly, they

provide too few opportunities for children to write and develop an understanding of the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. There is limited recorded work and children often draw pictures rather than attempt to write about their experiences. Younger children who have only one term in the Reception class are given too few opportunities to develop writing skills towards the end of their time in the Nursery class and this limits progress of potentially higher attaining children in particular. Few records are kept on children's progress in learning sounds and writing. ICT is used well to support learning and children enjoy listening to pre-recorded story tapes and playing sound games on the computer.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy investigating numbers.
- Teachers plan good practical activities that support learning well.

### **Commentary**

59. Children achieve well and most are on target to meet the expectations for the end of the Reception Year. Members of staff make learning fun and children are keen to take part in the interesting activities provided. For example, younger Reception children enjoy making pasta necklaces by counting out the correct number of each colour, and Nursery children enjoy identifying mystery shapes. In the class for older Reception children, higher-attaining Reception children add together numbers correctly and record their answers and other children enjoy playing a board game involving adding and subtracting small numbers with the teaching assistant.
60. Teaching and learning are good overall. There are good opportunities for children to learn how mathematics is used in everyday lives and mathematical language is promoted well. For example, in the Nursery, the Nursery nurse taught children how to use the balancing scales as they weighed ingredients for their cakes, and in the older Reception class children counted out vouchers collected for the school.
61. Teachers provide activities that provide good challenge for children with differing abilities. In one lesson in the Nursery, higher attaining children counted out different numbers of toys up to ten, found the correct numerals on a number fan to match their numbers and put the same numeral onto a calculator. Children use ICT well to support their learning; they play number games and make simple graphs.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

62. This was not an area of focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form overall judgements on provision. Nevertheless, a good lesson in ICT was observed. Children are given good opportunities for using ICT in support of other areas of learning, enabling them to reach the levels expected for children by the end of the Reception Year in ICT. Older Reception children designed and made interesting cress holders from papier-mâché and Nursery children explored the way dry sand flows through various pipes.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Clear instructions help children to learn quickly.
- Good use is made of the outdoor areas to provide activities.

### **Commentary**

63. Children achieve well and most are on target to meet the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. Nursery children control sit and ride vehicles well and enjoy scoring when practising playing basket-ball.
64. Teaching and learning are good. Members of staff give clear instructions and have high expectations for good behaviour, enabling children to react quickly. For example, in a lesson with the older Reception children, skills of changing direction and holding a balancing shape developed well because children listened and responded on request. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop good hand control by manipulating a range of materials.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given good opportunities to express their own ideas.
- Adults provide good, unobtrusive support.
- Creative activities make a good contribution to children's cultural development.

### **Commentary**

65. Children achieve well and in the Nursery and Reception classes are on target to meet the expectations for the end of the Reception Year.
66. Resources for artwork are made accessible so that children can make choices about what they are going to use. For example, in the Nursery some children chose shiny materials to represent scales when making fish from collage. Younger Reception children explored different ways of folding and twisting paper when making paper sculptures representing the sea. ICT is used well to support learning and children in the older Reception class made colourful fish puppets from pictures drawn using the computer.
67. Younger Reception children enjoy joining in with action rhymes and listen carefully and respond well to sounds made by the teacher's 'magic shaker'. Children are encouraged to explore the various sounds that can be made by playing real and home-made instruments.
68. Teaching and learning are good overall. Members of staff set up a wide range of interesting role-play situations during the year such as a café, pet shop and estate agents. In the Nursery, some good home-made books have been made using digital camera photographs of children's role-play and using relevant captions. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers often support groups of children in their play and encourage conversation. They engage children's interest well and have a good impact on the children's confidence in speaking and listening.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are not high enough.
- Pupils make good progress in reading.
- Pupils with special needs in language achieve well.
- Pupils need more specific coaching in formal speech.
- Effective action is being taken to raise standards.

#### Commentary

69. Results in the national tests in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 have been consistently below the national average for the last five years. Standards in the present Year 2 are also below average in reading, writing and speaking, though this represents satisfactory achievement by these pupils since starting Year 1. Standards in listening are good throughout the school because teachers have consistently high expectations for attentiveness and manage lessons well.
70. Results in the Year 6 national tests in English have varied considerably since the last inspection; for example, results were above average in 2002 but well below average in 2003. The fall in 2003 was mainly due to a weak performance in writing, with only about a third of pupils reaching the expected standard (Level 4) and a very low number reaching the higher level. In reading, by contrast, few pupils failed to reach the expected level and one third reached the higher level. The combined results represented satisfactory achievement by these pupils compared with their Year 2 test results. Pupils in the present Year 6 are also achieving well in reading, reaching average standards. Achievement is satisfactory in speaking and writing, though current standards are below average. No differences between the attainment of boys or girls were evident during the inspection, although girls achieved significantly less well than boys in tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from travelling families are given good support and make the same progress as other pupils.
72. The school has recognised that standards in writing are too low. Positive actions taken to raise standards include identifying targets for each pupil and setting aside one lesson each week for writing at length. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 write occasional imaginative descriptions and detailed accounts, but pupils as a whole have too few opportunities to work on longer pieces, for instance by writing their own stories. This lack of experience was reflected in the test results of 2003, when few pupils reached the higher level (Level 3). By contrast, frequent encounters with formal exercises and tightly structured tasks give good support to lower-attaining pupils, and they achieve well as a result. In exercises, overall standards of spelling and punctuation are average in Year 2 and Year 6. However, when writing at length, pupils in all years use a narrow range of vocabulary and sentence structures, and older pupils do not always check for accuracy carefully enough. Handwriting develops well, with most pupils using a joined style by Year 3, though they do not learn to write in ink. By Year 6, average-attaining pupils structure longer pieces using paragraphs. Most write confidently about personal experiences in informal style, but even higher-attaining pupils lack the language range expected in formal writing. Some common grammar errors, particularly forms of verbs, reflect regional speech, and not all teachers coach standard English firmly enough.

73. A quarter of pupils did not reach the expected level in reading in the Year 2 tests in 2003. The school has taken effective action, including setting up a rota of parent helpers and buying a new reading scheme. As a result, pupils are now making better progress, with books graded so as to develop skills in small steps. By Year 2, pupils recognise many common words and have satisfactory skills in sounding out unfamiliar words. Older readers show keen interest in reading and many visit local libraries. By Year 6, all pupils read silently with good concentration. They read aloud with expression and explain the meaning clearly. It is a strength that higher-attaining pupils seek out more challenging books.
74. Pupils through the school listen attentively and willingly join in discussions. Some teachers use techniques, such as role-play, to extend speaking skills. By Year 6, most pupils speak clearly in informal discussions, though they need prompting to expand their ideas. Few are confident in speaking formally without teacher prompts. More use needs to be made of the final review (plenary) at the end of lessons to give regular practice in formal speech.
75. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The literacy targets in their individual education plans are well thought out to guide their development in small steps. Class work is adjusted so that they are included as far as possible and teaching assistants give them help in supporting them individually and in small groups.
76. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons seen, teaching was good in two thirds of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder, apart from one unsatisfactory lesson. Staff have good relationships with their classes and pupils want to do well as a result. Topics are generally stimulating and hold pupils' attention. Pupils in all classes are quick to settle to work and behave well. Texts for close study are well chosen for their interest and relevance. In the most effective lessons, instruction is energetic and brisk, with effective use of the board to note key points. Teachers adjust their questions so that pupils of all abilities can join in, though they often expect too little in terms of developed thought. Instruction on specific features, such as spellings, is successful. However, teachers' expectations in writing are not always high enough and they do not spend enough time demonstrating how different kinds of writing are crafted, showing how words and sentences can be changed to achieve different effects. This weakness was most evident in the unsatisfactory lesson, leading to a slow pace and underachievement by a significant number of pupils when they tried to write independently. However, in this and all other lessons seen, good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensured that activities were managed efficiently within a happy atmosphere.
77. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school has made sound progress since the last inspection in improving provision. Progress has been best in reading: the coordinator has led good improvements in resources and teaching arrangements for reading, including the use of parents to support learning. However, strategies for developing writing through the school need to be reviewed and the monitoring of teaching and learning by observing classes is underdeveloped. Teachers show good skills in displaying pupils' best work and print of all kinds to motivate interest.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

78. Reading and writing opportunities in other subjects are underdeveloped because they are not consistently co-ordinated with literacy targets. It is a significant weakness in some classes that all pupils are given the same simple worksheet in subjects such as geography and science, reducing opportunities for more-able pupils to write at length. The school library is inadequate, with little stock and much that is out of date, limiting pupils' opportunity to find information independently. Insufficient use is made of ICT to help pupils develop drafting and editing skills.



## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Pupils have high levels of interest in and enthusiasm for mathematics.
- Use of support staff enables less-able pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and to handle data.

### **Commentary**

79. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good overall, with attainment in line with the national average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. The level of improvement since the last inspection is good and is being maintained in the current year with pupils on target to achieve better results in test at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 than in 2003. Pupils are benefiting from greater use of available assessment information which means that the school is able to target the most able pupils in Years 2 and 6. The other significant factor in the good improvement since the last inspection is the very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator that has resulted in all staff being aware of what best teaching practice should be. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and experienced and his enthusiasm motivates both colleagues and pupils alike. A vision of the future direction of teaching and learning is well communicated, with challenges identified and planned for.
80. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good; in Years 3 – 6 it is very good or excellent. In lessons that are very good or excellent, pupils receive stimulating mental activities to start lessons in an invigorating manner. All abilities receive direct and open ended questions which require them to think and explain their reasoning in a verbal answer, as in a lesson in Years 1 and 2 where a pupil described a pyramid in terms of its number of triangular faces.
81. Higher attaining pupils are identified and receive additional support with tasks designed to match and stretch their abilities. These lessons are taught with great enthusiasm by the co-ordinator. In one such lesson in Year 6, where teaching and learning were excellent, pupils participated in lively and deep discussions on aspects of probability, posing hypotheses and deducing answers about chances. Pupils in the majority of classes enjoy their work due to well-matched tasks, linked to good planning and efficient time management. In a good lesson in Years 5 and 6 on probability, pupils selected a wide variety of their favourite characters as swap cards, and then worked out the chances of them appearing in terms of fractions. This is symptomatic of high quality mathematics teaching throughout the school, with teachers' knowledge of, and enthusiasm for the subject inspiring pupils to want to learn, leading to good overall achievement from all pupils.
82. Assessment of pupils' learning is made regularly and is used well to inform discussions with both pupils and parents in forming short-term targets. Due to good support from teachers and other support staff, less-able pupils and those with special educational needs receive equal access to the whole mathematics curriculum and achieve well, making good progress over time. Pupils with English as an additional language or those from travelling families are given good support and make the same progress as other pupils.
83. Resources are good. However, teachers do not make enough use of ICT to support learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

84. Numeracy across the curriculum is good. Pupils receive a wide variety of opportunities to explore the different aspects of mathematical learning, with the greatest concentration upon

numeracy. This is evident in subjects such as ICT, where pupils use their mathematical knowledge to move programmable models and in art and design with designs featuring tessellation, rotation and symmetry. In physical education, pupils time, measure and estimate their performances as well as producing graphs to show league tables for netball and football. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to handle data or to use their mathematical skills in real-life situations.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well, with the majority of pupils working at levels appropriate for their age.
- Although teaching is good overall, there is not always enough challenge for more-able pupils.
- There is an overuse of worksheets; pupils do not get enough opportunities to write purposefully.
- The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership.

### Commentary

85. Progress since the last inspection has been good and pupils' attainment is now in line with national averages overall in Year 2 and Year 6, with the majority of pupils working at the level expected for their age (Level 2 or Level 4). This is confirmed by statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2003. However, in the current Year 2 and Year 6 few pupils are working at the higher levels (Level 3 or Level 5) because teachers do not take enough account of the needs of more-able pupils when planning work. As a result, there is sometimes a lack of challenge in lessons for potentially higher-attaining pupils.
86. Pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good, although there are variations across the school. Achievement is weakest in Year 1, where a large number of pupils in the single-age class are working at much lower than expected levels for their age. In the rest of the school, teachers are most successful at meeting the needs of lower- and average-attaining pupils. There is good challenge for these pupils in lessons and they make good progress in developing scientific knowledge. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they are fully included in activities and helping them to achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from travelling families are given good support and make the same progress as other pupils. In contrast, more-able pupils do not always make enough progress, especially in the development of scientific skills. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for them to devise their own experiments or to extend their understanding of skills such as fair testing.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Key strengths in teaching and learning throughout the school are:
  - Teaching methods are good: in most lessons, there is a good balance between teacher-led activities and allowing pupils to find out for themselves.
  - Teachers plan an interesting range of well-resourced practical activities that engage pupils and mean that they are keen to learn.
  - Teachers manage behaviour very effectively, leading to a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes towards learning and they work together well when carrying out investigations.
88. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when teaching in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory. However, there continue to be some areas of weakness:

- Teaching does not always take enough account of the differing abilities or ages in each class. Pupils often complete the same piece of work whatever their age or ability. This limits their learning and achievement of more able pupils in particular.
  - Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to write purposefully, with too much written work completed on worksheets.
  - Very little use is made of ICT to support learning.
89. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. Recently developed long-term assessment records give a clear picture of how well pupils have achieved at the end of a topic. However, it is difficult to measure progress over time because of the way that achievement is recorded. Target setting is underdeveloped and marking varies in quality. As a result, pupils have only a limited understanding of how they can improve.
90. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses, including the need to continue to focus on developing pupils' scientific skills and developing assessment procedures. Management is satisfactory. There has been some useful monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning. However, there has been insufficient opportunity to observe lessons, and the use of test data to track progress and set targets is, as yet, in the early stages of development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' learning in discrete ICT lessons is consistently good.
- The use of currently available hardware and software is limited.
- There are too few opportunities to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

91. Standards in ICT for all pupils are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Improvement since the last inspection is good, with pupils now achieving well due to recent well-led improvements in the use of a new ICT suite. All staff have made good use of recent in-service training to improve the quality of teaching which, during inspection, was never less than good. In lessons, planning is detailed, modelling and demonstrating are used well to introduce new skills and teaching assistants provide very good support for less-able pupils or those with special educational needs.
92. Less well developed is the skill level of most pupils, which is satisfactory. Pupils use control technology to move and direct programmable models in a Year 3/4 class. In a Year 5/6 class, pupils use the drawing tool bar to produce simple eight-pointed coloured stars. Higher order skills are yet to be developed for all pupils, as teachers work to overcome gaps in pupils' previous learning caused by weaknesses in resources.
93. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in the ICT suite and behave very well. They co-operate effectively with each other, with lots of animated discussion taking place. Pupils with special educational needs receive particularly good support and make good progress, as with a Year 4 pupil who received focused support for a sustained period from a teaching assistant to achieve the task set to the whole class.
94. Computers in classrooms are not well used to support learning in other subjects. Whilst software resources are good, teachers do not take this into account when planning work.

95. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Whilst a comprehensive action plan for future development exists, it has yet to be wholly put into practice and there has been insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons.
96. Resources are good. As yet they receive minimal use in supporting the curriculum, particularly to stimulate independent research and investigation.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

97. The use of ICT across the curriculum is a weakness. In the majority of lessons seen, too few pupils use ICT in any way to support their learning in other subjects. It is used to support art and design in the design of sweets and in drawing animals. Limited use of digital cameras is made to record local visits and events, such as trips to Colchester castle in a history project. Some use is made of spreadsheets and graphs to portray mathematics and science work in Year 5 and 6.

### **HUMANITIES**

98. Geography and history were sampled, and no secure judgement can be made on standards or the quality of provision.
99. In **geography**, there is now a satisfactory scheme of work that meets National Curriculum requirements and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Recent work by Year 6 is neatly presented in project folders and meets national expectations overall. Maps are accurately labelled and factual accounts indicate sound understanding. Lower-attaining pupils achieve well because findings are recorded in different ways: drawings, diagrams, charts and maps, as well as written accounts. However, all pupils complete the same tasks, and it is a weakness that pupils with the potential for higher attainment have no opportunity to go further in depth or detail. This was also evident in the small amount of work seen in Year 2.
100. Teaching was satisfactory in the two geography lessons seen. Both lessons were well planned and resourced to develop understanding of maps. Pupils showed strong interest in the work, though they had too little time to record their findings. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding, and the charitable link with a school in Nepal is particularly stimulating.
101. In **history**, planning is soundly based on official recommendations. Only recent work by Years 3 and 4 was seen, and this was broadly in line with the expected standard. Pupils responded well to imaginative tasks in studying Roman Britain, for instance writing imaginary newspaper reports on Boudicca's revolt from the viewpoints of the opposing sides.
102. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 concentrated well on finding information about the Tudor monarchy in good quality reproductions of contemporary paintings, and showed good understanding in interpreting the evidence. However, a scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that too much is completed on worksheets. This limits pupils' opportunities to write purposefully. In addition, there is little evidence of the learning of more-able pupils being extended beyond that of other pupils, restricting their achievement over time.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good leadership over the last two years, resulting in significant improvements in provision.
- Pupils are keen to learn and show good respect for different beliefs.
- Teachers do not always provide enough challenge for more-able or older pupils in their classes.

### Commentary

103. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' attainment is higher and is now in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Good leadership by the subject co-ordinator over the last two years has resulted in pupils' achievement improving. She has introduced a good scheme of work and has helped to develop teachers' subject knowledge. Resources for both teachers and pupils have been improved and the co-ordinator has worked closely with the local authority to ensure that the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus are being met. There is a good understanding of where further improvement is needed, including the need to make less use of worksheets in lessons and to develop links with other places of worship so that pupils can experience at first hand faiths other than Christianity.
104. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good quality support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Throughout the school, pupils now have a sound knowledge of the beliefs of Christianity. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good recall of Bible stories and in Years 5 and 6 a visit to the local church has helped pupils to understand how and why Christians worship. Pupils are beginning to understand that there are different religions but their learning in this area of the curriculum is less secure because of previous weaknesses in provision.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with an example of very good teaching in a lesson in Years 3 and 4. Pupils work hard in lessons and show good attitudes towards learning. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and they successfully encourage pupils to express their feelings and talk about their beliefs. Pupils show good levels of respect for non-Christian beliefs for example talking sensitively about what they had learnt after a visit from a member of the Jewish community.
106. In the very good lesson, the teacher used a very imaginative approach to helping pupils develop an understanding of faith. Good use was made of a Bible story to introduce the theme and pupils were able to act out the story. Pupils were given very good opportunities to share their ideas and questioning was used well to help extend learning. At the end of the lesson, pupils answered questions 'in role', showing a good understanding of how Abraham had faith in God when he was faced with the sacrifice of his son.
107. There are some weaknesses in teaching across the school. There is an over-reliance on worksheets as a method of recording work and pupils get few opportunities to write purposefully. Teachers do not always take enough account of the different ages or abilities within their classes; a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils of differing ages or ability are often set the same task and sometimes use exactly the same words in their accounts. This means that more-able or older pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

108. Art and design was not an area of focus for the inspection so there is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on provision. One good lesson and one satisfactory lesson were observed and attractive displays of work were sampled. Pupils enjoy art lessons and take great care with their work. There are examples of high quality three-dimensional work in Years 3 and 4, where one class has made interesting caricatures using clay and different colours of glaze and pupils in another class have made amusing giant-sized sweets from painted plaster strips in the style of Claes Oldenburg. Pupils in Year 5 make carefully-sewn fabric pictures using a wide range of stitches. A popular pottery club makes a good contribution to the learning of a group of pupils who have recently made amusing money containers. Some older pupils have benefited from working alongside a young artist designing and making an attractive mural to decorate the dining hall. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development and this aspect has improved since the time of the last inspection. For example, in the good lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, pupils developed a good understanding of Aboriginal artwork when discussing pictures found on the *Internet* and trying out similar techniques in their own work. As at the time of the last inspection, some classrooms have no running water and this causes considerable inconvenience for teachers and pupils.

### **Design and technology**

109. Design and technology was not an area of focus for the inspection and during the inspection only one lesson was seen. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on provision. Strengths in work seen are:
- The effective way that teachers use a good range of materials and techniques to extend pupils' knowledge and awareness of the subject.
  - The wide and varied curriculum and good links that are made between subjects by including design projects in history and science topics.
110. Pupils enjoy their work, producing good examples of designing and making. For example, in Year 1, pupils sew using different patterns. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate the use of couching, chain and running stitches in their designs.

### **Music**

111. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision because this subject was not an area of focus for the inspection. Two lessons were observed alongside assemblies, extra-curricular activities and some instrumental teaching by visiting teachers.
112. The quality of pupils' singing in assemblies and lessons is satisfactory. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically, clapping in time to the music when appropriate. Older pupils have a sound knowledge of the names of instruments and they confidently express their feelings after listening to a piece of music. Pupils who are learning to play instruments read musical notation accurately and when playing together in the orchestra they perform competently.
113. There is a good curriculum, with pupils given very good opportunities to take part in musical activities outside lessons. The level of pupil participation in these activities is good. Pupils perform to a range of audiences. They sing to parents at church services and performances, as well as taking part in music festivals with other local schools. There are well-attended choirs and orchestras and a good number of pupils learn to play instruments such as the guitar, flute and violin.

114. Good leadership from the co-ordinator means that weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Good use is made of a commercial scheme of work which ensures that there is progression from year to year. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers no longer lack confidence in teaching the subject and they plan an interesting range of activities which effectively cover all aspects of the curriculum.

### **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject.
- Good links with extra-curricular activities.

### **Commentary**

115. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils have an appropriate range of skills, benefiting from good quality teaching and an extensive range of clubs that result in good achievement.
116. Strengths in teaching are the good planning, and the high quality of organisation which means that differing needs are met well. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and make good use of resources. As a result, there is a good pace to learning and pupils are well motivated. They work hard in lessons and are very keen to participate in all activities.
117. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include netball, football for boys and girls, tennis athletics and cricket. These activities are very well attended and provide pupils with a wide range of new experiences, effectively extending learning in lessons.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

118. This curriculum area was sampled and no judgement is made on standards or the quality of provision. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Provision is guided by a scheme of work and commercial materials that give teachers good guidance in planning appropriate activities. Aspects are taught in separate lessons or within other subjects, notably science and religious education. Older pupils benefit from a substantial course in drugs awareness. It is the governing body's present policy that sex and relationships education should not be included in the programme, though this policy is under review. Members of staff report that participation in the healthy schools initiative has had a good impact on pupils' values.
119. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen. The teacher's encouraging questions helped pupils in a Year 5/6 class to explore their own experiences of relationships with others. Building confidence through discussion with a partner, they showed maturity beyond their years in explaining feelings of anger and frustration. Others in the class listened sympathetically and, in a discussion sensitively guided by the teacher, they agreed that tolerance and understanding are necessary strengths. They show good awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship and strong moral values in condemning anti-social behaviour.
120. Members of staff create good opportunities for pupils to take initiatives in the wider life of the school. Among these are the many fund-raising events for charity and performances for the local community. Pupils learn about the democratic process when they vote for school council members who then represent their views. Such opportunities make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and attitudes towards school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

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

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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