

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BAYNARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Townsend Road, Tiptree

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114767

Headteacher: Mr G Stimson

Lead inspector: Mrs M Hulme

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 259792

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	107
School address:	Townsend Road Tiptree Colchester
Postcode:	CO5 0ND
Telephone number:	(01621) 817 261
Fax number:	(01621) 815 197
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Darrell Wood
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school in Tiptree. There are 107 children on roll including 22 in the Foundation Stage of whom seven are still attending part time. Five teachers who include the headteacher, teach all except the Foundation Stage in mixed age classes. The school draws its children mainly from a large local authority housing estate and up to 20 per cent come from outside the village. Most children are of white UK heritage. The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than many other primary schools nationally and two children have been awarded statements of special educational need. The attendance rate is well below the national average at present. The high turnover of children other than at the usual starting and finishing dates often makes a big difference to a class. When children start school, the majority have fewer skills than expected for their age. The school has received two achievement awards in the past three years. It is involved in a Sure Start Initiative and receives specialist sports support from the local sports college.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3609	Mrs Margaret Hulme	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, religious education, music, physical education
9306	Mrs Barbara Moore	Lay inspector	
25555	Mrs Maureen Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, special educational needs
18344	Mr David Earley	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, geography, history

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school that is effective in providing well for all its children but is particularly successful with those who have special educational needs. People matter at this school and the key to its success is the commitment of staff and governors to provide for all aspects of children's development. The committed teaching supports children's learning very effectively and is one of the main reasons that children achieve as well as they do. The purposeful leadership, very good ethos, good achievement and a high quality of education provide good value for money.

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

- The good teaching is supporting children's learning, ensuring that all achieve well. Staff work hard to encourage children's all round development.
- The school is led and managed well and governors influence its work and give effective support. There is particularly good leadership of special educational needs.
- There is purposeful direction for the school's work overall but planned improvements outdoors for the Foundation Stage need implementing and the range of learning opportunities in religious education is too narrow.
- Although the school is making good efforts to improve standards there are a few areas in English where it can take further action.
- There is a wonderfully caring and supportive atmosphere that provides a firm foundation for pupils' personal development.
- The very effective partnership with parents, other schools and the community makes a positive contribution to children's learning.

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS CHANGED SINCE THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school has made **good** progress since the last inspection. There were only minor issues in the last report, which have been tackled successfully. High standards have been maintained in art and design and there are improving standards in other subjects. Support for those with learning difficulties has improved, so some children exceed the standards expected. Good teaching is maintained and better use is now made of assessment information to meet children's needs. Effective deployment of teaching assistants has improved learning. The caring ethos provides a firm foundation for children's attitudes and behaviour and they benefit from firm direction.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - very low. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2. The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.*

Achievement is **good** because of good teaching. In each class there is a high proportion of children with learning difficulties. The majority of children start school with fewer skills than expected for their age. Most are working well towards reaching the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year, but about a third will take longer. The Year 2 test results were well below average, but this was better than expected because almost half the class had learning difficulties. All those capable reached the expected standard and some did better. The Year 6 results, as seen in the table above,

were well below average but results must be viewed carefully because this was a small year group and there is constant variation because of the number with learning difficulties. The evidence shows that the school supports its children as well as it can and the Year 6 statutory targets for English and mathematics were exceeded overall. The comparison with similar schools is the result of pupil mobility when the make up of the class changed dramatically from Year 2 to Year 6. Standards were satisfactory in most subjects, but well below average in English.

Pupils have **very good** attitudes and behaviour is **very good**. The orderly and harmonious community means that bullying is rare. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. An atmosphere has been created where values and beliefs are respected. Attendance is **poor** mainly because there have been two epidemics with many children ill. There are no exclusions and punctuality is **good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching is **good** throughout the school. The very good relationships and expectations that children will work hard and do their best encourage effective learning. The curriculum is **very good** overall reflecting the relevant range of learning opportunities but requires improvement to the outside area for the Foundation Stage and a wider range of activities for religious education. Both areas lack some resources. A **very good** range of additional learning opportunities enriches the curriculum. Care, welfare and support are **very good**. The high levels of support contribute to the good achievement. There are **very good** links with parents who provide effective support at home and in school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. They stem from a caring and competent headteacher who benefits from the effective leadership of key staff and the good challenge and support from governors, who keep in close touch with school's work. They are well organised and informed, take a keen interest in performance and meet their statutory requirements. The effective management results from secure systems for ensuring that financial and administrative work is efficiently carried out. Staff and resources are used effectively and decisions are made with improved standards in mind and in consultation with parents and pupils.

## **WHAT PARENTS AND PUPILS FEEL ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

**Parents:** they have very positive views of the school and are well satisfied with the quality of education it provides and the standards their children achieve.

**Pupils:** they enjoy coming to school for the range of learning opportunities offered them. Self-esteem is high because they are listened to and contribute effectively to the school community

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The main weaknesses that need attention are:**

- Standards in English with improvements to spelling and more time for additional literacy support to help pupils do better in national tests.
- The planning of religious education does not include the use of visitors or visits to places of worship or a wide range of learning experiences for juniors and there are few resources for all the religions studied.
- The outdoor provision and some resources for the Foundation Stage are limited.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Children's achievement is **good** throughout the school. Good teaching and effective support have enabled those who have the capability to reach average and sometimes higher standards in English, mathematics and science and those with learning difficulties achieve well for their capability.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well.
- Despite the overall results that show standards in national tests being well below average those children capable of reaching the expected standards for their age do so.
- The particularly effective provision for children with learning difficulties is the main reason that they achieve so well.
- High standards in art and design have been maintained and standards are showing improvement in some other subjects.
- The school is making good efforts to improve standards but it could take further action in English, particularly spelling and make more time to provide additional literacy support for those almost reaching the national standard.

#### Commentary

##### *Starting school*

1. When children start school in the Reception class their knowledge and skills are very wide ranging. Although a few have the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for their age and there are a few who are above expectations, overall their attainment on entry is lower than average and sometimes very low. This year they lack skills in personal and social education and there are a third already identified as having speech difficulties, but they have made a good start and there are indications that in four areas of learning the majority will reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. However, in communication, language and literacy and mathematical areas of learning about a third may not do so.

##### *The school's results in national tests*

2. The table below shows that in 2003 standards in the national tests in Year 2 were well below average for reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.5 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.6 (12.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.5 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. This was a small year group where there was constant variation because of the numbers with special educational needs and therefore the national test results must be viewed carefully. These Year 2 children were in a mixed age class that had a very high proportion with learning difficulties and only the very good teaching and specific support planned for in lessons made it possible for these children to achieve as well as they did. An outstanding example of how this works can be found in the commentary on teaching later in this report. However, one of the

challenges this school faces is how to assist those children who reach satisfactory standards in lessons because they have high quality support, cope with a situation where that is removed, such as in national tests.

- In 2003 the standards by Year 6 were well below average for English and mathematics and science as seen in the table below and although English and science remained the same the mathematics result dipped from the previous year. As with Year 2 this was a small year group, subject to considerable variation and the effect of one pupil on a school percentage was again considerable.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.2 (24.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.7 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.5 (26.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- When compared to that in similar schools progress since Year 2 is very poor, particularly in English. However, this is a better result than it appears because by the time this year group reached Year 6 its make up had changed. The school's evidence shows that there were just eight of the original class left from Year 2 in 1999 by the time they reached Year 6 in 2003. The five pupils who joined this class included one who had been awarded a statement of special educational need, one with learning difficulties, one with social and emotional problems, one with behavioural problems and one of average capability. There are good indications that the very poor progress referred to earlier is not an appropriate judgement, particularly when the evidence above shows that all pupils who had the capability to reach the expected standards did so and some did better. In the table below there are highlights that show important achievements in a school that regularly has year groups with a high proportion of children with learning difficulties.

Subject	Special educational needs highlights	Successes
English	Five children who had reading difficulties achieved well. One child who had a statement of need did very well	Four children reached the expected standard and three did better.
mathematics	Of five pupils with learning difficulty, two did very well but the others were not at the stage where they could tackle the tests.	Eight children reached the expected standard and one did better.
science	Of five pupils with learning difficulty, two did very well but one could not cope with the tests. One child who had a statement of need did exceptionally well exceeding the expected standard.	Because the teacher was able to read the questions to the children in this subject, they did better. Seven children reached the expected standard and three did better.

- Targets were set for Year 6 in English and mathematics and in both subjects were exceeded at the average level but not at the higher level.

*Inspection findings*

*The Foundation Stage*

- The indications are that the majority will reach the expected goals for physical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. However, at present, about a third will still be working towards those

goals expected for their age in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.

#### *Years 1 and 2*

8. Children achieve well because of the very good provision. Those with learning difficulties are particularly well supported and planning for the higher attainers is good, maintaining their interest and ensuring that they respond well to challenge. In the samples of written work seen the standards are satisfactory in mathematics and science. The science work of higher attainers is above average because of the good, thorough teaching. Although children reach standards in mathematics that are generally below average, they do achieve well for their capability. In lessons children were reaching satisfactory standards overall in mathematics and science. In science children's investigative skills are becoming very well established at this early stage. In English standards in lessons and in the samples of written work seen were well below average overall because a high proportion of children have learning difficulties. However, there are children who reach satisfactory standards and a few who do better. There have been improvements to speaking and listening and now children are confident in discussion sessions and try to use more interesting words in their writing. The information and communication technology suite and the guidance and support of the teaching assistant have been important factors in improving standards since the last inspection.

#### *Years 3 to 6*

9. Children achieve well in all year groups. Work is well matched to capability, so all groups are suitably challenged including those with learning difficulties. In English standards by Year 6 are well below average overall. This is attributable to a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and high pupil mobility. However, some reach satisfactory standards and more able pupils attain above average standards, for example, older children choose from a wide selection of authors, which they read accurately and with expression. Slower learners make competent use of strategies for reading unfamiliar words but are less fluent and accurate. In mathematics, although children reach standards that are generally below average, they nevertheless achieve well for their capabilities and those able to reach the higher standards do so. Older children cope well with answering questions against the clock and are improving the speed of recalling facts. Fractions were a difficulty in the last national tests but the most able mathematicians are now efficient at reducing fractions to their simplest forms. Learning through practical experiences has made science more interesting and enjoyable to children, which has extended understanding and improved standards. Year 6 children not only have a better understanding that harmful substances can affect the way the body functions but also that scientific ideas are based on evidence. Standards in information and communication technology are improving, although the full impact of the improved provision and good teaching has not yet led to higher standards in all aspects of the subject and models and simulations are not used sufficiently in other subjects.

#### *Whole school matters*

10. Few lessons were seen in other subjects, but evidence indicated that there are high standards in physical education and standards are higher in information and communication technology by Year 2. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus and for children's ages. However, although no lessons were seen in art and design the work sampled was of a very high standard. In all other subjects where work was sampled or subjects discussed with children there were indications that standards are satisfactory.
11. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught thoroughly and children generally use them well in other subjects, but insufficient emphasis is given to accurate spelling. Additional literacy support is provided, but in order to ensure that all children sample all activities the time for extra literacy is sometimes lost.

12. The use of computer skills has improved since the last inspection and now good use is made of them to support other subjects. However, across the curriculum not enough use is made of work related to simulations and models.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their personal development is **very good** overall, with spiritual, moral and social development strongest. Their attendance is **poor**, but punctuality is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the many opportunities for them to take the initiative and accept responsibility.
- Relationships are very good and pupils feel secure and welcome.
- Behaviour is very good so that pupils respect others and concentrate on their work.
- Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem.
- Pupils are very interested in the life and work of the school.
- Recent outbreaks of illness and pupil mobility are significant factors in poor attendance.
- The richness and diversity of cultures within the wider community are not well enough developed.

### Commentary

13. As seen in the table below the attendance rate is poor at present but this does not truly reflect the school situation. There are well-organised and efficient systems for promoting attendance. However, there have been recent widespread outbreaks of illness, which have had detrimental effects on attendance statistics. This has been compounded by the high mobility rate of some pupils who remain on the school register but are away from the area at different times throughout the year and a very small minority of persistently poor attenders in one family. The education welfare officer confirmed that the school is working hard to improve the situation and attendance for the majority of pupils is usually good.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.5	School data	0.2
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.*

14. Pupils like school and come willingly because it is a friendly and welcoming place and the work is interesting both in lessons and in after-school clubs. Relationships are very good, pupils are very highly valued and their efforts respected, which gives them confidence to try hard. They have many opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, such as helping in assemblies, looking after younger pupils and helping in the library and with computers. Most pupils have a very good understanding of how to live together as a caring community. The school council makes a real contribution to the life of the school and through it pupils develop a very good understanding of citizenship and community. At the behest of the school council a "friendship bench" was provided, so that pupils who feel lonely or sad can find comfort and companionship. In their team games, during and after school pupils learn the value of collaboration and the importance of taking part as well as trying to win.
15. Most children behave very well in lessons and around the school because there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour and they understand what is expected of them.

Consequently, no children have been excluded over the last year as seen in the table below and since there is no disruption in lessons children can get on with their work.

#### **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	106	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0

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

16. Younger pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and older ones understand that their behaviour always has consequences. Because the school has a very caring ethos pupils develop a very good understanding of others' feelings and a respect for values and beliefs. Pupils consider real issues such as the nature of dilemma against the background of the conflict in Iraq and express a sense of wonder when their spiritual development is enhanced by such experiences as the sight of the sun beginning to illuminate a frosty and misty morning.
17. Pupils develop a very good understanding of their own culture and are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs. They treat others with respect and compassion and their close links with a school in the Ukraine have helped them understand the differences and similarities between cultures and the need to respect the views, beliefs and ways of life of people from cultures other than their own. However, opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of cultures within the wider community are less well developed and in some classes, for example, the Reception class, there are only limited resources for the teacher to extend this awareness.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

18. The quality of education provided by the school is **very good** reflecting the good and sometimes very good teaching. The range of learning opportunities is very relevant to the needs of the children and because staff know them and their families well they provide just the right amount of support and guidance to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. Parents show much interest in their children's education and most give them support. This, together with an effective partnership with other schools, prepares children well for the next stage of education.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is **good** overall and sometimes very good; consequently the quality of children's learning is **good**. The teachers' assessment of children's work is **good** which ensures that their understanding of how well children are progressing is used effectively in lesson planning.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good teamwork and a consistent approach to lessons.
- Very good relationships motivate children to do their best.
- Assistant staff are well deployed to support and improve children's work.
- A thorough system of assessment ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals and changes planning when necessary.
- Very good efforts are made to see that all children are treated fairly and take part in the activities provided.

- Additional support is provided for those close to reaching the expected standards in national tests but insufficient time is given to this in English because the school is keen to see that all children experience all learning opportunities.
- The good knowledge of subjects and areas of learning results in activities that maintain children's interest.
- The use of specialist teaching is driving up standards.
- The lack of some facilities outdoors and in the imaginative play area for the youngest children limits the range of activities that the Foundation Stage teacher would like to provide.
- The planning of religious education does not provide opportunities for raising children's awareness of world faiths by using visitors to the school and by making visits to places of worship.

## Commentary

19. This good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and is still a strength of the school. The findings of this inspection showed that there were similar strengths in all classes and consequently the good teaching is producing good learning. The very good teamwork that exists is a particular strength ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the way that lessons are taught and the way that children are treated.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5	16	3	0	0	0

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

20. Teachers are very concerned about all children being treated fairly and, in their responses to inspection questionnaires, 95 per cent of parents agreed that this was effective. Almost all children too in their inspection questionnaires and in discussions with inspectors agreed with this view. They particularly thought that teachers were very fair in ensuring that everyone had the chance to take part in challenging activities. However, in ensuring that children do not miss anything there is less time to provide more intensive literacy sessions for a few children where such work might help them do better in national tests.
21. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects or areas of learning they teach so they are good at explaining new ideas in ways that make sense to children and answer questions accurately. Children's learning is extended because they are offered first hand experience in practical tasks, a wider range of knowledge or see links with other subjects. A particularly good example was seen in a Year 6 science lesson. Children were learning that tobacco can affect the way the body functions and that some effects can be harmful. They used a mechanical smoker to experiment and as a patch of tar appeared on the paper lungs children expressed horror at the result. Resources such as x-rays and a baby's feeding bottle full of tar were used very effectively to explain the outcomes of passive smoking. In the session at the end of the lesson the teacher made good links to the programme of personal, social and health education to reinforce the scientific evidence. The children maintained a high level of interest and learning was good.
22. It was evident that much thought and careful planning went into each lesson. However, in religious education there was a difference between the range of learning opportunities provided for younger children and those for older ones. For example, the lesson for infant children succeeded better because there was greater variation in tasks that maintained children's interest. This subject lacks a range of artefacts from different religions, for children to handle and treat with respect when trying to understand why some people are different from them and

believe different things. The infant teacher is now planning to invite a visitor from the Hindu faith.

23. Children with learning difficulties are thoroughly supported in lessons as they work towards their individual targets. Very strong teamwork between class teachers and learning support assistants has a very positive impact on children's progress. Tasks are appropriately matched to each child's capability. All adults have high expectations of individual children and they in turn respond by working hard and doing as well as they can. Each child's individual needs are very well appreciated and this helps to bring about the confidence and improving self-esteem on which success can be built. In some lessons this was particularly effective and an outstanding example is illustrated below.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**In a mixed Years 1 and 2 class with a high proportion of children with learning difficulties, a mathematics lesson epitomises the very skilled way in which the needs of all children are met.**

Teamwork is crucial and each part of the lesson is carefully organised. In the very relaxed atmosphere of the classroom, the children work with total confidence with either the teacher or her learning support assistant as they develop their understanding of subtraction. They know when to join either adult and do so quietly sharing the most appropriate oral activities, seeking support for their independent tasks or joining their teacher for specific learning. Recognising the wide range of different mathematical abilities in the two age groups, individual independent tasks are very well suited to each child, challenging the most able mathematicians to mentally subtract, for example, 21 from three-digit numbers whilst those at the earliest stage of their understanding are helped to accurately count back from ten by using their number lines. Because both adults share the highest expectations for the children to succeed at their own level of working, they are constantly aware of any uncertainties or misunderstanding, which means that children benefit from their advice or an extra question. As a result all achieve well and make very good progress during the lesson.

24. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. The teacher knows the importance of methods such as purposeful play and resources to help children learn effectively. On her recent arrival in the school she realised that if children were to become independent learners the classroom and outdoor area must be organised appropriately so that they could make choices and take responsibility for tidying up what they had used. The range of resources has been improved, but there is a lack of equipment to raise children's awareness of ethnic diversity as required in their personal, social and emotional development. The lack of some facilities outdoors for the youngest children limits the range of activities that the Foundation Stage teacher would like to provide. The area is too small for what is there and for all the children to use it at once. It particularly lacks large equipment for climbing and balancing as needed for the physical development area of learning. There are plans to improve the resources for this stage.
25. The system of assessment that ensures an appropriate response to the needs of individuals is thorough. In lessons the teachers and their assistants observe children at work and keep a notebook to jot down what they see and then discuss it later. Even at this early stage they are encouraged to say how well they think they have worked and how some outcomes could be improved. As they get older children's understanding of how well they have done improves. Children told inspectors that they were taught new things in lessons and most knew how to get help if they were stuck. There are effective marking comments in books and when children read these they have a better understanding of how well they are doing. Such information is used when reporting to parents about progress and, in their responses to inspection questionnaires, most parents agreed that this was effective.
26. Teachers have established very good relationships with children. This has provided a firm foundation for children's learning and gives them the motivation to try hard. Children pay attention, are eager to answer questions and try hard even when they find the tasks quite challenging such as reading a play with expression and taking note of punctuation. The teacher had carefully selected play scripts that were a good match to their reading skills and the easy relationships made children feel secure about volunteering for a trial run. This was a successful lesson because no child was distracted, reluctant learners were coaxed and

managed very well, learning was real and relevant and every child achieved well for their capability.

27. Teachers who have specialist skills at the secondary school often use them to assist pupils. In physical education the specialist skills of both the class teacher and the secondary school teacher are proving to be instrumental in driving up standards.

#### Example of outstanding practice

##### **A gymnastics lesson for Year 6 pupils using the team teaching skills of two specialists to improve standards.**

Excitement was in the air as pupils gathered to make sure they knew what was to happen today, what new skills and co-operation were required and most importantly whether they could master them as well as others. Right from the start the two teachers oozed confidence, made pupils feel secure and built in new skills carefully to instil confidence. One teacher led and the other supported, giving praise, encouragement and support. Effective use of demonstration made clear what was expected, for those who were a little uncertain. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate the efforts of others, correctly use gymnastics terminology and build efforts into a sequence changed great effort to considerable enjoyment. The excellent relationships provided a strong motivation for pupils to perform well. Stimulating, enthusiastic and continually challenging teaching stemming from expert knowledge left pupils wanting more. Reference to how they had improved on the previous lesson left pupils with high self-esteem. "I don't want this to end! It makes you feel good! Watch me!" were just some of the pupils' exclamations as they came back to earth and changed for the next lesson.

#### The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum with a rich and varied programme of experiences that enable all pupils, whatever their capability, to succeed. All statutory curriculum requirements are met.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very committed to providing equality of opportunity for all children.
- The very good provision for those with learning difficulties ensures that they achieve well and make good progress.
- Children's personal, social, health and citizenship education is promoted very well.
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good.
- Although the accommodation and resources are mainly good some improvements are needed for the Foundation Stage and religious education.

#### Commentary

28. This is a very inclusive school that values every child and includes them all in the rich variety of learning experiences. The learning opportunities are designed for all-round development so children achieve as well as they can - not just academically, but creatively and physically too. The school prepares its children well for the next stages of their learning, which is confirmed by the secondary school.
29. Provision for the large proportion of children with learning difficulties is very good. Children's individual goals are clear, precise and very relevant to each one's specific learning or behavioural needs, building securely on what they can already do and recognising their strengths. Regular support is detailed and well considered in order that the most efficient use is made of the skilled assistants working with small groups or individuals thus ensuring children can achieve the targets they are set and develop strategies to help their future learning. Children's progress is regularly reviewed. The school also reviews its own work each year, identifying and acting on areas to improve its provision further.
30. The provision made for children's personal, social and health education (PSHE) now includes aspects of citizenship and is very good. Personal development is promoted through a wide

range of opportunities that are planned carefully so that subjects and areas of learning are interlinked and enable children to use the skills and knowledge they have acquired in one subject in any alternative subject. Carefully managed innovations, such as the “Thinking Skills” programme are beginning to make a valuable contribution to children’s development and some sessions draw on the expertise of outside agencies such as the sex and relationships programme. The school council is an example of citizenship in action. Following a visit to county hall to see the council at work, the school council also decided to meet regularly, working hard on behalf of the whole school community.

31. Expertise from within and outside the school is used very well to enrich the curriculum. Visitors to the school extend children’s understanding, for example, about the work of the fire brigade or how to maintain the willow dome built outdoors. Theatre and drama groups regularly visit and such programmes as arts week involve children in learning skills from an artist in residence. Working with a member of a local rugby club, all classes learn some of the skills of the game. Beyond the school day, a good range of clubs exists that include the arts, sport and other activities such as French or gardening.
32. Accommodation has improved since the last inspection and is mainly good. The classrooms and other areas for learning, such as the library, are organised imaginatively and some new facilities, for example, the information and communication technology suite, are used so productively that standards are rising in this subject. High quality displays of children’s work make the school an attractive place for children to learn. Although the accommodation for the Foundation Stage children is mainly good, the outdoor area lacks space and equipment. Resources are good overall, supporting learning efficiently in most subjects but religious education lacks sufficient artefacts for all religions studied.

### Care, guidance and support

There is **very good** provision to ensure pupils’ care, welfare, health and safety. A **very good** range of support, advice and guidance is provided for children based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school is **very good** at seeking, valuing and acting on pupils’ views.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good arrangements for health and safety, child protection and general welfare.
- There are high levels of care and support for those with learning difficulties.
- Teachers know the children and their families very well and use this knowledge effectively to provide appropriate advice and support.
- The school greatly values the views of the children and acts on improvements suggested whenever possible.

### Commentary

33. Daily routines are planned and carried out scrupulously. Accidents are recorded, medical attention to injury or sickness is provided and parents are informed of accidents or incidents that happen in school. All the necessary arrangements for health and safety are very well organised and child protection arrangements are comprehensive. The very good care taken of children is confirmed in their own questionnaires. For example, they say they are confident that adults will help them if they are worried about anything. Pastoral support is very good and a strength of this school because the children, the parents and other agencies work together effectively. Staff have established warm and caring relationships which ensures every child has a good and trusting relationship with more than one adult in the school. Parents keep teachers well informed about what they need to know to help their children. There is a high level of care for those children with learning difficulties and they are very conscientiously supported not only in their learning but also in their behavioural needs.

34. The way the school seeks children's views is very effective. They express their views thoughtfully and responsibly because they know they are listened to and taken seriously. The school council has resulted in proactive pupils being self-supportive. They quickly draw attention to the improvements they consider they need. The support and advice they receive results in them being assured young people by the time they leave school.

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

The partnership that the school has with parents, the community and other schools is **very good** and contributing effectively to how well pupils achieve.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents support their children well because they receive good information about their progress and have a good understanding of the curriculum.
- There is very effective working with parents of children with learning difficulties.
- The support of other schools and their contributions enhance the curriculum provided and in some instances are helping to improve standards in some subjects.
- Parents actively support the school's partnership with other schools and the community.

### **Commentary**

35. The school works very effectively with parents to support children's learning. The range of information that the school provides for parents about their children and how they can be supported is good. Parents find the reports particularly helpful because they indicate both strengths and weaknesses. The children have targets for improvement and parents know what they are and how they can help. Parents feel well informed about the curriculum and say they now understand what their children talk about and can give them support. There is particularly effective working with all parents of children with learning difficulties. They are kept fully informed of their children's needs and regularly discuss progress and learning targets. Parents of children awarded a statement of special educational need play a full and active role in the annual reviews. They are consulted extensively and their views taken into account. The individual education plans guide parents well on supporting children at home.
36. The links with other schools and early years providers are very good. The pre-school playgroup begins the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, which the teacher builds on when they start school. The secondary school finds the children confident and positive about changing schools because teachers collaborate well to make the transition as smooth as possible. Older children benefit from the contacts they have with secondary teachers, particularly those in the physical education department because standards are improving as a result of specialist teaching. The school's links with other primary schools through contributions to music festivals, art workshops and information technology events, extend the range of learning opportunities for the children and raise their self-esteem making good efforts and achieving well. Parents are keen to encourage activities with other schools and support activities whenever they can.
37. The partnership with the community is very good and well supported by parents. The school knows the locality well and has developed some very productive links with external organisations. Sporting activities, such as coaching from Colchester United Football Club, extend the range of opportunities available to children and extend their games skills. The Baynards Action Group, founded to support the school, organises events that help children's social development and provides activities that contribute to achievement. For example, when the school needed a pond to extend science activities the local fire brigade helped them. The school is effective at tapping into skills and resources that strengthen children's learning and regular outside visits contribute effectively to learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good** reflecting the efforts towards pupils achieving as well as they can and making the best use of the resources available. The leadership of the school is purposeful and has good direction from key staff. Governance is **good** shaping the vision and direction of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and communicates it well so that staff share his commitment and form a strong team.
- The school's systems for self-evaluation and development planning form a coherent approach to improving provision and raising achievement.
- The school's finances are carefully and astutely managed and closely linked to its development planning so that staff and governors have a clear view of development to raise standards.
- The management of special educational needs is very good.
- The administration staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.

### **Commentary**

38. The headteacher has been at the school several years and has maintained his vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations. The staff are a united and supportive group who put the pupils first and are very committed to providing for their all round development.
39. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and creates a common sense of purpose and direction, with a strong focus on raising achievement for pupils of all abilities. The school is constantly working with the challenge of poor results in national tests because the small year groups have a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. However, standards in other subjects are at least typical for their age and parents are very supportive of the school's efforts. The impact of leadership is seen in the overall good progress and achievement of most pupils in the school despite the difficulties.
40. Staff work well as a team and have high expectations and a clear vision for taking the school forward. The leadership helps to create a purposeful ethos where very good relationships, a friendly family atmosphere and a strong sense of community are the foundation of the opportunities provided by the school.
41. The headteacher understands the challenges that teachers meet when their classes have a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and is ensuring that they have the support necessary from well-trained teaching assistants. The very good procedures ensure that the aspect of special educational needs runs smoothly and that children receive just the right amount of support and encouragement to make them persevere and achieve success. The special educational needs co-ordinator helps staff understand the pupils' needs extremely well and all work together to identify and provide the best way forward for each child.
42. The management of the school is good with effective procedures to ensure that it runs smoothly. The very experienced administration staff are extremely efficient and provide effective administration and financial support. They are very welcoming to staff, pupils, parents and visitors and make a significant contribution to the school.
43. The school's development plan is clear and detailed. It is closely linked with the budget so that governors and the headteacher have a clear view of priorities and how they are to be achieved.

### ***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	360,161
Total expenditure	315,752
Expenditure per pupil	3,255

Balance from previous year	44,409
Balance carried forward to the next	33,000

44. The school has addressed a criticism from the previous inspection and is astutely managing a previously large budget surplus to serve the school's present and future needs. Performance management is well linked to support and opportunities for professional development. Within a small school many staff responsibilities are shared. However, the quality of leadership and management of subjects and departments of the school is generally good. Teaching, learning, planning and pupils' work are regularly checked in order to make improvements. Analysis of test results is thorough and pupils' progress is systematically tracked and targets set for improvement. Systems for self-evaluation are good and enable the school to focus on particular areas for improvement. Finances are managed efficiently and the headteacher and governors apply the principle of best value well, particularly consulting parents and pupils about any proposed changes.
45. Governance is good. The governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They meet regularly, visit the school and help in classes and on educational visits. This gives them a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and enables them to give good direction and support. Governors ensure that all their statutory responsibilities are met. They have close contact with subjects and aspects of the school, such as special educational needs, so that they have a good understanding of issues as they emerge. Because they know the school very well governors provide appropriate support and challenge when considering areas for development and promoting the provision of opportunities for pupils to have equal access to the curriculum and to succeed.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** reflecting the continuing good leadership and teaching that have led to some improvements since the last inspection. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1.

At the time of inspection all, except those who will be five in the summer term, were in the first week of attending full time. When they start school the majority of children have fewer skills than usually expected for their age and the end of year profiles now being used, indicate that children's capability overall is lower than expected when compared with other schools in the county. At the end of last year standards were lower than average overall. This year the span of capability is better with more in the average group, although one third of the class have speech problems.

The teacher is new to the class and has established very good relationships with the children. They all achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is planned well to provide a relevant range of activities that are matched appropriately to their needs. Although some activities are adult-directed there is a good balance between these and others which children work at independently. The teacher and her assistant have a consistent approach to the children and work effectively as a team. They both take responsibility for observing how well the children are doing and for keeping tabs on their progress and make records briefly during lessons and discuss them later. They provide a good example for the children and insist on high standards of behaviour to which most children respond well. The provision has improved since the last inspection, with better resources, some outdoors, but the separate, secure area is not big enough and there is a lack of climbing and balancing equipment to enable children to extend their skills.

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

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because staff set high expectations and the teaching is good.
- Very good relationships are established which make the children feel secure and happy.
- There are some children who have difficulty in listening and following instructions and consequently their progress is sometimes slower.
- Although resources for raising children's awareness of ethnic diversity have now improved, they need extending.

#### **Commentary**

46. Standards are satisfactory overall. Although there are a few children who are still finding it hard to meet the expectations of staff, most are now familiar with routines and beginning to understand what is acceptable behaviour. They settle to the tasks and most behave sensibly. The teacher gives them many opportunities to learn about co-operation and perseverance and is helping them achieve a calm approach to their work. Both adults provide lots of encouragement because they want children to feel confident to try hard at new things. Many show determination to overcome any difficulty experienced because the adults have established very good relationships with the children who are eager to please them. They are learning to take turns and share equipment. However, some children do not always listen carefully to instructions and sometimes, as in a science activity, the teacher finds it necessary to repeat them so that everyone understands what is expected of them. Although children are being taught the importance of tolerating differences, the teacher lacks resources that would make it easier for her to raise their awareness of ethnic diversity; for example, dressing up

clothes and cooking utensils. Children are being taught to take responsibility such as answering their names when the register is called, changing the calendar each day and finding their own change of clothes for physical activities. They are making good progress towards the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception because the trusting relationships help them succeed.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- No opportunity is missed to extend the children's use of language.
- Particular emphasis is given to the teaching of letter sounds to help children with reading and spelling.

### **Commentary**

47. Children achieve well because the teaching is good and an emphasis is given to learning essential skills. Children are making good progress and showing an interest in learning to read. Every day the whole class learns letter sounds and are gaining confidence in matching the right sound to the letter and attempting to spell simple three letter words correctly. Most children have now learned 21 sounds. The faster learners are already beginning to use this skill well enough to read some familiar words. The majority do not have well-developed speaking and listening skills, but the lessons are well organised to include play activities that involve these skills; for example, using headphones for listening games, taking part in discussions, listening to stories and answering questions. Time is made for those children with speech difficulties to respond so that all achieve success. For example, children learn to say the word 'vegetable' by the adult using clear pronunciation and making them listen carefully. When groups are small there is more time to help individuals and children make better progress. This was evident in a session where children were learning to write a Christmas list. The teacher's very clear explanations together with just the right amount of encouragement helped some children correctly form a letter, although others relied on making marks or recording pictorially. The faster and average learners are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception, but others will not do so and will need additional support before achieving the foundation for National Curriculum work.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well because they experience a wide range of activities to support their learning.
- Children acquire a good mathematical vocabulary.

### **Commentary**

48. Numeracy sessions are organised effectively and relate well to the early goals that form a foundation for the National Curriculum and to the expectations of the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching is good and such short oral sessions as number rhymes and counting skills get children ready for the main activity. Sessions are planned that give children a range of opportunities for counting, matching and sequencing. Activities are chosen to extend

children's mathematical understanding. Teachers use every opportunity to reinforce counting skills as a fast oral activity, during registration and in rhymes and songs.

49. The good teaching in one lesson made effective use of children's knowledge of two-dimensional shapes before moving on to the introduction of three-dimensional shapes. Imaginative thinking was employed when the teacher used a magic bag to choose a shape, give it a name with caption and explain its properties. Children were learning such terms as *cylinder, sphere, cube, cuboid* and *cone*. Children were using mathematical language well and used practical activities to reinforce knowledge. Particularly good examples were of children constructing houses and then putting them in a row using *shortest* and *tallest* to do so. In the shape aspect of mathematics the majority of children are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities are planned to extend learning.
- Staff use questioning effectively to extend knowledge and understanding of the world.

### Commentary

50. Although the range of activities seen was limited evidence from planning and records of the previous year show that standards are satisfactory and the majority reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception.
51. Teaching and learning are good. Children achieve well because the range of activities is planned to extend their understanding and stimulate their curiosity so that they explore, experiment and ask questions. For example, in an activity with a science focus the teacher used skilled questioning that gradually helped children realise that the balls used were of different sizes and made of different materials. The teacher has to plan the words she will use very carefully, for example, when asking two children to 'swap places' she found it necessary to explain what this meant. The teacher has quickly developed a good knowledge of individuals and understands their needs, so plans activities to ensure children have the experiences that enable them to achieve well for their capability and that all can take part and achieve success.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**, reflecting the good teaching, but the outdoor area still requires improvement.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and activities well planned for children to extend their physical skills.
- The outdoor resources lack provision for relevant activities that offer appropriate physical challenges.

### Commentary

52. Children are achieving well because the teaching is good and lessons are planned to make the best use of resources to extend the range of skills children need for physical development. Although there is an outdoor area, which is better resourced than at the last inspection, it is too small and still lacks some essential equipment. For example, the lack of climbing and balancing equipment means that children have few opportunities to refine existing skills.

Indoors the situation is better. Manipulative skills are improving and children extend their control of tools such as pencils, scissors and paintbrushes and learn to manipulate materials and objects. Good use is made of the hall in raising an awareness of space and developing control and co-ordination in movement.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**, reflecting the stimulating environment in which creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, staff work well as a team and give children confidence to try something new and use a range of media and materials.

### Commentary

53. Teaching is good and children achieve well. The teacher puts great store on providing a place to learn where children can be creative and extend their understanding by making connections from one area of learning to another. They respond well to challenging tasks and standards are good so most will reach the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception and some will do better. Children produced some outstanding work using clay and in drawings and paintings of elephants inspired by the work of David Shepherd. Both adults work well as a team and have a consistent approach to working with the children. They talk about tasks and encouraging perseverance. Because adults made sufficient time for children to explore the materials, develop ideas and finish working, each child succeeds and takes pride in their work.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** with some good features reflecting the good teaching and achievement. Although children reach standards that overall are generally well below average, they nevertheless achieve well for their capabilities and those who are able to reach the higher levels do so.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children, including those with special educational needs achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work ensure that they move quickly to the next stage of learning.
- Resources have improved since the previous inspection and are now good and used effectively to help pupils make good progress.
- The National Literacy Strategy is used well to ensure that pupils build securely on previous learning although spelling is generally weak and an area for improvement.
- The very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each class and high pupil mobility are the two main factors that influence the overall standards in this subject.
- Although additional literacy support is provided, some opportunities are lost because teachers try hard to ensure that all children are treated fairly and experience all activities in all subjects.

### Commentary

54. Because the quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. The teaching of basic skills is thorough and stems from a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. By the end of Year 2 most pupils know how to use a range of strategies when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Higher-attaining pupils confidently sound out words, use the meaning of their texts and look at pictures for help. Lower-attaining pupils recognise fewer letter combinations and their skills are more limited. Pupils with special educational needs have clear, manageable targets for improvement in their individual education plans and receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. This is why they generally make good progress according to their capabilities and achieve well. There is additional literacy support for those children who need it but sometimes such opportunities are lost because of teachers' efforts to ensure that all are treated fairly and experience the same range of learning opportunities.
55. The school has a good range of books, including the library provision. They are well organised and accessible so that pupils have a variety of reading material suitable for their stage of learning. This helps higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 to choose from a wide selection of authors and to discuss their reading preferences confidently and in detail. They read accurately, with expression and are familiar with the library system and the use of index, contents and glossaries in order to locate information. Lower-attaining pupils are less fluent and accurate although they make competent use of strategies for reading unfamiliar words.
56. The school has a very caring ethos and relationships are very good. Pupils know that they are respected and valued. This gives them confidence and poise and helps them to extend their speaking and listening skills so that by the end of Year 6 standards in speaking and listening are only slightly below average overall. In Year 2, for example, pupils confidently discussed how to give and follow instructions. They listened carefully and volunteered appropriate vocabulary such as "next" and "finally". Teachers use challenging questions and provide many opportunities for pupils to extend their skills so that by the end of Year 6 pupils confidently discuss play scripts with one another and clearly describe the differences between modern language and language used in Shakespearean times. In assemblies pupils confidently take part, they give opinions, answer questions, explain themes from stories and courteously greet and welcome visitors.
57. Teachers plan their work carefully and share lesson objectives with pupils. This gives pupils a clear understanding of what is expected and when, at the end of lessons, they review progress towards the objectives, pupils have a clear understanding of their learning. Because teachers provide work suited to the wide range of ability levels within their classes, most pupils are challenged to extend their skills. This enables them to make good progress and achieve well in writing instructions in Year 2. Teachers mark work regularly and provide comments that tell pupils how they can improve. The school makes good use of its many procedures to check pupils' progress. Teachers make effective use of this information to meet individual needs and set targets for improvement.
58. Because teachers have high expectations pupils usually present their work clearly and the handwriting of the older more-able pupils is of a particularly high standard. Although teachers teach spelling and provide lists for pupils to learn, they do not consistently ensure that children use these skills accurately in their independent writing. By Year 2 higher-attaining pupils write carefully organised sentences and most pupils use punctuation accurately, which is an improvement. However, despite the teacher's efforts, handwriting is sometimes inconsistently formed and positioned because pupils lack dexterity. Lower-attaining pupils generally produce less work and their ideas are less clearly presented. Because teachers challenge pupils to give of their best, the Year 6 higher-attaining pupils produce extended writing with chapters and paragraphs clearly delineated. They make their work interesting by using imaginative language and most are confident in writing for a range of purposes such as stories, poetry and journalistic writing. This is enhanced by the school's effective use of the National Literacy Strategy, which ensures that pupils experience a wide range of writing for different purposes

and helps them to build securely on what has gone before. The handwriting and organisation of ideas of slower learners are less well presented although they show a growing understanding of journalistic styles of writing because they are well supported.

59. The subject is well led and managed. Teaching and learning are regularly checked in order to make improvements. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and of the way ahead in order to raise standards. The teaching of English is enhanced by the support provided by the teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator.

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

60. Lessons in other subjects provide many opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in English. In personal, social and health education pupils write about people who help us and in history they describe life and events during the Tudor period. They use e-mails to write letters to pen pals in a Ukrainian school and make effective use of information and communication technology skills to produce newspaper reports with headlines and columns. Scientific investigations are recorded and in religious education stories in the Bible are produced. Pupils use their computer and reading skills to research aspects of work in geography and from the 'news board' they read international, national and local news. At times when the whole class is gathered together pupils discuss feelings and consider issues such as the proposed firefighters' strike.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**. Although children reach standards that which are generally below those expected, they nevertheless achieve well for their capabilities and those who are able to reach the higher levels do so.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Because of strong teaching, all children achieve well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- Teachers are good at keeping tabs on children's progress and children's work is matched very effectively to their wide-ranging mathematical abilities.
- Good links with other subjects reinforce mathematical skills.

#### **Commentary**

61. Teaching overall is good with many strong features that enable all children, whatever their age or capability, to do as well as they can and make at least good progress in lessons. The high proportion of children with learning difficulties in each year group are supported very well and make good progress for their stage of learning, with some reaching higher standards than expected. The key strength is the teachers' appreciation of each child's capability, planning suitable and yet demanding tasks so that all can achieve success and improve their knowledge and understanding of number from whatever starting point. Very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants provides very efficient and well-directed support for all children. Because teachers expect children to behave well and be totally involved in their learning, relationships in lessons are very good. Children work hard and collaborate very well with partners or in groups and many revel in the challenge of times when the whole class is learning together.
62. The well-organised and thoroughly planned activities extend children's understanding. For example, children in Year 4 learning about the passage of time enjoyed practical activities such as skipping and successfully use stopwatches to compare their actual measurements with estimates of what they thought could be done in one or two minutes. Encouraging children to remember different ways to tackle mental calculations or to recall quickly facts about number

or shape is integral to each lesson. In Years 5 and 6, being in the “Hot Spot” to answer questions against the clock is a much enjoyed routine improving the speed of recalling facts. The use of the correct mathematical words when explaining answers is always promoted.

63. Teachers are good at keeping tabs on children’s progress and the information they gain helps them to meet specific needs. Teachers’ marking helps children to improve their understanding and in lessons everyone’s work is closely tracked so that help can be given quickly. Children’s understanding of their work and progress is regularly checked. The oldest children record their own achievements, discussing these with their teacher. Homework supports well the work undertaken in lessons and children are expected to practise their multiplication tables and addition bonds regularly. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do problem-solving at home each week and, following their recent work, were set the task of calculating the financial costs of smoking. Using their number skills in practical or real situations such as this is very beneficial.
64. Mathematics is well managed. The subject leader has observed teaching and learning in other classes and works with all teachers to review children’s work and agree the standards that are achieved. National test results are analysed and weaker areas are reconsidered when they are next taught. For example, fractions were identified as one such area and recent work in Years 5 and 6 shows this to have been thoroughly addressed, with the most able mathematicians extending their work to a higher level of understanding and efficiently reducing fractions to their simplest forms.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

65. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects, particularly measurement or presenting information in graphs. For example, younger juniors use stopwatches to time activities in physical education and record the time taken for different shapes to fall through water before identifying the fastest in science. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 record pulse rates after different levels of exercise in the form of a computer-generated graph. Pupils’ computing skills and learning in mathematics are combined well, including entering information to be presented in graph form, reinforcing understanding of fractions and shape, counting activities for younger children and speeding up older children’s addition.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**, reflecting the effectiveness with which teachers plan and set demanding tasks because they understand the capabilities of the children who then achieve well in lessons. Those with learning difficulties who are effectively supported often do better than expected when their scientific understanding is tested.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All children learn well in lessons because of good teaching.
- Many activities, including visits, enrich the subject by adding interest to the children’s work.
- Practical experiences develop children’s understanding and enjoyment of the subject.
- Infant children know how to investigate in a scientific way.
- Good links are made with learning in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

66. Teaching overall is good, resulting in effective learning and enabling all children to achieve well. Standards are typical for pupils’ age by Year 2 and average by Year 6. Teachers and the support assistants make a strong team and have high expectations of children’s active involvement in their learning. Lessons are very thoughtfully planned, the teaching of scientific concepts is thorough, and careful consideration is given to the level of support and challenge for all children, so tasks are matched appropriately to capability. Using their experiences of pushing and pulling forces, children in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to consider each step

they will take in an investigation, including identifying the conditions to make the test fair and to share their predictions. They then turn their attention to gravity and have great fun finding out whether a larger or smaller ball falls faster. By observing very carefully they discover the answer for themselves. When balls of different sizes and shapes are used, this really challenges the young scientists to relate their findings to a new situation. Children's investigative skills are becoming very well established at this early stage.

67. Teachers know that learning through practical experiences makes science interesting and enjoyable and this is central to their planning. By discovering that making their shapes more streamlined will make them travel faster through water children in Years 3 and 4 develop their understanding of water resistance. Knowing in detail how their heart and lungs work, children in Years 5 and 6 watch the tar collecting after cigarette smoke is drawn into the paper lungs of "Smoking Sue", an image that reinforces not only the understanding that harmful substances can affect the way the body functions but also that scientific ideas are based on evidence. Very effective links are made between this work and children's personal, social and health education.
68. Many activities enrich science teaching and make learning more relevant. For example, on a visit to a nature reserve, Year 2 children learn about different habitats and enthusiastic gardening club members grow plants for use in science lessons, look after the school pond and recycle suitable waste to produce compost. Science is often successfully linked to work in other subjects; for example, timing with stopwatches. Older children measure their pulse rate after different degrees of activity and then record, present and compare their results using a computer program. Computing skills are used well in science, such as employing a database to find out more about animal classification or a program to illustrate different forces. The use of correct scientific language is always encouraged in children's written or oral responses.
69. Science is currently a school priority and the co-ordinator is leading an audit of the subject, with a week devoted to science activities planned. Science is managed well overall and colleagues are kept well informed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**, reflecting the improved facilities, better teaching and good achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good so most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
- The provision of resources is good so that pupils have ready access to equipment.
- Good use is made of ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum although there is insufficient use of models and simulations.

### **Commentary**

70. Since the previous inspection the school has improved its provision in ICT. Now there are better facilities, including an ICT suite and training has improved teaching. The good teaching has particularly helped to raise standards and by Year 2 they are higher than expected. By Year 6, standards are at least satisfactory and are improving, although the full impact of improved facilities and teaching has not yet been felt.
71. The good teaching stems from a secure knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. This enables teachers to challenge pupils to improve their skills. For example, in Year 6 the teacher insisted on pupils using precise language in framing their enquiries, resulting in increased skills in using search engines to research rivers throughout the world. Higher-attaining pupils

successfully used different approaches to using search engines and the teacher welcomed their efforts and shared their results with the rest of the class. Because lower-attaining pupils did not use the same precision their progress was slower, but good use is made of the teaching assistant to support pupils during lessons. In addition, she uses technical expertise to support staff. This helps to raise standards and ensures that equipment is used efficiently.

72. As pupils move through the school teachers ensure that they systematically improve their basic skills; for example, by Year 2 pupils save, retrieve and analyse data in their work on pets. They program a floor robot and test their predictions. Linking the projector to computers so that the teacher can clearly demonstrate the process, enhances work. Because teachers ensure that pupils build securely on previous skills, older children cope readily with such tasks as analysing information on the classification of animals. They devise programs to control lights and buzzers in a model house. They use word-processing skills confidently and efficiently. Staff plan activities after school that help children to extend skills. One group, skilled in the use of e-mail, met to discuss how they might instruct others in its use. Others began preparations for the school's own website, supported by the teaching assistant. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and works hard to support staff and raise standards.

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

73. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects. This reinforces skills and extends understanding in other subjects. In geography older pupils use search engines to conduct research on India and in history to deepen their understanding of the Second World War. In Year 2 pupils import digital photographs of toys to link with stories as part of English work. They use computer programs to compose music and practise their spelling and number work. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 change fonts, colours and sizes of texts to illuminate poetry. In their religious education studies older pupils combine text and graphics in producing newspaper reports of events in the Bible. They followed up a visit to a nature reserve by using computers to design a poster. They produce pictures and patterns in art designs and communicate with pupils in a Ukrainian school using e-mail. The school is aware of the need to make more use across the curriculum of its ICT work that involves simulations and models.

## **HUMANITIES**

Lessons were observed in all classes for religious education and samples of written work were discussed with pupils in class. No lessons were observed in either history or geography and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on the overall provision for either subject. The planning indicates that the statutory requirements for teaching both subjects are met.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good relationships encourage openness during discussions and contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- The planning of religious education does not provide opportunities for using visitors to the school nor by making visits to places of worship and lessons for juniors lack variation in individual and group tasks.
- There is a lack of resources to support all the religions that the syllabus covers.

## Commentary

74. Pupils reach standards in this subject by Year 2 and Year 6 that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and this has been maintained since the last inspection. During this inspection the Years 1 and 2 pupils were studying the birth of Jesus and had a good understanding about why Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus and why Jesus is special to Christians. By Years 3 and 4 pupils gain a greater awareness of what it means to be a member of a religious group and that beliefs influence the way people live such as St Francis and his love and care for animals. By Years 5 and 6 understanding is deepened. Pupils have increased their awareness of the need for tolerance and the acceptance that the strength of religious beliefs has a firm influence on the way people lead their lives, their celebrations and traditions. They are beginning to have some awareness of what it means to have to struggle for religious freedom.
75. Overall, the teaching of the subject is good and most pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and understand and make good use of the discussion times at the beginning of lessons. The very well established relationships make pupils feel secure and even when tasks and topics for discussion are difficult they make good efforts to get involved. In a class of three age groups and a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties the teacher posed interesting questions as a quick recap of what was remembered about St Francis. The discussion then progressed to extend their understanding of his relationship with the natural world. The pupils were keen to respond but many found it difficult to understand St Francis' use of '*brothers and sisters*' when applied to animals. The *Canticle of the Sun* was read to the class and some of the language is difficult for these children to understand so homework tasks are given such as finding the meaning of 'nourish'. The tasks that pupils attempted in pairs and small groups were only possible because they felt sufficiently secure to admit to needing additional support and guidance. The openness in discussion ensured that most were able to tackle the written task but several had difficulties.
76. Two lessons were taught when pupils were tired and near the end of the day. Although both were well planned the one for the infant children succeeded better because there was a greater variation in tasks. In the infant class the children were involved in discussion, reading captions, putting the story in sequence, making decisions, organising resources, model making and dramatisation with finger puppets. There was a high level of interest throughout the lesson, problems associated with *making* were overcome and everyone was involved in the drama. Those with learning difficulties were effectively supported when tasks proved difficult resulting in all achieving well. In contrast the lesson for older pupils about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, was late starting and although there was a good reason for this it curtailed the time that the teacher had planned for group activities. Consequently the reading of a story and discussion made up the main part of the lesson. However, the very good relationships did encourage openness during discussion and pupils had to think hard about such dilemmas as obeying the laws of the king as against obeying the laws of God. Few pupils have much personal knowledge of what it means to belong to a religious group or of religious persecution but were prepared to tackle this challenging discussion because they knew they could offer opinions or make statements to which others would listen. Although a Menorah (used during Hanukkah) was shown to pupils there was no opportunity for them to handle it and only a few realised it had been displayed, as part of the interest in Judaism, in another area of the school.
77. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership for the subject but has assumed this responsibility only recently and is aware that the school lacks resources for every religion they study. There is a lack of visits to places of worship or visitors to school who represent world faiths that limits the range of learning opportunities.

## Geography

78. On the limited evidence available there are indications that standards are satisfactory. By Year 2 pupils extend mapping skills when they learn to draw simple maps of the route from home to school and label the features they pass. They visited a nature centre, watched demonstrations and then, under the guidance of the warden, they gathered natural materials such as dogwood, sedge and willow to make garlands. When they had collected and identified wildlife, the making of mini bugs in clay, such as the wolf spider, extended their studies. By Year 6 pupils understand the water cycle, and know the vocabulary associated with river systems such as *delta* and *confluence*. They use the Internet to research work on India. Teachers ensure that pupils make effective use of the local area in order to deepen their understanding, for example, on a visit to Daws Hall Nature Reserve they compared the pollution levels in the River Stour and a nearby brook. Their tests showed that there were fewer animals in the river than in the brook because of pollution by detergents and fertilisers.

## History

79. In the samples seen the work of junior children indicates that standards are satisfactory. By Year 6 pupils study the Tudors and know about Henry V111 and his wives. Their understanding is deepened by visits to places of interest such as Hedingham Castle. Children study the history of exploration and the navigation devices of the period. They compare ancient and modern maps and contrast the purposes of travel in modern and Tudor times. Teachers make good efforts to ensure that there are strong links with English through studies about Shakespeare. Knowledge of the Elizabethan period and in particular the theatre is good and included in newspaper accounts and an interview with William Shakespeare. As part of their homework pupils produced well-finished models of Tudor houses and were extending these skills to making clay versions based on these models with a local potter. Teachers plan links with other subjects whenever they can be made and studies based on the Victorians linked well with design and technology models of fairground rides. In order to make work interesting and exciting teachers organise visits to centres that will extend their experience and understanding. On this particular visit they wore Victorian costume and made artefacts from the Victorian period.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology or music and only one lesson in physical education. Therefore no judgement about the overall provision for these four subjects can be made. Music is enhanced by clubs, which were sampled and lessons discussed with children. The close working partnership with the secondary school which involves team teaching of colleagues from both schools in physical education lessons is having a positive impact on standards and a gymnastics lesson was sampled.

### Art and design

80. Despite seeing no lessons the high quality of work indicates that provision is very good and the subject continues to be a strength of the work of the school. The provision very effectively enables children of all capabilities to develop their creativity and imagination very successfully. Great importance is placed on this aspect of children's learning and many examples of children's work far exceed the standards normally expected, particularly in the visual use of colour, line and pattern. The pride that children take in their work was evident whenever they explained what they had done in creating their representations.
81. Many starting points stimulate and improve skills using different materials and techniques. For example, Years 1 and 2 children design clay tiles creating intricate patterns or adding features in relief for interest. The styles of other artists are explored and their styles impressively reflected in the children's own work. For example, inspired by "*The Scream*" by Edvard

Munch, Year 2 represent the mood and suspense in their own work and Years 5 and 6 respond to Picasso's cubist style with striking black and white facial images

82. Additional activities such as arts week extend learning opportunities for this subject. For example, a very imposing mosaic wall mural was designed and made by children of all ages working together with an artist in residence.

### **Design and technology**

83. Although no lessons were seen during the inspection the photographic records and recall of activities show that children experience a wide range of designing and making activities, often given added relevance by the associations made with their learning in other subjects. Children practise and acquire skills that help them to successfully transfer their ideas into reality and indications are that standards are satisfactory. For example, Years 5 and 6 children designed and made Tudor houses using sheet materials and have now moved on to model their buildings in clay. After learning to make hinges, the youngest children make attractive frames for sunglasses and Years 3 and 4 make pop-up mechanisms as part of a Christmas book with different moving parts.

### **Music**

84. No lessons were seen and a musician who is a pianist supports staff in the teaching of the subject. Assessments show that standards are mainly satisfactory at Year 2 and Year 6. Links to other subjects are planned such as designing and making musical instruments. Singing in worship sessions is good and occasionally spiritually uplifting. These sessions are used effectively in helping children appreciate music. For example, they listened to '*Romeo and Juliet*' linked to Year 6 literacy work and answered questions about it. A range of additional learning opportunities enhances the subject such as recorder groups and guitar club. Children are enthusiastic learners as seen at lunchtime when extending their skills in playing recorders. Some children are very skilled and prepared to give much time to perfect their expertise such as practising *Ode to Joy* by Beethoven on the recorder.

### **Physical education**

85. This subject is planned well and the co-ordinator is an enthusiastic leader who inspires and challenges children to make that additional effort. There is considerable encouragement for children to take part in activities that enhance this subject such as sports day, primary sports festival and Get Fit Kids Club. Most children can swim 25 metres by Year 5 and all do so before moving on to the secondary school. A member of a local rugby club held rugby workshops for all classes. At the Foundation Stage they practised passing the ball but older children competed with one another and girls were quicker than boys.
86. In the one lesson of gymnastics seen the team teaching of the co-ordinator and her secondary colleague was very good and an outstanding example of how specialist expertise is driving up standards. The children were totally engrossed in the tasks and made considerably better progress than might be expected for their age. Both enthusiastic teachers inspired and challenged children to give their best efforts and it was evident this very good teaching stemmed from expert knowledge of gymnastics and how to teach it. The tasks were far from easy but the warm relationships together with encouragement and praise raised children's self-esteem and made them go the extra step to improve performance and reach high standards.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work but discussions with children and teachers, together with a well-planned programme of work indicates that the school plans effectively for this aspect and provision is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships give children confidence to discuss aspects of their personal life.
- Good preparation is being made for studying citizenship at secondary level.

### Commentary

87. PSHE makes a very important contribution to children's overall personal development and its impact is seen in their very good attitudes and response to learning. The work ethic is well established. They react willingly to the needs of others and their contact with a school in the Ukraine has extended their understanding of values, festivals and traditions. Most children co-operate well in lessons, take part in team games and accept responsibility for daily routines. The school council's activities contribute to the school being a harmonious community. At the beginning of each day, all children spend a short time working on activities to help their learning by concentrating on thinking skills. This innovative practice has been introduced to build confidence in offering opinions and to dispel children's fears of being wrong in what they say.
88. Very relevant links are frequently made with lessons in other subjects, for example, investigating the effects of harmful substances on the body as part of their healthy living project and following issues from the news relating to a geography project. The very good relationships give children confidence to discuss aspects of their personal life and discuss issues that range from world events, local issues and aspects of personal dilemmas to incidents related to life in 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	2
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>2</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

<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	3

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