

INSPECTION REPORT

FRIARS GROVE INFANT SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114761

Headteacher: Mrs S L Howard

Lead inspector: Mr B J Gosling

Dates of inspection: 23 – 25 February 2004

Inspection number: 260632

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 7 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll; | 168 |
| School address: | Upland Drive Colchester Essex |
| Postcode: | CO4 0PZ |
| Telephone number: | 01206 843683 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr F Rogers |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Friars Grove is a fairly large infant school with 168 pupils, 93 boys and 75 girls. More than half come from outside the local ward, and the proportion eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic families and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. There is some pupil mobility, but this is in line with the national average. The attainment of children when they start at the school is currently broadly average, although the school's records show that it has been lower in previous years. A particular feature of the school is the stability of the teaching staff, with many experienced and long-serving teachers, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The most significant challenge the school is facing currently arises from staff absence. Three temporary teachers were working at the school during the period of the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| 22453 | Brian Gosling | Lead inspector | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education |
| 1165 | Peter Dannheisser | Lay inspector | |
| 32314 | Liz Wilson-Chalon | Team inspector | English Geography History Religious education Foundation Stage |
| 27793 | Peter Moore | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is providing a **satisfactory** standard of education. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. The curriculum provided is satisfactory with some good features, such as the range of visits and visitors and the introduction of a systematic method for teaching reading skills. There are effective procedures for the care, support and guidance of pupils, and the partnerships with parents and the community are good. The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve good standards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The school cares for its pupils well and the provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers work well with learning support assistants, who support pupils effectively.
- Day-to-day opportunities to assess pupils' learning are not used well enough.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good in maintaining a positive climate for learning.
- The role of subject co-ordinators has not been developed fully.
- Curriculum plans are not sufficiently detailed.
- The school's links with parents and the community are good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Assessment procedures have been developed and resources for information and communication technology have been improved. There have also been improvements to teaching in the Foundation Stage, the school's links with parents, the building and outside facilities. The school has made a satisfactory response to the areas for development identified in the last inspection report, although more remains to be done in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is **good**. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most exceed the goals expected of them at this age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 attain standards that are above average and their achievement is satisfactory.

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| reading | C | C | C | C |
| writing | B | A | B | B |
| mathematics | C | C | B | B |

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

The school's results in the national tests in 2003 were average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The school's results are rising broadly in line with the national trend. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are good in writing and mathematics. Standards in reading are improving following the introduction of a new strategy for teaching reading skills and are now good. Standards are satisfactory in information and communication technology and religious education. Children in the Foundation Stage exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills, due to the good teaching they receive. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Their behaviour is good and their positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to the standards they achieve. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Children's learning in the reception classes is good because teachers plan lessons that build on what children have learned. Learning support assistants work well with teachers and provide good support and guidance for pupils, especially those with low attainment.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. The school ensures that the care, guidance and support for the pupils are good and partnerships with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is good and has maintained a positive climate for learning through a difficult period of staff absence. The management of the school is satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory and is improving through the implementation of a good action plan to develop the effectiveness of the governors. However, the leadership of subject co-ordinators is unsatisfactory because insufficient advantage is taken of the opportunities to monitor their subjects. Statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally pleased with most aspects of the school's work. In particular, they like the way it treats their children fairly, helps them to mature and ensures good behaviour. They also think that the arrangements to help their children settle at school are good. Most parents who expressed an opinion reported that their children like school. However, a significant minority did not feel they were well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors judge that the information provided for parents is satisfactory.

Pupils say that they are happy at school and that the adults are kind.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve teachers' planning and the assessment of pupils' work.
- Develop the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators.
- Increase the guidance offered to teachers in medium-term curriculum plans.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Standards in English and mathematics are above average in Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes achieve well.
- Standards of attainment are good in English and mathematics.
- Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 2.

Commentary

1. Children in the reception classes currently arrived at the school with attainment broadly in line with national expectations. They achieve well and make good progress due to the good teaching that establishes good attitudes to school and develops their learning skills effectively. Almost all children are on target to attain the goals¹ they are expected to reach by the end of reception and many will exceed them. Children achieve particularly well in their personal and social development as well as language and number skills.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 16.2 (15.7) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 15.2 (15.7) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 17.0 (16.4) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school's results² in the national tests in 2003 were above the national average and the average of similar schools in writing and mathematics, and close to these averages in reading. Teachers' assessments show that standards in science are broadly average. Almost all pupils attained the nationally expected Level 2³ in all tests and a good proportion attained the higher Level 3 in mathematics and science. This indicates that there is suitable challenge for more able pupils. Boys tended to do better than girls in 2003, but there has been little difference between their performance over time. The school has identified a small number of gifted and talented pupils. The trend in the school's results is rising broadly in line with the national trend, and results have been maintained a little above the national average for a number of years.

¹ On Early Learning Goals: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development; and personal social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage continues until pupils enter Year 1, when they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

² On the school's results: An average points score provides schools with a single statistic with which to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in other schools. At Key Stage 1 the National Curriculum levels of attainment are given a score. For example, in mathematics Level 1=9 points and Level 2=15 points, and so on. The average test score achieved by a school is calculated by adding up all the scores achieved by the pupils and then dividing by the number who took the test.

³ On Levels: The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that, by the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Level 4 by the end of Year 6. Those who reach Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

3. The inspection findings confirm that standards exceed national expectations in writing, mathematics and science, and standards of reading are improving following the introduction of a systematic procedure for teaching reading skills. This steady progress results from the systematic use of schemes by experienced teachers, which ensure that the full range of topics is covered steadily and progressively. The provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection, and pupils' attainment meets national expectations at the end of Year 2. Pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs make good progress.
4. Pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In all subjects, teachers generally prepare lessons well and there is good support for the pupils, who approach lessons very positively and enthusiastically. However, planning does not ensure that there are consistently high expectations of what pupils will produce and achieve in lessons and this limits their achievement. This is because the leadership of the subjects has not been sufficiently rigorous in identifying areas where improvements can be made and in promoting the highest standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are good.
- The good provision for pupils' moral and social development promotes good attitudes and behaviour.
- The school's provision for multicultural education enables pupils to value others.

Commentary

5. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and in some lessons observed were very good. Pupils are happy to come to school and work with interest. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated, particularly through inclusion on the 'Golden Wall' and displays around the school. Pupils' relationships are good, both in the classroom and in the playground, and they work and play together co-operatively. Lunchtimes are managed well, with pupils purposefully occupied with a range of play equipment as well as playing games in groups that are led by a member of staff. There are a number of opportunities to take on responsibility within the classroom. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are good.
6. Pupils have a clear understanding of how they should behave. Around the school they are relaxed and polite, happy to give directions and assistance to school visitors. The school has an effective behaviour policy that works well. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive approach to lessons. They respond particularly well in small groups where they are supported well by the support staff.
7. The school raises money for a number of charities. Pupils are taught to understand their own culture and to be aware of and respect the cultures of people from a range of backgrounds. The use made of visitors and parents is particularly good. The school uses the local community well to increase pupils' understanding. Parents have recently been involved in talking to the children about Chinese New Year and the Muslim faith. Assemblies give pupils appropriate opportunities for quiet reflection, and Circle Time⁴ provides good opportunities for them to talk about any concerns they may have.

⁴ On 'Circle Time' - this is a discussion period which provides good opportunities for pupils to talk about issues that face them in everyday life.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data: | 5.6 | School data : | 0.0 |
| 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.

8. Attendance is satisfactory and effective procedures, clearly set out in the school prospectus, ensure that parents notify the school of the reason for their children's absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The quality of the curriculum provided is satisfactory. The care, guidance and support that the pupils receive are good and there are good links with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage but only satisfactory overall because there are inconsistencies in teaching throughout the school. The use of assessment is also inconsistent and is unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.
- There are good procedures to support temporary teachers.
- Teachers work well with learning support assistants, who provide effective support for pupils.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching throughout the school.
- Day-to-day assessment does not inform planning well enough.
- There is an over-reliance on commercial schemes of work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 4 | 6 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

9. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. A third of the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were good or very good, and none were unsatisfactory. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on detailed and thorough planning. Lessons are therefore well organised and there is a brisk pace. The recently introduced programme for teaching literacy with a focus on the sounds of letters is improving standards in reading and writing. Resources are used well to stimulate children's imagination, and learning support assistants provide good support for the children.
10. Lessons are planned in the paired year groups. This ensures a common experience for pupils and effectively supports temporary teachers, of which there were three in the school during the inspection. Pupils are managed well in all lessons and teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. Consequently, pupils listen attentively and concentrate well on their tasks. This is enhanced by the very good contribution of the learning support assistants, who work closely

with teachers and provide good support and guidance for pupils in lessons. Learning support assistants usually work with lower-attaining pupils, who they support effectively by explaining and simplifying the tasks set by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are also supported well by learning support assistants, either in the class or in small groups that are withdrawn from the lesson.

11. Some other aspects of teaching and learning are inconsistent between classes and year groups and these are often connected. The most obvious example is that some lessons make very good use of a period at the end to consolidate pupils' learning and extend their speaking and listening skills as they explain how they tackled the task, the strategies they used and what worked well and what did not. This session also provides a very good opportunity for the teacher to assess pupils' learning, and the best practice in the school uses this information to plan the next lesson. However, some lessons do not include such an opportunity and end abruptly, whilst pupils are still engaged on their tasks, with an instruction to tidy their equipment away. The best lessons are focused on clear and specific learning objectives that facilitate assessment at the end. The quality of marking is inconsistent, which also has an impact on the day-to-day assessment that teachers make of pupils' learning. The best practice assesses pupils' work and indicates how they can improve. Marking is regular but in a number of cases achieves no more than showing whether pupils' work is correct.
12. There is an over-reliance on worksheets and commercially-published schemes of work. This restricts the opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in a range of contexts and for different purposes. The reliance on commercial schemes diminishes the responsibility of the teacher to assess pupils' work and plan sufficiently different tasks for the next lesson. This is particularly so in mathematics but also has a negative influence in other subjects. Although some pupils' work is presented neatly, much is undated and this stops teachers and subject co-ordinators from assessing learning over time. These inconsistencies exist because the opportunities that are provided for subject co-ordinators to monitor their subjects and share the best practice are not taken and the development of subjects is not rigorous enough.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' interests are catered for well as the local community plays an important role through visits and visitors. The accommodation satisfactorily meets the needs of the curriculum, and resources to support pupils' learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visitors to the school and school trips make learning more exciting for pupils.
- A systematic procedure for teaching reading is a recent, positive addition to the curriculum.
- Curriculum planning in Year 1 and Year 2 is underdeveloped.
- The time available for teaching is not always used as well as it could be.

Commentary

13. The curriculum provided meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There are frequent visitors who come into school and provide first-hand opportunities for pupils, which enhances their learning. During inspection week, for example, the local vicar came into school to talk about his role. A Muslim parent has spoken to the children about the Qu'ran, and a Chinese parent spoke to them about the Chinese New Year. In the Foundation Stage the fire service, a vet, the RSPCA and the ambulance service also visit the school. Having information directly from these visitors gives the children a good focus for their learning, encourages them to ask a good range of questions and provides added interest and excitement.

14. Pupils make many visits out of school during the year. In the Foundation Stage they visit Marsh Farm and the local community. In Year 1, pupils visit the Toy Museum, a nature reserve and the local community, whilst Year 2 pupils go to a local country park and to Flatford Mill. These visits are all linked to various topics so that, for example, Year 1 pupils develop a better understanding of history after visiting the Toy Museum. Pupils in Year 2 know where Constable stood when he painted some of his famous pictures and this stimulates them to produce their own artwork back in school.
15. The school has recently introduced a procedure for teaching reading through the systematic development of phonic skills. This adds beneficially to the curriculum as it improves pupils' reading and writing skills. It also fosters enthusiasm and interest in the pupils. It has been introduced, initially, in the Foundation Stage and parents, pupils and teachers speak enthusiastically of its success. It is also being used effectively with those pupils experiencing difficulties in learning to read in Years 1 and 2. This is having a significant impact on raising standards of reading.
16. Provision for children with special educational needs, as at the time of the last inspection, is good. The school identifies the least able pupils in each year group as having special educational needs. The needs of the majority of these children are met within the lesson through particular planned activities. Those with more complex needs are supported by an individual education plan.
17. Curriculum planning for the Foundation Stage is detailed and identifies links between learning opportunities in the different areas of learning. The coverage of the subjects of the National Curriculum is ensured in Years 1 and 2, often through commercially published schemes, but links between the subjects are not exploited fully. Medium-term planning for the curriculum in Year 1 and Year 2 has insufficient detail, and information is sparse in many subjects. For example, 'finish masks' in art and design and four weeks of Year 2 plans for geography have a title 'What might it be like to live in Tocuaro?', with no indication of what children are to learn each week and how their understanding and skills will progress. The purpose of the learning in that topic or subject is not clear and, consequently, this impacts on teaching because the assessment of the desired learning outcomes at the end of a lesson or group of lessons does not form an effective part of teachers' planning.
18. The time available for teaching is not always used well as some lessons start late or finish early. This is often because of the length of time that it takes to bring pupils in from the playground and to tidy up materials at the end of lessons. In one lesson observed, pupils were given 15 minutes to change their clothes after PE. Combined with a late start after playtime, time was not used well in this session. Timetables for Year 2 show the intended times for teaching different subjects in a session, but these are not included on timetables for Year 1 and, consequently, the start and end times of lessons are not planned well enough.
19. The satisfactory accommodation is well maintained and provides a safe learning environment for pupils. There is plenty of playground space, including a good, enclosed outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. The use of these areas has been enhanced by the purchase of playtime games and toys and this makes playtimes more interesting for pupils. Resources are generally good in all subjects and particularly good for science and information and communication technology. Pupils take good care of the resources. However, the library is under developed, as there is no system for pupils to select non-fiction books.

Care, guidance and support

There are good procedures for the care of pupils in a healthy and safe environment. The support and guidance they receive are satisfactory and there are satisfactory arrangements to seek and act on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment.
- Pupils feel that there are always adults available to advise and support them.
- The arrangements for children starting school are good.

Commentary

20. Members of staff and governors take care to inspect the school regularly to ensure that the children are safe. First aid systems are good and members of staff are well trained. The school is clean and areas are well organised so that they are safe and pleasant to be in. Pupils are well looked after and care is taken at lunchtime to ensure that they are eating appropriately. Parents are requested to provide healthy snacks, and water bottles are encouraged in class. This has been shown to help pupils to concentrate better.
21. The school has good child protection procedures in place. Most members of staff have had training and all know to whom they should refer any concerns. The headteacher is very experienced in these matters and works closely with the deputy and a nominated and experienced governor who has also received relevant training.
22. The school is well prepared to ensure that the progress of pupils who are not living in their own homes is monitored to make sure that they are not disadvantaged and they have individual pastoral support plans. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants when necessary.
23. There are a range of individual and classroom rewards that help pupils to know how they are doing. However, marking is insufficiently consistent for teachers to assess learning effectively and for all pupils to have a clear idea of where they need to concentrate their efforts. In one class, groups of pupils are given targets in literacy, but this practice is not common throughout the school. These targets are kept on cards, and stickers show when they have been attained.
24. The school encourages older pupils to take care of younger ones. This helps all pupils to be happy in school and they develop self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning. This is encouraged by a carefully planned start at school in the term before they reach five. Most children come for a full day from the start, but they have the option to start for a half day to begin with if their parents and the school feel that would be more suitable, and two children began part-time this year. Children visit the school twice before they start and this helps them to settle quickly. In their last term at the school, pupils visit the junior school once a week for assemblies and spend an afternoon there. Parents say that the transition to junior school is smooth.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the local community. Links with playgroups and the neighbouring junior school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents play an active part in the life of the school.
- Visits and visitors help pupils to develop a good knowledge of the community.
- There are good procedures for dealing with any concerns.

Commentary

25. There are three formal opportunities a year for parents to talk with the teachers, discuss pupils' progress and discuss their reports. Pupils' annual progress reports are informative. Parents of children who start in January do not feel that they are as well informed about how their children

are settling in as parents of those who come in September. However, they all receive the same information before their children start school and this is satisfactory.

26. There are termly newsletters, and those seen are well presented and informative. There are also curriculum letters that describe the main areas of learning for the coming term for each year group. Despite this, however, some parents say that they do not feel well informed, and some feel that they would like more information about what has been done in response to their concerns. Inspection judgements are that the information provided for parents is satisfactory and there are good procedures for dealing with concerns when they are raised.
27. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. Several enjoy helping in class and their contributions are valuable. For example, in a literacy lesson in a reception class four parent helpers were present. They made a significant contribution to the children's learning and to the successful involvement of all the children, including those who might otherwise have had difficulties with the tasks. They were carefully deployed by the teacher to be of most help when group work was under way.
28. The parent-teacher association supports the school both socially and financially. It has helped to provide library books and playground toys. It also makes trips possible by subsidising their cost and so gives all pupils valuable experience of the world beyond the school gates. Pupils visit local museums and country parks. Thanks to the parent-teacher association a swimming pool is maintained that is shared with the neighbouring junior school. It makes a considerable contribution to pupils' physical education and enjoyment. Parents and other relations help to forge good links with the community by coming into school and sharing their experiences with pupils. Visitors have included people whose jobs are with the police, hospitals, church, fire service and veterinary practices. By involving parents and others, the school brings the community through its doors. This helps pupils to recognise and respect their family's contributions and reinforces their positive attitudes to school.
29. Pupils' views are sought at assemblies and in other ways so that they may feel involved in decisions about their school. For example, they have considered what should be done about litter in the school and how the playground should be developed. This helps to develop positive attitudes and good relationships with adults. Pupils' self-confidence is encouraged because they are consulted and listened to. Parents are given an annual questionnaire to help the school to keep in touch with their views. Teachers make themselves available to parents at the end of the school day, and the headteacher is available at the start of the school day.
30. There are good relationships with local playgroups, including a playgroup that looks after children with special needs, so that helpful information is available before children come to the school. There are satisfactory links with the neighbouring junior school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership, but subject co-ordinators are not fully effective in monitoring their subjects. Management is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Governance is satisfactory and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is providing effective leadership.
- The monitoring role of co-ordinators has not been fully developed.
- Governors are implementing a good development plan to improve their effectiveness.
- The school development plan details no clear strategy for future planning.

Commentary

31. The headteacher is providing good leadership that maintains a good climate for learning and secures a sound education for pupils during a period of instability due to staff absence. There

are good systems in place to ensure that temporary teachers follow school procedures and receive effective support from permanent teachers at the school. The experienced headteacher provides opportunities for development that are not always used as well as they could be. This limits the effectiveness of management strategies. Nevertheless, management procedures, that include the practice of teachers planning lessons within year groups, are sound and ensure the smooth running of the school. Consequently, a positive learning environment is maintained for all pupils.

32. Arrangements for performance management are fully in place and much of the other monitoring of teaching and learning is organised informally. The headteacher has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and has identified the need to improve the period at the end of lessons to review pupils' learning. The results of the national tests are analysed and a computerised system has recently been introduced to track pupils' learning through the school and assist in identifying areas of weakness. There is a comprehensive programme of professional development.
33. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and results in the good progress that the children are making. However, subject co-ordinators' monitoring and improving pupils' learning in their subjects are unsatisfactory. There is a programme of development to improve subject co-ordinators' monitoring skills, but this is not developing these skills quickly enough. Nevertheless, subject co-ordinators have observed colleagues' lessons, and pupils' work has been looked at to consider standards. One day each week is available for subject co-ordinators to arrange time to carry out their monitoring duties, but they are not taking full advantage of this opportunity.
34. The governing body has organised a suitable number of sub-committees to carry out its duties. Governors are very supportive of the school and have shown a willingness to challenge the school on areas of potential weakness. They have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Many governors come into school to assist in classrooms and there are frequent visits, usually on an informal basis, to monitor the work of the school. A written record of these visits has been introduced to share findings with the full governing body effectively. In addition, subject co-ordinators regularly report to the governing body on provision in their subjects and this is adding to the governors' understanding of the work of the school. Nevertheless, the governing body has recognised the importance of developing its monitoring role and, with the effective support of the local education authority, has implemented a good development plan to improve the way it carries out its strategic role. The school improvement plan is a suitable document to focus school development but is coming to the end of its period and almost all items have been completed. This leaves no clear focus currently for improvement. Statutory requirements are met.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 433,779 | Balance from previous year | 44,532 |
| Total expenditure | 438,246 | Balance carried forward to the next | 40,065 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,672 | | |

35. The balance carried forward is above the recommended amount. This was the result of planning for minor building works and has now been spent. This is an acceptable use of funds and the governors have reduced the amount carried forward this year to within the recommended limit. Financial management is sound and the principles of best value are suitably applied.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children begin full-time education either in September if their birthday is before May, or in January if their birthday is in the summer term. Children's attainment when they started school was generally average, although the school's records show that it has been lower in previous years. The quality of teaching is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour.
- Pupils' learning difficulties are identified early.
- Personal, social and emotional development is planned well.

Commentary

37. Teaching is good and most children are likely to exceed the goals expected for their age. There are high standards of behaviour in both Foundation Stage classes where children care extremely well for each other and the apparatus they use. They are quick to settle first thing in the morning and after lunch. The teachers' planning is detailed and thorough, and so there are many opportunities to develop personal, social and emotional skills throughout the school. Pupils who need extra support to develop social and emotional skills are identified early and clear targets are agreed with all staff and the children's parents, which enables good progress to be made. Circle Time explores questions such as 'Is it good to blame someone else?' and pupils make good progress in these well-established sessions. The class works well together. Children enjoy classroom games and activities, and listen well to each other's responses.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently-introduced strategy for teaching reading is a useful addition to learning.
- Children are given good opportunities to develop confidence in writing.
- Not enough is made of all opportunities for the development of speaking skills.

Commentary

38. Teaching is good and most children are on course to exceed the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1. The school has recently adopted a new strategy for teaching reading. Three times each day children practise their reading skills for ten minutes by focusing on the sound of each letter. This has been met with great enthusiasm from staff, children and parents, who were introduced to it at a parents' evening. Children join in these sessions with gusto and quickly learn the sounds of each letter, what they sound like when put together and how simple words can be broken into sounds. They also develop their knowledge of key words, such as 'and' and 'said'. The pace is brisk. The sessions are well organised and are already having a positive effect on children's skills and their attitudes towards reading and writing.

39. As soon as they start school children are encouraged to write. They do this through their play, such as when they book appointments in the vets' role-play area. Children's work is annotated and their progress carefully recorded so that the next step in their writing development can be planned effectively. There is a good selection of books in the Foundation Stage for children to read. Exciting and colourful books are frequently used to stimulate the children's imagination, and their writing is displayed well, which encourages them to write carefully and present their work well. However, some opportunities are missed to develop their language skills through other subjects.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good strategies are used in the introduction to lessons.
- Children work at a good pace in lessons and achieve well.
- Teaching relies too heavily on a commercially-published scheme.

Commentary

40. Teaching is good and most children are likely to exceed the goals expected for their age. Lessons begin very well with focused and well-paced 'warm-up' activities such as number songs, counting forwards and backwards, using parts of the body and a range of exciting resources to help with number rhymes and learning. Learning support assistants provide good help for children who are experiencing difficulties. The activities set are generally at the right level of difficulty, which means that children are fully involved in their learning. Most recognise the numbers 0 to 9 and are able to count a group of objects within this range. Some can count backwards and a few can count beyond 20, saying which two numbers come after 57, for example. In a lesson on patterns, children explored repeating patterns at complex levels and used mathematical language well, such as 'red triangle, yellow square, red triangle,' to describe what they were doing. There is sometimes an over-reliance on the commercially-produced scheme. For example, in a lesson on ordering numbers to ten some able pupils were not given the chance to extend their knowledge of the order of numbers beyond ten, although they were clearly capable of this.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning establishes a good range of opportunities.
- Artefacts and resources are well used.
- Ways of supporting children's learning, other than writing, are not fully explored.

Commentary

41. Teaching is satisfactory and children are on course to attain the goals expected by the end of reception. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils learn about people and places from different times and different parts of the world. These areas are often linked effectively. For example, children make masks, listen to music and learn about the festivals in South America when they find out about the religious importance of Shrove Tuesday. Teachers ensure that children are stimulated by a good range of artefacts and resources. For example, in a lesson based on a story called 'Handa's Surprise', a map of the world showing Kenya and England was used to establish the setting, and African masks were shown to the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the culture. A real basket of fruit helped them to realise which exotic fruits

were being stolen by the animals. Children record much of their knowledge and understanding of the world through writing and pictures. Further opportunities for them to use speaking and listening skills and role-play to support their learning are not realised.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their skills well.

Commentary

42. Teaching is satisfactory and children are on course to attain the goals expected for their age. They work well on their own, with a partner or in a small group when using craft materials. For example, they cut, glue and sprinkle glitter accurately when making carnival masks and they follow the teacher's instructions suitably when making numbers with salt dough. They dress and undress themselves and know how to put their clothes away carefully. During the inspection they were not able to use the outdoor play area, which is set up for them to ride on tricycles, climb, balance and slide, because of the freezing weather which brought snow. However, they demonstrated suitable control and co-ordination in a session in the school hall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities is planned.
- Children's creativity is valued and their work is displayed well.
- Some opportunities for assessment are missed.

Commentary

43. Teaching is satisfactory and children are likely to attain the goals expected for their age.

44. Teachers' planning shows that opportunities for pupils to be creative are woven into other aspects of their learning. For example, pupils sent paintings to the Queen when they were learning about the Golden Jubilee. Children were creative when developing the idea of repeating patterns and used two- and three-dimensional shapes as well as colour and size. Displays in both reception classes show children's work vibrantly. Some opportunities to assess children's creative development are missed. In a music lesson, for example, the teacher was unable to accurately assess who was keeping a steady beat as too many children were playing instruments at the same time.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

English

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 2 are good.
- The recently introduced scheme for teaching reading skills is proving effective.
- Learning support assistants support pupils effectively.

- Pupils' behaviour and approach to learning are good.
- There is an over-reliance on worksheets.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and pupils' work,

Commentary

45. At the end of Year 2, standards in English are good. Pupils ask sensible and articulate questions and listen very well. For example, during a talk by the local vicar pupils sat in silence and listened attentively. This enabled them to ask very good questions such as, 'Why do vicars baptise people?' Pupils spell common words accurately such as 'special'. They are developing the use of speech marks and already use full stops and capital letters widely. They read clearly and discuss their favourite authors happily. The introduction of a scheme to teach reading systematically in the reception classes has proved successful in raising standards and the school is using this approach to teach those pupils in other year groups who are experiencing difficulties. This well-organised strategy is having a positive effect on pupils' learning and their approach to reading and writing.
46. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers use first-hand experiences well to engage pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on writing instructions, pupils readily remembered the instructions for making a fruit salad that they had made in a science activity the day before. These approaches encourage pupils to be fully involved in lessons and promote good standards of behaviour. Pupils listen attentively as a class and work productively when engaged in working independently. Learning support assistants help them to focus on the task in hand and complete the tasks successfully. For example, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were developing their writing, the learning support assistant worked very well with a group to help them to link sentences with words such as 'after' 'suddenly' and 'later on'. She had a clear understanding of the purpose of the lesson and helped pupils sensitively, explaining the procedure clearly to them and repeating things when she assessed that the pupils had not understood. This helped them to learn effectively in the lesson.
47. There are some inconsistencies in teaching English, particularly in the focus or objective of the lesson. In particular, teachers are insufficiently clear about what pupils are going to learn in each lesson, the final part of which is not used well enough to assess what pupils have achieved. There is an over-reliance on worksheets, and pupils engage in a good deal of written exercises. This means there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length and writing a range of poems, plays and stories. There is insufficient monitoring of lessons, and pupils' work is underdeveloped. This means that the co-ordinator is unable to form a full picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and to take effective action to raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. There are suitable opportunities in other subjects for pupils to develop writing skills. For example, they produced their own chronological diaries in a Year 2 history lesson about the Great Plague.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain good standards at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning in the subject.
- Learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils.
- Assessment is not used well enough.
- There is an over-reliance on published schemes and worksheets.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the subject.

Commentary

49. By the end of Year 2 almost all pupils attain standards that meet national expectations, and many exceed them. In the national tests in 2003 more than a third of pupils attained the higher Level 3. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make sound progress in Years 1 and 2. They have a good understanding of the number system and they recognise and name common shapes well. However, many do not have a quick, mental recall of number facts because they do not practise these skills regularly. This makes it harder for them to work at number problems.
50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers prepare lessons well and make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest in their activities. Pupils' good attitudes have a positive effect on their rate of learning. They listen attentively and concentrate well on their tasks, working well collaboratively. Learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils. They work well with teachers and have a clear understanding of what pupils are expected to do in the lesson. Occasionally they work well with pupils with special educational needs during the introductory session to ensure that they have sufficient understanding to complete the task effectively. This support is instrumental in ensuring that almost all pupils attain the nationally expected standards by the end of Year 2.
51. Some teaching practices are inconsistent. In one very good lesson the teacher set clear learning objectives and varied the level of difficulty in the task to meet the different learning needs of the pupils. A useful session at the end of the lesson enabled the teacher to assess which pupils had achieved the intended learning. However, many lessons do not set clear and specific learning intentions that enable the teacher to assess learning effectively, and too often the lesson ends abruptly with no time at the end to consolidate pupils' learning and assess what has been learned. This restricts opportunities for teachers to plan lessons that take full account of what pupils have already learned or failed to learn. There is an over-reliance on worksheets and a commercially-published scheme that, to some extent, compensates for the inadequacies of assessment and the limited guidance that is given to teachers in the medium-term plans for the subject. Worksheets are rarely dated and this restricts opportunities to assess pupils' learning over time. Although teaching and learning have been observed by the subject co-ordinator, the opportunities made available for this and the monitoring of pupils' work are not taken often enough.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Suitable opportunities are taken in other subjects such as design and technology and science to develop pupils' numeracy skills. However, there is scope for improvement, as these opportunities are not identified clearly in the school's curriculum plans.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are good.
- Leadership and management of science are underdeveloped.
- Assessment is not used well to plan suitably challenging activities for pupils.

Commentary

53. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, and so pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of scientific topics and have opportunities to present their work attractively in a variety of ways around the school.

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good use is made of scientific vocabulary to extend pupils' learning, and teachers make sure that they are aware of specific vocabulary. Pupils respond well to careful questioning and participate fully in the lessons, concentrating carefully. Weaknesses in marking, however, mean that written comments to pupils do not indicate what improvements are needed. Teachers do not use assessment sufficiently well to inform planning so that activities meet the learning needs of all pupils. Computers are used well to support learning and add interest to the work that pupils are doing. Resources were carefully chosen by the teachers for the lessons observed during the inspection so that pupils were able to deduce from the toys they examined the scientific principles involved in forces. In many classes, timetables are fragmented so that teachers do not always have enough time for a well-structured lesson with an opportunity to assess the children's learning at the end. Pupils often sat on the carpet for long periods, which left insufficient time for the lesson to be developed fully. Pupils take pride in their work, which is well presented. They work with interest and contribute fully to discussions, offering ideas and hypotheses.
55. The leadership and management of science are unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator does not monitor standards sufficiently well to ensure that the best practice is encouraged and supported, and that planning is consistent across the whole school. The resources for science are good and their use supports pupils' learning effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The resources for ICT have improved and are now good.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in ICT.
- The subject co-ordinator's monitoring role has not been developed well enough.

Commentary

56. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations. These standards have been maintained and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The modelling aspect of ICT was identified as a key issue and this has now been addressed. Since the last inspection the school has increased its ICT resources and now has a dedicated computer suite and computers in each classroom, which enables teachers to teach ICT more effectively. All members of staff have completed training in the use of ICT and their confidence in using computers is improving.
57. Pupils enjoy using computers and concentrate well. They are confident in the use of computers and are familiar with a range of software. These skills are developed in Year 1, where ICT is also used to enhance learning in a range of science topics such as "the Senses", "Body Parts" and "Growth and Change". In Year 2, pupils use ICT well to develop literacy skills through word processing and spelling programs.
58. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and learning support assistants are used well to support pupils in the classroom and in small groups in the computer suite. In a literacy activity based on a reading scheme, a small group of Year 1 children were particularly well supported by teaching assistants and a parent. The activity was introduced well, with pupils fully engaged throughout the lesson and this helped them to learn well.
59. The school uses part-time technical support to good effect and a number of teachers have the use of laptop computers. However, the co-ordinator does not monitor standards well enough to ensure that best practice is encouraged and supported, and that planning is consistent across the whole school, and this limits the standards that pupils attain.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Information and communication technology is used effectively to raise standards in a range of subjects such as English, mathematics and science. In mathematics pupils in Year 1 used data on eye colour to create simple graphs.

HUMANITIES

One lesson was observed in history and no lessons were seen in geography. Teachers' planning and pupils' work were looked at and time was spent talking to pupils.

61. Curriculum plans for geography show that the subject is taught throughout the school. Mapping skills are taught each year and large maps are well displayed to enhance pupils' understanding. There are some examples of good links with other subjects. For example, when the Chinese New Year is studied in Year 2 a map of China forms part of the display. In history, the lesson observed made good use of first-hand experiences. The pupils were given copies of a diary from the Great Plague to help them to understand what it would have been like to have lived then. Pupils' work and teachers' planning show that the history curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils have suitably interesting opportunities to be 'history detectives' in a topic on the Edwardian era as they look at old kitchen appliances and try to ascertain their use.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils listen well and show interest.
- Displays are presented attractively.

Commentary

62. Standards meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and are able to remember what has been explained. For example, in a lesson about Moses pupils remembered much of the detail of the story they had heard and were able to retell the story. Displays are vibrant and interesting, and include a display of Diwali, where pupils had made their own clay Diwali lamps, and another display of the festival of Eid. These are eye-catching and contain interesting artefacts, pupils' work, clear labels and information that enhance pupils' learning. In Year 2, pupils learn about the story of Moses, and in Year 1 they develop an understanding of the Torah.

63. Teaching is satisfactory. Well-organised visits and visitors are a good feature of the subject. Year 2 pupils enjoyed a visit by the local vicar, who talked about his work, and Year 1 pupils touched and held a replica Torah to help make their knowledge meaningful. Pupils respond well and sensitively to these approaches and the subject suitably supports pupils' spiritual development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

One lesson was seen in each of art and design, music and physical education. No lessons were seen in design and technology. Pupils were talked to about their work in school, and teachers' planning and pupils' work was looked at.

64. In art and design, and design and technology, pupils' work and teachers' planning show that the breadth of provision is in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum, although planning contains little detail. Pupils enjoy a visit to Flatford Mill in Year 2 that stimulates them

to create paintings, based on the work of John Constable, back in school. In design and technology pupils design a glove puppet, noting the colours to be used. They make the puppets from felt, using well a variety of joining methods, such as stitching, stapling and gluing. They also benefit from the assistance of their parents when making fruit salads.

65. In music, pupils are enthusiastic when given the opportunity to use instruments. They keep time well, use the instruments appropriately to make clear sounds and sing well in tune. The good relationships that they enjoy contribute well to their collaborative efforts in music. In physical education, pupils demonstrated suitable co-ordination and balance in a dance lesson. They are enthusiastic and make concentrated efforts to move like cats, snakes and birds. They change their clothing appropriately for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no formal planning for PSHE.
- The informal provision is reflected well in the consistently good and respectful relationships that are fostered by adults.

Commentary

66. The school has not established a formal programme for its PSHE provision. However, the informal arrangements for PSHE help pupils to learn about family life, health, hygiene, drugs awareness and their environment. However, the practice of pupils remaining in their PE kit for following lessons, as seen during the inspection, does not support their understanding of the importance of hygiene. The school has a policy not to teach sex education. Pupils share their thoughts and feelings confidently in Circle Time sessions. The secure and supportive environment established by teachers and learning support assistants helps pupils to become more aware of themselves and of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 4 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 4 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 5 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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