

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHINGDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashingdon, Rochford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115275

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Stewart

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 1st-4th March 2004

Inspection number: 262150

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	346
School address:	Fambridge Road Ashingdon Rochford
Postcode:	SS4 3LN
Telephone number:	01702 202857
Fax number:	01702 205826
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Ashingdon School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Liz Durham
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashingdon Primary School is bigger than average for primary schools, having 346 full-time pupils on roll. This is 49 more pupils than at the time of the last inspection. There are more boys than girls on roll, with a significant gender imbalance in Year 2. The school has 42 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Most of these pupils have minor to moderate learning difficulties. Two of the pupils have a statement of special educational need. None of the pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speaks English as an additional language. Both of these features are lower than in most schools. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds. During the last school year, 17 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and three left it at a time which was not the normal leaving or transfer time for most pupils. This rate of mobility is broadly average. In the last two years, 11 teachers have left the school and eight have been appointed. This is a very high rate of turnover. At the time of this inspection, two classes were being taught by teachers on temporary contracts, and three others were being covered by supply teachers due to staff illness. Pupils enter the school at average levels of attainment. The school achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2002 and received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in the same year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	Mathematics, design and technology (DT), music, the Foundation Stage curriculum.
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector	
15917	Bob Cross	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, physical education (PE)
22745	Rosalind Johns	Team inspector	English, religious education (RE), art, history, special educational needs (SEN), English as an additional language.

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
 Thule
 60 Joy Lane
 Whitstable
 CT5 4LT

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ashingdon School is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Overall, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, which is inconsistent throughout the school. Although achievement is good, overall, in English, it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and science. The leadership, management and governance of the school do not have a satisfactory impact on the quality of education provided, which has significant shortcomings. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils do not achieve well enough in mathematics and science, but achievement in English and PE is good.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, but some good teaching was seen in Years 2, 5 and 6.
- The leadership, management and governance of the school are unsatisfactory because they have not managed to tackle the root causes of underachievement.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- Provision for children in the Reception year is unsatisfactory.
- Curricular provision is unsatisfactory, but the range of extra-curricular activities provided is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well enough because provision for them is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory because of inconsistencies between classes and subjects.
- The school's partnership with parents is unsatisfactory and there is growing discontent and frustration among parents on a number of issues.

The school has not made sufficient improvement since it was inspected in 1998. Standards have fallen significantly in mathematics, the quality of teaching and learning has declined and curricular provision is weaker. There has been a noticeable decline in the quality of provision for Reception children and insufficient improvement in assessment and in the role of curriculum co-ordinators. Significant barriers to improvement have included a very high turnover of teachers, high levels of staff absence due to sickness, and resistance to change among some teachers. These factors have had an adverse effect on the pace of improvement.

In accordance with section 13 (7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

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

*E*Standards are in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country.*

Achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year R, achievement is unsatisfactory. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, but standards are below expectations in mathematical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development. In Year 2, achievement is good and standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science.

Standards in Year 1 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 6, achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are above average in English, but well below average in mathematics and average in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE). Unsatisfactory achievement results from inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and curricular provision.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show sound interest in learning and are enthusiastic. Their behaviour is generally satisfactory in lessons and around the school but there are inconsistencies due to variations in the quality of teaching. The attendance rate is in line with the national average but unauthorised absence is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Good teaching was seen in Years 2, 5 and 6 where teachers' expectations of the pupils are high and, as a result, pupils work hard and have a clear understanding of how to make their work better. In other classes, expectations are too low and work is undemanding. Due to weaknesses in planning, work is not well matched to pupils' needs. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because it does not incorporate all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum and is often over directed. Assessment information is not used well enough to inform teachers' planning. Curricular provision in Years 1 to 6 is unsatisfactory. The school does not work closely enough in partnership with parents. Staffing is unsatisfactory because of the high turnover of teachers and insufficient support staff. The accommodation and resources for children in Year R are unsatisfactory in the two mixed age classes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. The leadership team has a clear vision for the school's development and has implemented many changes to improve the quality of provision. However, these are not working consistently well because of inconsistencies in their application. The governing body does not play a fully effective role in shaping the direction of the school and is not meeting statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage. The management of the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is not good enough to enable pupils to progress rapidly enough. Financial management has weaknesses. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents have positive views about the school. However, a significant number of parents have serious concerns about the high turnover of teachers and levels of staff absence, and about the way the school works in partnership with them to support their children's learning. Pupils mostly enjoy school but some express concern about the behaviour of others and the turnover of teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve achievement and raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve teaching and learning throughout the school so that standards rise.
- Develop leadership and management to increase the speed of improvement.
- Improve curricular provision, in particular the termly and weekly planning, and assessment procedures, so that they promote progression in learning from year to year.
- Work more closely in partnership with parents to support their children's learning.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Improve the provision for children in the Reception year to ensure equality of opportunity for all and to meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are below average in Reception. In Year 2, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English, average in science and well below average in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of the children in Year R is not as good as it could be due to shortcomings in teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management.
- Achievement in English is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6 but there are marked variations between year groups.
- Pupils do not achieve their potential in mathematics and science.
- Pupils with SEN do not achieve as well as they should.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils in some subjects which limits their achievement.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is unsatisfactory. This reflects the unsatisfactory quality of teaching the children receive and the inequalities of provision between classes. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, where teaching is stronger. In mathematical development, creative development and personal, social and emotional development, standards are below average because the curricular planning and teaching for these children does not ensure that they receive an appropriately broad range of experiences. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is ineffective in ensuring consistency of approach and equality of opportunity for all pupils. It was not possible to judge standards and achievement in physical development or in knowledge and understanding of the world.

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards in reading and writing were above the national average. Compared with similar schools, based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, standards were average in reading but below average in writing. Standards in mathematics were in line with the national average but below the average for similar schools. Prior to 2003, standards in reading had been consistently below those of similar schools, while those in writing had been average. Standards in mathematics were consistently well below average. Overall, the trend in the school's performance in the national tests over the past five years is below the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (16.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.3 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. Standards in ICT, RE and history are average, while those in PE are above average. These were the only subjects where sufficient evidence was

gathered to make reliable judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be made, these standards are the same as they were when the school was last inspected except in English, where they are lower, and science, where they are higher. The judgements of the inspection are not as high as the school's results in the 2003 national tests in reading and writing. Achievement in Year 2 is good. However, it is unsatisfactory in Year 1 where standards are below average because pupils are not given sufficiently demanding work.

4. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, standards were well above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science compared to all schools. Compared with similar schools, based on pupils who performed similarly in Year 2, standards were average in English and well below average in science. In mathematics, they were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. These results represent satisfactory achievement in English and poor achievement in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.5 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.1 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.5 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, average in science and well below average in mathematics. Compared to the findings of the previous inspection, this shows similar standards to those found in English and science, but significantly lower standards in mathematics. This is the result of weaknesses in teaching and curricular planning. Standards in ICT, RE and history are average, while those in PE are above average. Where comparisons can be made, standards in these subjects are similar to those found by the previous inspection, except in PE, where they are higher. Throughout the school, achievement in swimming is very good because of the provision made for this aspect of PE and standards are above average in Year 6.

6. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are average, while those in reading and writing are above average. In Year 2, standards are average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The use of writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory. The use of mathematics in other subjects is not fully developed. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils in this school do not achieve their potential in all areas of the curriculum by the time that they leave Year 6. Most pupils feel they are expected to work hard, but some are clearly struggling in mathematics. Achievement in mathematics and science is unsatisfactory, because pupils do not reach the levels they are capable of. Significant differences in the quality of teaching between year groups in Years 3 to 6 contribute to the uneven progress pupils make across the curriculum. Some pupils' progress has been affected adversely by the high turnover of staff, including a number of temporary teachers, and many parents have expressed serious concern about this situation.

7. Overall, pupils with SEN make unsatisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. This is because the quality of their individual education plans (IEPs) depends to an extent on individual teachers' skills and expertise. Some IEPs are well organised and targets are clear and achievable and relate well to pupils' needs. In other cases, the content is too general and strategies to help pupils to reach their targets are not specific enough. In addition, the shortcomings in provision outlined in other areas of this report mean that pupils with SEN do not all achieve as well as they should.

8. The school's results in the national tests over a three year period indicate that boys do better than girls in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. This is the reverse of the situation at

the time of the previous inspection. However, the findings of the inspection are that there are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls, mostly because teachers are alert to the need to provide equally for both. The needs of more able pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, are not always met in subjects other than English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are also satisfactory. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils behave appropriately, have positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- Nevertheless, the low expectations of a few of the teachers cause pupils to lose interest and sometimes to behave inappropriately.
- The good provision for pupils' social and moral development leads to overall satisfactory relationships around the school.

Commentary

9. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The level of attendance has deteriorated in the past few years and is now similar to that of primary schools around the country. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons but a number of families insist on taking holidays during term time. The high level of unauthorised absence is due in part to parents not always providing reasons for their child being away and, in part, to the school quite properly not authorising a few days absence as a holiday. Punctuality is satisfactory. The effective arrangements in the morning lead to the great majority of pupils being in school before the beginning of the day resulting in a prompt start to the day. However, some assemblies overrun, causing the start of the following lesson to be delayed by up to ten minutes.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year [%]

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.0	School data:	1.4
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.

10. Pupils' social development is good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work, to participate in paired discussions and to undertake tasks as monitors within each class. The pupils in Year 6 show maturity when undertaking a range of responsibilities around the school. The school council enables pupils of all ages to work together and contribute to making decisions about the school. Pupils' awareness of the wider world is enhanced by, for example, entertaining patients in hospital, inter-school sports matches and collections for charity. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults make a satisfactory contribution to the quality of work in lessons.

11. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory and reflects the opportunities for them to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness. School assemblies help pupils to develop a sense of belonging to a whole school community and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Circle time helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. In the classroom they discuss varied topics and accept that others may have a different view or belief from their own. However, in several

classes the teachers closely direct much of the work in lessons and opportunities for independent working are limited.

12. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory and, since the last inspection, the school has increased opportunities to increase pupils' understanding of other cultures. Various subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. The study of world faiths in RE helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. Art and music help to develop aesthetic awareness. The work undertaken during a recent multicultural week provided pupils with opportunities to learn about different ways of life in various parts of the world. Nevertheless the school's approach has not yet reached the stage of being a natural and regular feature in the curriculum, especially with regard to life in multi-cultural British society.

13. The pupils' attitudes towards learning are satisfactory. Parents confirm what their children told the inspectors and what was seen during the inspection; many pupils enjoy being at school. They listen attentively and follow instructions well. They are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute ideas to discussions. In most classes pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities built into the lessons. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies between classes and year groups. In several of the lessons seen, the work was not presented in an interesting way. This led to a lack of attention by some pupils and the unsettled atmosphere limited learning. Pupils with SEN have positive attitudes to their work and play a full part in the life of the school. Older pupils in the school give them particularly good support.

14. Pupils' moral development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Many are aware of how their behaviour affects others and many are developing self-discipline. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other and welcoming and courteous to visitors. However, in a few lessons seen, the inconsistent management of the pupils led to talking, calling out or even a high level of noise. Pupils confirmed that some bullying or aggressive behaviour had affected them and they had been reluctant to report it. Nevertheless, when the staff became aware of the problem, they dealt with it quickly and effectively. Last year no pupils were excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. This is mostly due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and weaknesses in curricular planning, assessment, staffing, accommodation and resources which are unsatisfactory overall. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Enrichment of the curriculum is good. The school's relationships with parents are unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 3. It is satisfactory in Year 4, but with some weaknesses. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching, in Years 2 and 6, and consistently good in Year 5. Assessment is unsatisfactory because of inconsistencies between classes and subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high turnover of teachers has contributed to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

- Some teachers have insufficient knowledge and understanding of the subjects and year groups they are teaching.
- Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 helps to boost pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of teachers' planning is poor in some classes and provides inadequate support for temporary teachers.
- Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils in many lessons.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory because of its inconsistency.
- The use of homework to support learning is inconsistent.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and are not used effectively by all teachers to plan work that meets pupils' needs.
- Pupils do not have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

Commentary

15. Many parents have expressed serious concern about the high turnover of teachers in the school and about the number of different teachers that some classes have had due to staff absence. They have good cause for concern. The staffing situation has adversely affected the quality of teaching and learning, which has declined significantly since the last inspection. Some teachers do not have a good understanding of the curricular requirements in some subjects or the needs of the age group they are teaching. This is particularly evident in the mixed Year R/1 classes, where there is insufficient awareness of the needs of the Reception children. It is also evident in mathematics, where there are significant weaknesses in aspects of the teaching in some classes. The table below shows that, during this inspection, just over a fifth of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory, most of which was in Reception, Year 1 and Years 3 and 4. This was also reflected in the quality of pupils' work that has been completed throughout the year. Such inconsistencies lead to uneven progress from year to year and underachievement for a significant proportion of the pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	1 (2%)	22 (46%)	15 (31%)	8 (17%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)

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

16. There is, however, evidence of good teaching, in one of the Year 2 classes, and in Years 5 and 6, where it is strongest and most consistent. The common factors that contributed to the good lessons were good planning, which caters for the needs of different groups of pupils within the class, good use of assessment information to inform planning, high expectations and well paced lessons that challenged and extended pupils. In Years 5 and 6, three quarters of the lessons seen were good. Teaching in Year 5 was consistently good, whereas there were some shortcomings in a few lessons in Year 6. Where good teaching was observed, teachers have a good understanding of the subject and of the ways in which pupils learn. For example, in a good Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher provided pupils with visual and practical aids to assist their understanding of the concept of sharing. In Year 5, pupils examined an interesting range of devices for measuring mass, which illustrated for them, in a practical way, the use of different scales.

17. The quality of teaching for Reception children varies considerably in effectiveness but is unsatisfactory overall. During the inspection, it ranged from good to poor. This is largely because of inconsistencies between the three classes, and insufficient emphasis on the Foundation Stage curriculum in the two mixed age classes. However, there are weaknesses in aspects of the teaching that are common to all three classes. There are not enough opportunities for any of the children to make choices and to pursue an activity independently. Most activities are directed by the

teachers, leaving little scope for free choice. Children often spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher and become restless. They also spend too much time on a single task, which sometimes results in children becoming bored and losing interest and concentration. Children do not have enough opportunity to participate in role play, and, as teachers only have part-time support from assistants, they spend too little time interacting with children in their play. Tasks are not always planned carefully enough to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities within each class. The children who move into the mixed age classes in January do not have equality of opportunity or access to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The main focus in each of these two classes is on the National Curriculum, with separate activities for Reception children, but these are often too formal and require children to sit and write rather than explore and learn through practical activity.

18. In other year groups, where teaching is unsatisfactory, a significant factor is the quality of teachers' planning, which is often poor. This is because it does not make adequate provision for all groups of pupils within a class, particularly the more able pupils. Teachers' expectations for these pupils are often too low, and, as a result, they provide insufficient challenge for them. Weaknesses in planning are clearly linked to shortcomings in the curriculum, where there is a lack of continuity from year to year, and inadequate progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics. There are also inconsistencies in the way assessments are carried out and recorded, and in the way teachers use these to track pupils' progress and plan suitable work for them. Parents expressed concerns about the use of homework to support learning. As with other aspects, this is inconsistent and does not always contribute effectively to learning. All of these factors combine to create a situation in which temporary teachers do not have sufficient information or support to enable them to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. They also reflect weaknesses in the leadership and management of the curriculum.

19. The school is addressing the need to improve assessment procedures and has recently appointed a new co-ordinator to lead development. However, procedures are still at an early stage of development. A policy is being drafted, an assessment timetable is in place, which shows the assessments that are expected to take place in each year group throughout the year, and new recording formats are being developed. The assessment co-ordinator is well informed and aware of the priorities to be addressed. However, as with most other aspects, there are inconsistencies in the way procedures are put into practice. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator has produced a good system of recording pupils' attainment and progress against National Curriculum levels, similar to that for writing. Some teachers are using this to good effect, while others have yet to implement it. Assessment in reading is carried out using a different system which does not refer to National Curriculum levels, and procedures in other subjects are under development. Again, the high turnover of teachers has frustrated attempts to ensure a common and rigorous approach to assessment. This also hampers effective tracking of individual pupils' progress throughout the year and from one year to the next.

20. The quality of teachers' marking is also inconsistent. Some teachers mark pupils' work in a way that balances praise for what is good with helpful comments that show pupils how to improve. Some, however, provide few comments that will help pupils to do better or give too much praise for work that is mediocre. In some cases, work is just ticked or occasionally unmarked. As a result, pupils do not have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work. Although realistic but challenging targets are set for pupils in some classes, this is not carried out consistently throughout the school. In some classes, teachers make effective use of the 'traffic light' system to involve pupils in assessing their own progress during a lesson. This was done well in a Year 2 mathematics lesson and showed that this is a regular feature of pupils' learning. Again, it is not used consistently throughout the school.

21. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory. In the previous inspection, it was good. Some teachers have a good understanding of their needs and take good account of targets when planning, but others do not provide a sufficient range of activities that are suited to all levels of ability. Teaching assistants are experienced and committed and give sound support in basic skills. However, they have limited opportunities for liaison with teachers in the

planning and evaluation of lessons because most of them are not consistently attached to one class. Folders containing notes of pupils' progress are available in classes but these are not adequate for teachers and support staff to evaluate learning or to discuss concerns about pupils.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is unsatisfactory. The enrichment of the curriculum is good. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Staffing is unsatisfactory throughout the school but accommodation and resources are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage does not meet statutory requirements.
- Curricular planning in Years 1 to 6 is not effective.
- The curriculum does not cater sufficiently well for the needs of all pupils.
- Provision for pupils with SEN and for those who are gifted and talented is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not receive equality of opportunity.
- The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- There are strengths and weaknesses in the school's accommodation and resources.
- The school provides a good range of additional curricular activities.

Commentary

22. The curriculum provided for pupils in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because Reception children in the two mixed age classes receive a different curriculum from those in the Reception class. This is because those teachers plan their work mainly according to the National Curriculum for Year 1 pupils, and references to the Foundation Stage curriculum and the early learning goals are few and far between. However, there are weaknesses common to all classes. Provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is inadequate because there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to make choices or carry out activities independently. Movement between the classroom and the outdoor play area is minimal, especially for children in the mixed age classes. This is partly because there are not enough teaching assistants to support children. This, and too much direction by teachers, also limits children's creative development, as adults spend too little time participating in children's play to develop their learning.

23. Curricular planning in Years 1 to 6 is based largely on appropriate national guidelines. However, the implementation of the curriculum is not evaluated rigorously or systematically enough. The teaching of the national guidelines is adversely affected by the school's weak assessment procedures and its failure to support successfully the many changes of teachers it experiences. As a result, pupils, particularly those in Years 1 and 3, are often given work which is too easy for them, for example, in mathematics. In Years 2, 5 and 6, pupils are generally challenged appropriately and, to some extent, make up for lost time. However, because of the weaknesses, the progress they make as they move through the school is uneven rather than smooth and is not good enough. This means that equality of opportunity is unsatisfactory and that pupils are not prepared for transfer to secondary school well enough.

24. Arrangements for using the IEPs for pupils with SEN are not fully effective in ensuring that pupils' needs are met. The needs of the two pupils with statements are satisfactorily met. The school is working towards improving aspects of inclusion so that pupils are integrated into classes where possible. Provision is also made in small withdrawal groups mainly for work on basic literacy skills. Care is taken to ensure that pupils do not miss vital learning when withdrawn from class. ICT is not used well enough to support the learning of pupils with SEN.

25. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory and the school has recognised this as an area for development. Attempts to provide for the needs of these pupils through extracurricular activities were unsuccessful because the pupils preferred to attend other activities. The school's register of more able pupils was not available during the inspection.
26. The school has experienced a high number of changes of staff recently. As a result, some staff are unfamiliar with the teaching of the year groups, classes and subjects that they are teaching. Newly appointed teaching staff are inadequately inducted to the school. The school employs a below average number of teaching assistants. The teaching assistants have received only limited training. These factors adversely affect pupils' achievement.
27. In Years 1 to 6, the school has satisfactory accommodation. This includes infant and junior libraries, a learning support room and a suitable number of adequate classrooms some of which are reached through other classes. The school also has a small ICT suite and an adequately sized hall. However, both of these facilities are also thoroughfares which interrupts lessons. Outside, the school has a good sized field, adequate hard surfaced area, a swimming pool and a derelict environmental area. Learning resources in Years 1 to 6 have strengths such as the availability of laptops. However, there are also weaknesses including some out of date computers and shortages in geography and PE. The school's limited financial reserves restrict the improvement of resources.
28. Accommodation and resources for children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. Again this is largely because of inequalities between the Reception class and the two Reception/Year 1 classes. The former is housed in a purpose built, large classroom, which is well resourced. The teacher has created a stimulating, colourful and vibrant environment for the children, with well planned role play, library and other work areas. Children's work is displayed to good effect and resources are clearly labelled and accessible to the children. However, the teacher does not make the best use of the space and resources at her disposal as, in most lessons, most children pursue the same activity, which means that opportunities for role play, water and sand play, independent writing and learning through exploration are limited. The stark contrast between the Reception classroom and the facilities for Reception children in the other two classes underlines the inequalities in provision. The classrooms are geared more towards the Year 1 pupils and lack the vibrancy and variety of the Reception classroom. This is reflected in the quality of the activities that are provided for the children.
29. The school provides a good range of well attended clubs at lunchtime and after school. These include music, art, library, mathematics, dancing and a range of games. Educational visits arranged for the pupils embrace, amongst other places, Tower Bridge, Colchester Castle, various museums, a pantomime and a residential trip for Year 6. Visitors to the school include Westcliffe College of Arts, a theatre group, clergy from local churches and local officials such as a policeman and a librarian. These activities interest the pupils and are relevant to their work. They extend their cultural and sporting experiences and are incorporated well into the life of the school.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory overall and support pupils' learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is unsatisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- The adults in the school are very caring and know the pupils well.

- The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic progress through the school is limited.
- The school has good arrangements to enable new pupils to settle in.

Commentary

30. The governors are actively involved with the caretaker in touring the school each term to identify any potential hazards. The deputy headteacher also carries out checks at other times. Various written risk assessments are in place for visits out and office working. Nevertheless, other risk assessments are not always properly formalised and the school is aware that they need to be recorded in writing. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science and DT. The school follows the local procedures for child protection and staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good with several trained staff, records kept of treatment and letters for parents after minor accidents.

31. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and care for them well. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children were well supported when they first come into the school either into Reception or if they arrive in other years. This is because the children in the local playgroups visit the school on several afternoons and the helpful, informative booklets provided to parents before they start in the Reception class. New arrivals in other years are partnered with a 'buddy' to help them settle. Pupils consider that they relate well to the staff and know whom they would go to if they needed help. They also consider that the teachers listen to their ideas in the classroom during circle time and in discussions such as when deciding on the class rules. They are able to influence what happens in the school by means of the school council.

32. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress in English make a satisfactory contribution to raising pupils' achievement. Each half term or so the teachers set targets and these are recorded in the pupils' books. When the pupil's work is marked the comments include suggestions for improvement and, when targets are achieved, a new one is set. However, the teachers do not have a similar system for any of the other subject areas and have no structured approach to providing guidance to help the pupils improve. The school also has no procedures for assessing and recording personal development. Pupils' self-esteem is raised by the range of rewards such as praise and team points for effort and by the range of awards made in assembly. They recognise that these encourage them to do well.

33. Pupils with SEN are cared for satisfactorily and have trust and confidence in those who support them. Their contributions are valued and their achievements soundly recognised. The school taps into the expertise of outside agencies such as the educational psychologist, speech therapist and specialist teaching for the pupils with statements to support individual pupils' programme of work. Targets on pupils' IEPs are reviewed termly and provision re assessed. The school's assessment procedures are not used efficiently enough to track pupils' progress and to give them appropriate support and guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are unsatisfactory overall. Links with the local community are satisfactory and those with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents generally like what the school provides but a significant minority has concerns in a number of areas.
- Links with parents of children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.

- The annual reports on pupils' progress vary in quality between classes.
- The school has no structured approach to consulting parents.
- Opportunities for informal contact between teachers and parents are limited.
- Links with the local secondary school are good.
- Links with parents of pupils with SEN are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

34. In their high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, parents showed they that they are pleased with much of the school's work. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they are encouraged to become mature and independent. However their positive views have reduced since the last inspection and a number of parents are now unclear and even dissatisfied with what the school provides. They consider that the move of the older Reception children into classes with Year 1 pupils is detrimental, that pupils with special educational needs are not well supported, that homework is not used consistently and there are weaknesses in the way they receive information. The inspectors agree with these concerns.

35. The school sends home regular news and other letters about general matters each term, outlining what is to be taught in each class. In the infant and Reception classes teachers are readily available at the start and end of the day. From the relaxed, informal conversations seen to take place during the inspection, it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. In the junior classes staff do not usually come into the playground at the end of the day limiting the opportunity for informal conversations. However, parents recognise that the teachers and headteacher are willing to see them if they have a problem. Parents meet the class teacher in the autumn term but see only the mathematics teacher in the spring term. In some classes, the annual reports on pupils' progress in the summer term provide a good summary of what the children know and can do in each subject but in others emphasise mainly attitudes or work covered. In addition targets for improvement are often either in educational jargon or are vague.

36. Parents generally are very supportive of the education process and want their children to do well. Almost all come to the consultation meetings with teachers and many come to other meetings to hear about new initiatives that the school plans to introduce. But the inconsistent setting of homework limits the extent to which parents can help their children at home. A few provide good regular help in the classroom or with administrative activities and more are willing to help with one off events and on trips. Nevertheless, in one lesson seen during the inspection the lack of guidance from the teacher prevented a parent from helping effectively. The parent association works hard to successfully organise both fund raising and social events. However, parents do not feel they are sufficiently involved in a partnership with the school. The school certainly has no structured approach to seeking their views by means of, for example, regular questionnaires or a parents' consultative group. Parents of Reception children who move into Year 1 after a term feel that they are not given enough information about the transfer and many are very dissatisfied with the way the process is managed.

37. The links with other schools and the community at large help to broaden the experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development. The local secondary school provides good support to enhance pupils' learning. Secondary teachers take some science, DT and French lessons with pupils able to use their specialist facilities. The consortium of schools enables co-ordinators to meet and share good practice. Pupils' sporting skills are enhanced by competitions with other schools. Contacts with local playgroups help new pupils to settle easily. Pupils' understanding of society is enhanced by the contact with local ministers, charitable organisations and staff from public bodies such as the police and fire brigade. They have contributed to a local safety campaign against speeding and they take part in events organised by the parish.

38. Before this inspection, several parents expressed disquiet about the quality of SEN provision in the school and felt that it had declined significantly. This inspection finds that their concerns were justified as provision, which was very good at the last inspection, is now judged to be unsatisfactory. The limited amount of time spent by the coordinator for SEN (SENCO) in the school makes links

with parents very difficult. All IEPs are shared with parents and there are opportunities for both parents and pupils to comment on targets and progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of the headteacher and other key staff are unsatisfactory in terms of their impact on the quality of education provided and the achievement of the pupils. The school's governance is unsatisfactory. Governors are not meeting the statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage, where leadership and management are also unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has introduced a number of initiatives to improve the quality of education and the pupils' achievement.
- The effectiveness of these initiatives and the pace of improvement have been adversely affected by the high turnover of teachers and resistance to change among some staff.
- There is a lack of teamwork because the headteacher's and governors' vision for the school is not shared by all teachers.
- Although the recently formed leadership team provide effective role models for teaching and developing the curriculum, the overall leadership of teaching and the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory.
- The management of the provision for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory.
- Governors do not play a sufficiently influential role in shaping the direction of the school and are not fulfilling all of their statutory duties.
- The school development plan reflects the school's goals, but its effectiveness in tackling the underlying weaknesses in teaching is limited.
- There are sound procedures for evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses and for checking on its performance.
- Although appropriate performance management procedures are in place, their effectiveness in bringing about improvement is limited.
- Budgetary restraints and staff absence have greatly reduced the school's ability to achieve its educational priorities.
- The principles of best value are not fully effective in the school's management of its resources.
- Significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff have created a major barrier to improvement.

Commentary

39. Since the headteacher was appointed in April 2002, she has taken steps to address the weaknesses in achievement, teaching, assessment, the curriculum and leadership and management that were confirmed by a Local Education Authority review later that same year. Most of these had been key issues from the previous OFSTED inspection four years earlier, and were, as a result, identified as urgent targets for improvement. Progress in achieving these targets has been patchy, largely because of the high turnover of staff in the past two years and staff absence, which have resulted in the school employing a number of supply teachers. This has slowed the pace of improvement considerably. Discussions with the headteacher, staff and a representative of the Local Education Authority also show that there has been resistance to change from some teachers which has affected adversely the rate of progress in implementing new initiatives.

40. As a result of these difficulties, the headteacher has not managed to create a strong team spirit throughout the school. There is no coherent whole school team, who share the headteacher's vision for the school. Those who do are working hard to support the headteacher and lead development in key areas, such as mathematics, science and assessment. Their efforts are already having an impact on the quality of teaching and the curriculum in some parts of the school.

However, this approach is by no means consistent. For example, there is a noticeable lack of team work in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This results in a fragmented approach towards the education of the younger pupils in the school, where teachers do not see their own role in the context of the wider picture. There is insufficient liaison between year groups in terms of planning to ensure that pupils progress appropriately in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year.

41. The leadership team has also suffered from staff changes and is still refining its role. However, it is clearly beginning to have an impact on certain aspects of the school's provision, albeit in its early stages. The subject leaders for mathematics and science, for example, have clearly identified key priorities for improvement and have made a good start on implementing strategies to address them. The assessment co-ordinator, who took on the role a few weeks before this inspection, has already formed a clear idea of where strengths and weaknesses lie. All of these teachers also provide good role models in the classroom and are contributing to raising achievement. However, their influence has not yet spread to all parts of the school, with the results that inconsistencies remain.

42. Furthermore, leadership in other aspects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The last inspection identified weaknesses in the role of curriculum co-ordinators which still remain in most subjects, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and leading development. In addition, there is no clear leadership for either Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) or Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) to ensure consistency and teamwork.

43. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are also unsatisfactory. The Reception teacher is the co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage, but she is not part of the leadership team and, for the most part, operates separately from the rest of the school. Although she provides informal advice to the two teachers of the mixed Reception/Year 1 classes, her influence on curricular provision and the environment for the children in those classes is limited. Although an action plan is in place to improve provision in the Foundation Stage, few of its priorities are being addressed successfully, especially that relating to developing the children's independence and autonomy. The monitoring and evaluation of provision in the Foundation Stage classes are not rigorous enough.

44. The management of provision for pupils with SEN is unsatisfactory. Because of staffing costs, the SENCO is only employed for one day a week, mainly in an administrative role. This has major repercussions although the headteacher is also involved in SEN provision. It means that the

SENCO is unable to act as a focal point for teachers and support staff to discuss strategies and air concerns. She is unable to carry out her leadership role appropriately in training support staff and monitoring their work to ensure that all are up to date with new trends and practices. This is particularly important as, due to budgetary constraints, teaching assistants have had limited training and, being few in number, it is difficult for them to liaise with teachers. The SENCO is not a member of the leadership team which limits her ability to highlight the needs of these pupils in school development. Some teachers are not confident in their new role of taking responsibility for pupils with SEN rather than the SENCO. In addition, teachers new to the school and supply teachers are not being given enough support and guidance to enable them to meet the very specific needs of pupils with SEN.

45. Governors have a good working relationship with the school and are supportive of the headteacher. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, is limited. This restricts the governors' effectiveness in ensuring that the school provides an acceptable standard of education for all its pupils. Governors were not aware of the strength of parental discontent, and parents were unsure of the role of governors in listening to and acting upon their concerns. Although governors have challenged the headteacher on certain issues and have set appropriate objectives for the headteacher to meet, their role in shaping the direction of the school is not sufficiently strong. Their failure to ensure that the statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage are met means that children in the Reception year are not receiving equality of opportunity or access to an appropriate curriculum.

46. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for improvement over a three year period, with a more detailed breakdown for the current year. It provides a comprehensive programme for development in teaching and learning, curricular provision, special educational needs, assessment and leadership and management. However, its scope is too great to achieve in the allotted timescale. It presents teachers with a large number of initiatives to be implemented and leaders with a considerable number of areas to manage and evaluate. This is tending to result in a 'scattergun' effect rather than bringing about gradual but firmly embedded change. As a result, it is not successfully tackling the underlying weaknesses that are at the root of the pupils' underachievement.

47. From the outset, the headteacher has taken a rigorous approach to evaluating the work of the school and its performance. Effective procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been set up within a yearly timetable. In this way, the headteacher and leadership team gain a clear picture of what needs to be done to bring about improvement and raise standards. As a result, training has been provided for teachers to help them address identified weaknesses. However, the support and guidance for some teachers have not been sufficient to eradicate the causes of underachievement. Detailed analysis of the school's performance in national tests, particularly in mathematics, has clearly identified where weaknesses lie. However, as with the school development plan, there are too many issues to tackle at the same time and there is a need to prioritise.

48. There are close links between the school's performance management procedures and the priorities identified for whole school development. For example, teachers have performance objectives to meet that relate to raising achievement in mathematics. However, the overall effectiveness of these procedures is unsatisfactory because of the number of temporary teachers and the high staff turnover. In addition, the rigour with which teachers' performance is evaluated is not always sufficient to secure improvement.

49. Weaknesses in financial management arise from a combination of factors, many of which were in existence when the present headteacher took up her post. Staffing costs, in particular, have placed a significant burden on the school's finances, particularly those caused by long-term staff sickness which was not covered by insurance. The additional costs incurred by giving teachers curricular responsibilities were, in some cases, found not to be providing satisfactory value for money in terms of the effectiveness of the role. At the beginning of the current financial year, budgetary constraints were such that there was no budget for staff or school development. Priorities

in the school development plan and subject action plans are not adequately costed, so there is no clear picture of how far short of its current needs the school's budget falls. The governors' decision not to increase the overall number of teaching assistant hours is having an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning for some pupils, especially those in Reception and Years 1 and 2.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	835153	Balance from previous year	66561
Total expenditure	813792	Balance carried forward to the next	21361
Expenditure per pupil	2386		

50. The larger than average balance carried forward into the last full financial year, as shown above, consisted largely of capital funding that was already committed to a building project.

51. The principles of best value are not central to the school's management and use of resources. As a result, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money. There is insufficient consultation, both among staff and parents, to ensure that the needs of all are met in the process of bringing about change and improvement. Parents are not kept well informed about the reasons for strategic decisions and their views are not regularly sought. This has led to a situation where a significant minority of parents is becoming increasingly frustrated with aspects of staffing and the organisation of classes.

52. Overall, the school's improvement since its last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There has been a decline in standards and in the quality of teaching and learning, and insufficient improvement in assessment, leadership and management. A review carried out by the Local Education Authority shows that many of the school's weaknesses were in existence when the headteacher took up her post. Since that time, the headteacher has experienced some significant barriers to raising achievement. Resistance to change among some staff has proved difficult to manage and difficulties in recruiting appropriately experienced teachers have consumed a great deal of management time. Staff absence and, in some classes, several different teachers for a class have led to insecurity and instability for pupils and lack of continuity in learning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **unsatisfactory**.

53. Children are admitted to school full-time in the September and January of the year in which they become five. Those who start school in September spend a term in the Reception class before moving into a class that also contains Year 1 pupils. Those who enter school in January spend two terms in Reception. At the time of this inspection there were 30 children in the Reception class and 19 children in the two mixed age classes. Induction procedures are good and help children to settle quickly and happily into the school. However, the arrangements for transferring children into the Year 1 classes are unsatisfactory and lead to significant discontent among parents, who feel that they are not kept well informed. Furthermore, there are significant differences in provision between the three classes which mean that children in the Foundation Stage do not have equality of opportunity and experience during their first year in school.

54. There are significant shortcomings in the quality of education provided for these children. As a result their achievement is unsatisfactory and they do not reach the standards of which they are capable in some areas of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, overall, though it is stronger in the Reception class than in the two mixed age classes. Curricular planning is unsatisfactory and does not meet the statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage. This is partly because the curriculum for these children is at times too closely related to the programme for pupils in Year 1 and partly because it does not provide adequate opportunities for children to develop independence or take the initiative in selecting activities. The accommodation and resources for children in the Year 1 classes are also unsatisfactory and restrict aspects of the children's personal, social and physical development, as it is difficult to provide a broad range of situations in which the children can use and extend their learning outside. Staffing is also unsatisfactory as classes do not benefit from the consistent support of teaching assistants throughout the week and some teachers do not have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage was judged to be satisfactory by the previous inspection. Since then, there has been a decline in the provision, in particular for the children who are taught in the mixed age classes.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Reception soon develop confidence and form good relationships with each other and with adults.
- There is insufficient emphasis on children's personal and social development in the mixed age classes.
- In all classes, children do not have enough opportunities to choose activities for themselves or to initiate their own ideas through play.

Commentary

55. Children do not reach expected standards in all aspects of their personal development and are capable of achieving more than they do. Relationships between adults and children are good, and this helps to build children's self-esteem and confidence. Most children are interested and motivated to learn and have a developing awareness of their own and others' needs and feelings. Children work as part of a group, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly. Most have a sound understanding of what is right and wrong and their behaviour is satisfactory. However, children do

not always sit quietly and maintain attention when appropriate and do not initiate ideas or show independence in selecting activities. They are too reliant on teachers for direction and do not always exercise self-control when they are given a degree of freedom.

56. These shortcomings result from weaknesses in the quality of teaching which is unsatisfactory in this area of learning. The provision for children to choose activities for themselves is insufficient and free play is limited in scope and frequency. Teachers do not promote independence through planning opportunities for children to make choices about what they can do and to initiate their own ideas through play. Furthermore, the weekly planning for children in the mixed age classes makes no reference to the Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development and takes little account of the guidance for the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Even in the Reception class, this aspect of the children's learning is not promoted strongly enough, as activities are mostly directed by the teacher, leaving little scope for pupils to develop a degree of independence. In all classes, children are expected to sit for too long on the carpet listening to the teacher and to spend too much time on a single activity.

Communication, Language and Literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's listening, communication and language skills are developed well in the Reception class.
- There are good opportunities for children to share and enjoy a wide range of books.
- There is structured teaching of sounds and letters and children are given a range of opportunities to learn to write.
- Provision for children in the mixed age classes is not as good as in the Reception class.

Commentary

57. Most children make satisfactory progress in developing new skills and reach the standards expected of them by the end of the Reception year. The teaching and curriculum for speaking, listening, reading and writing are satisfactory, overall, with some good features in the Reception class. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to talk, which enable them to become confident speakers. Children listen to stories with great interest and attention and many know about books and how to use them. The Reception teacher is particularly skilled at story-telling and holds children's attention well. However, there is sometimes a tendency to talk for too long which means that some children with a short attention span lose interest and motivation. Curricular planning in the Reception class shows that language and literacy activities are linked well to other areas of learning. For example, the class focus on *Hansel and Gretel* involved comparing the height of cut out trees, icing gingerbread houses and examining 'minibeasts' which might live in the forest, as well as retelling and sequencing events in the story, writing posters and acting out the story.

58. This is not the case in the mixed age classes, where the curriculum is planned mainly for Year 1 pupils, with separate activities for the Reception children. Teachers do take account of the differing levels of attainment amongst the Reception children, some of whom work in groups alongside Year 1 pupils where appropriate. However, the opportunities for children to communicate through play are limited and planning does not make effective links between areas of learning as in the Reception class.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are not planned well enough to ensure progression in learning for all children.
- There are too few opportunities for children to join in with number rhymes, songs and counting games.
- The planned activities are at times too long to retain the interest of the children and do not always take account of their earlier achievement.
- There is some good teaching in the Reception class.

59. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and standards are below average in this area of learning. The curriculum is not planned well enough to ensure that children receive appropriate experiences throughout the Reception year, or that the teaching builds effectively on their previous learning. Achievement is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, younger children in the Reception class were given more challenging tasks than the older children in the mixed age classes. There are too few opportunities for children to learn from well known number rhymes, songs and games. In some cases, there is insufficient emphasis on learning through practical activity. For example, in a lesson in a Year R/1 class, where children were comparing two sets of cubes to see which had more or less, the activity for the Reception children consisted of worksheets which they coloured in. This lesson, also showed that insufficient attention had been given to matching the activities to children's capabilities in order to build on previous learning. Sometimes too much time is spent on the tasks and the children become restless when they have to concentrate on one activity for a long time.

60. There are some examples of good planning and teaching in the Reception class. For example, in one lesson, children explored the concepts of 'taller' and 'shorter' by comparing objects and sorting cut out trees according to height. They had to find objects that were longer or shorter than the one they were holding. Some worked in the playground with the teaching assistant to draw a line of trees that were reducing in size. The children all showed interest in these activities, which were related to the *Hansel and Gretel* theme, and clearly enjoyed them.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

61. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards or teaching and learning in this wide area of learning, but the evidence shows that there are significant differences between the provision in the Reception class and that in the two mixed age classes. Indications are that there are significant weaknesses in the provision. In Reception, children have more opportunities to learn from first-hand experience than in the mixed age classes, where curricular planning is based more closely on the National Curriculum requirements for Year 1 than on those for the Foundation Stage. Although some of this work captures the interest of the younger children, it does not cover all the aspects recommended for the Foundation Stage, especially the opportunity for children to explore and learn by doing on a day to day basis. The weekly planning in the Year R/1 classes makes very little reference to the Early Learning Goals and takes insufficient account of children's previous learning.

62. Teachers in all classes do not provide enough opportunities for children to build and construct with a wide range of objects, select appropriate resources, tools and techniques to assemble materials or to use ICT to enhance their learning. Curricular planning for the Reception class shows that children benefit from a wider range of experiences that involve using the outdoor area to explore their environment. However, not all of these activities are planned well enough to develop learning, and sometimes opportunities to make effective use of the school grounds are missed. In one lesson, whose objective was to find out about and identify some features of living things, children spent a long time searching the classroom for hidden plastic 'minibeasts' as well as observing some living ones under a magnifying glass. Too many children were involved in the same activity and many lost interest as it went on for too long. Consequently, some children drifted aimlessly round the classroom as there were no other planned activities for them to choose from.

Physical Development

63. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision, standards, teaching or learning. However, there are significant differences in the quality of provision between the Reception class and the two mixed age classes. The limitations of the accommodation in the Year R/1 classes, and the lack of a permanent teaching assistant, mean that children do not have constant free access to the outdoor play area. Reception children benefit more from this facility on the days when the class has an assistant, but the use of the outdoor area to extend learning is inconsistent. Teachers provide children with a suitable range of experiences to help improve their manipulative skills by handling modelling materials, scissors and brushes. However, this is not clearly planned for in the mixed age classes.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Reception classroom is vibrant and stimulating and promotes creativity.
- The environment for children in the mixed age classes is dull and uninspiring by comparison.
- The quality and range of experiences for children in the Reception class are much better than in the mixed age classes.
- Not enough time is given to imaginative role-play.

64. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory because it is inconsistent and does not fully meet the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, the children's achievement is unsatisfactory and they do not reach the standards laid down in the Early Learning Goals. Children in Reception explore colour, texture and shape through painting, modelling and printing. They make collage pictures, explore repeating patterns and use playdough to create woodland scenes. When learning about *Little Red Riding Hood*, children make wolf masks, and listen to the music of *Peter and the Wolf*, copying simple clapping rhythms. They use puppets to retell a story and act out parts of a story with the teacher or assistant. Opportunities for children in the mixed age classes to pursue similar activities are limited as the curriculum is planned by subjects according to the National Curriculum guidelines. Although children participate in art and music activities, these are not as appropriate as those planned for the Reception class.

65. The Reception classroom provides a rich environment for developing children's creativity. It is colourful, well laid out and clearly planned to stimulate children's imagination. However, it is not always used to the full as children do not have enough opportunities to engage in structured role play. The mixed age classrooms are smaller and provide less scope for the teachers to create a stimulating environment for creative development. However, the contrast between these rooms and the Reception classroom is stark. Not enough has been done to ease the transition from one to the other or to make the most of the available space.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

- Pupils in Year 6 reach above average standards and are developing a good feel for language.
- Variations in teaching mean that pupils make uneven progress through the school.
- There is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' research skills.
- Teachers' confidence is shown in the way they introduce new learning.
- Work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities especially in mixed age classes.
- Marking does not challenge pupils to improve their work.
- Targets give pupils a good incentive for higher achievement.

66. Overall, standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. By the time they reach the top of the school, pupils' achievement is good. However, within this judgement, there are marked variations in different year groups. The achievement of all groups of pupils including those with SEN and the more able is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 3, satisfactory in Year 4 and good in Years 2, 5 and 6. This is directly linked with the quality of teaching in those classes. In the last inspection, standards were above average at both Year 2 and Year 6 and teaching was reported to be good with some very good and excellent teaching. Improvement has, therefore, been unsatisfactory.

67. Across the school, standards are average in speaking and listening. Many pupils are careful and responsive listeners and this helps them to absorb new ideas and information and apply them to their work. In Year 2, some pupils speak confidently and audibly and offer opinions freely in well-formed sentences. However, others need encouragement to develop simple and appropriate responses. Many Year 6 pupils put forward views in a well-judged and thoughtful way whilst some find it more difficult to elaborate on their ideas or to use precise language. Teachers frequently use talk partners to add impetus to the lesson but they do not use activities like drama and role play enough to improve pupils' speaking skills and build confidence. They also do not have effective strategies to encourage more reluctant pupils to contribute their views and allow the more articulate to dominate discussions.

68. Reading skills are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Many pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words using their knowledge of sounds and letter combinations appropriately and their understanding of the context. However, they are reluctant to talk about aspects of stories they have enjoyed or to identify favourite books and authors. They are not really aware of how they can locate simple information in non fiction books. By Year 6, pupils tackle books confidently and are fascinated by the twists and turns of the plot and the fate of characters. More able pupils detect hidden meanings in the text and predict possible outcomes. Older pupils are well aware of how to bring the book alive by using their voices expressively to match the mood and character of the story. They are keener to use the Internet rather than books for research. The school has highlighted group reading as an area for development. In the Year 1/2 group seen during the inspection, those in the focus group led by the teacher made good progress in reading skills but others in the class lacked direction and became distracted. In contrast, in Year 6, a group of pupils reading *The Borrowers* showed insight and maturity as they discussed the author's skilful handling of time in the novel.

69. Standards in writing are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In Year 2, many pupils have a developing awareness of the structure of a story and write in a variety of styles including lists and instructions. Some are beginning to use words imaginatively and bring ideas to an appropriate conclusion. Less able pupils write simple words and phrases but they do not always make sense and often run on without punctuation. Some write in a fluent joined style but others produce writing that is inconsistent in size with poorly formed letters. Spelling is variable but most have a sound understanding of simple punctuation. In Year 6, pupils write in a wide and challenging

range of styles and show increasing confidence in organising their ideas in interesting ways. Some have a good command of expression and their writing shows the influence of different authors. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient freedom to experiment with language and content and to be bold and innovative in their creative writing. They also do not always insist upon high standards in the presentation of written work.

70. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. However, there are wide fluctuations: it is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 3, satisfactory in Year 4 and good in Years 2, 5 and 6. Such inequalities mean that pupils' progress is uneven as they move through the school and they do not always achieve as well as they should. Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject is shown in lively presentations and in the clear and systematic way in which they teach key skills. In a Year 5 lesson about adding suffixes, the teacher skilfully helped pupils to explore spelling patterns and formulate rules. Teachers' positive and sensitive management of pupils creates a friendly, supportive atmosphere for learning. In another Year 5 lesson, the teacher used lots of praise to reward pupils' efforts but also made them justify their answers. They are also good at asking questions which make pupils think about what they are going to write and how to frame their answers. Some teachers move lessons along quickly but, in other classes, there is a lack of pace and vitality. Pupils are quick to pick this up; they relax into a comfortable rate of working and output is not good enough. Although there are good assessment procedures in the subject, some teachers do not use this information precisely enough to provide sharply defined or imaginative tasks for pupils which will challenge them all at their own level. This is especially true in the case of mixed age classes where there is a wide range of ages and abilities. Although learning objectives are made clear, teachers do not always give expectations of the quality and quantity of work required so that important learning is lost.

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring procedures are well established and give the leader a sound overview of provision. ICT is not used adequately in the subject. Marking is variable but, in general, it does not provide constructive comments to help pupils think more deeply about their work. Older pupils find spelling logs helpful but they are not being used consistently well by teachers. Pupils' reading records are not linked to National Curriculum levels. Targets have helped pupils to raise their expectations of their own performance and are a good springboard for improving standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. The development of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. For example, in RE, pupils explore different versions of the same story in the Bible and write certificates for Special People. In art and design, pupils decorate their willow pattern plates and write stories. In good links with history, pupils write letters home from the Battle of Marathon and younger pupils sequence events in the life of Louis Braille. Year 6 also wrote Aboriginal stories as part of multicultural week.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
- Standards are low in Year 1.
- More able pupils make good progress in Year 2 due to good teaching and high expectations.
- Standards are low in Years 3 to 6.
- There are weaknesses in pupils' ability to use and apply mathematical knowledge to solve problems.
- Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is helping to address underachievement.

- The National Numeracy Strategy is not being implemented consistently well throughout the school.
- Good assessment procedures have been introduced but are not yet being used consistently.
- Numerous changes of staff have adversely affected the development of teaching.
- The use of ICT in mathematics is unsatisfactory.
- The co-ordinator has a clear idea of the priorities for improving the subject and is monitoring teaching carefully.

Commentary

73. In Year 6, standards are well below average because a high proportion of pupils are not reaching Level 4 and too few higher attainers have achieved Level 5. Achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils' progress has been erratic throughout Years 3 to 6 due to inconsistencies in the teaching. These judgements reflect the low standards achieved in the national tests in 2003. Since the school's last inspection, standards have fallen from average levels, which represents a significant decline. In 1998, underachievement by boys was identified as an issue for the school to address. Since that time, the results of national tests have shown underachievement by girls. At the present time, there is underachievement by both girls and boys, with no significant pattern of variations.

74. Standards are average in Year 2, as at the time of the last inspection. This judgement also reflects the standards reached in the national tests in 2003. Pupils achieve well in Year 2 because they are taught in groups formed on the basis of their previous attainment and higher attaining pupils, in particular, are challenged well. The subject leader teaches in Year 2 and is setting a good example, both in her high expectations for the pupils and her implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching is brisk, well planned and challenges pupils to apply their knowledge to solve problems. There is a good balance between direct teaching and independent work, which moves pupils along well in their learning. A strong feature of the lesson observed was the use of visual images and practical equipment to help pupils understand division. Well targeted questioning enabled pupils to work out answers to problems and explain the strategies they had used. Carefully planned tasks challenged groups of pupils at different levels and the use of the 'traffic light' system of self-assessment involved pupils well in evaluating their own progress.

75. In Year 1, on the other hand, expectations are too low and standards are below average. For example, in one lesson, pupils spent a considerable time comparing two groups of cubes, both of which contained fewer than ten, to decide which had more and which had less. Pupils' books show that there is insufficient challenge in the work they are given, especially for the more able. One of the lessons observed for Year 1 pupils was satisfactory because the original planning was amended by the headteacher, who also supported the supply teacher throughout the lesson. There are significant weaknesses in the planning for numeracy in Year 1 as activities are not matched appropriately to the pupils' needs or previous attainment levels.

76. Standards are low in Years 3 to 6 and the quality of teaching varies considerably from good to unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good in Years 5 and 6, and this is going some way towards addressing the underachievement. In Years 5 and 6, teachers have high expectations of pupils and lessons are well paced and challenging. However, teachers find that there are significant gaps in pupils' understanding due to poor teaching in the past. Much of this is due to the very high turnover of teachers and the number of temporary teachers that the school has employed over the past two years. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Years 3 and 4, where there was insufficient pace and challenge to the lessons and tasks were not planned well to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment.

77. Throughout the school, there are weaknesses in pupils' ability to use mathematical knowledge and to select appropriate strategies to solve problems. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement and some teachers are addressing it well in their lessons. However, this is not consistent. In some cases, pupils are unable to solve problems because they have not been taught well in the past and do not have all of the strategies and knowledge at their fingertips.

78. When the Headteacher took up her post, the National Numeracy Strategy was not being implemented consistently throughout the school, and the high turnover of staff since that time has adversely affected attempts to rectify the situation. Some teachers do not have a clear idea of how to adapt the strategy to meet pupils' differing needs, and some are not aware of the need to do this more rigorously even within teaching groups that are formed on the basis of previous attainment. Another significant factor is that the recently introduced assessment and recording procedures are not being used consistently by all teachers. As a result, some teachers do not really know what pupils can already do or where the gaps in their understanding lie. This was also a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Together with shortcomings in curricular planning, these factors make it very difficult for temporary teachers to meet the needs of the pupils.

79. The use of ICT in mathematics is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, there was little evidence that pupils use ICT to extend their numeracy and data handling skills.

80. The subject leader has a clear vision for the subject and is beginning to have an impact on how the subject is taught. She provides good leadership and has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject which she has gained through monitoring teaching and learning and examining pupils' work. She has correctly identified the need for consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, improving teachers' planning and assessment procedures. The co-ordinator has already started to address some of these areas of concern successfully. She has carefully analysed the school's results in national and internal tests and identified areas of weakness in teaching and curricular planning. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching has identified where improvements need to be made and the school is receiving valuable support from an Advanced Skills Teacher. However, significant training needs still exist. There has been an overall decline in mathematics provision since the last inspection. This is recognised in the school improvement plan, which sets out an extensive programme to address weaknesses. It is also reflected in the performance management objectives of the permanent staff, who are working towards raising standards through improving their own teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. The use of mathematics in other areas of learning is inconsistent and not fully planned. As a result, opportunities for the pupils to apply their skills productively in all subjects are missed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards reached by the pupils in Year 6 are too low.
- Pupils in Year 2 do well.
- ICT is not used well enough to assist the pupils' learning in science.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too varied.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
- The implementation of curricular planning does not promote smooth progress.
- The relatively new co-ordinator has a clear grasp on how to improve provision in science.

Commentary

82. Pupils in Year 6 reach average standards compared with all schools. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. However, both inspections judged that achievement in Years 3 to 6 was unsatisfactory. This is because standards compared with similar schools were and are well below average and standards were and are not as high as in English. The last inspection judged that there had been very little improvement since the inspection before

that. Improvement since the last inspection remains unsatisfactory. The evidence shows sound cover of all aspects of the subject and broadly average standards in all areas in Year 6.

83. Pupils in Year 2 reach above average standards and achieve well. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection. It is not as high as the standards reached by the pupils in the end of year assessments by teachers in 2003. The difference is explained by variations in the abilities of the pupils in the two year groups concerned. The evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 have a strong understanding of life processes and living things and of physical process such as electricity. They have a sound knowledge of materials, for example, how they can be changed by bending and stretching.

84. Throughout the school, although pupils clearly enjoy investigative work in this subject, they are relatively weaker in this aspect of the subject as there is sound evidence of some over direction by some teachers. Other important weaknesses are the very limited use of ICT to support the pupils' progress in the subject. The application of their numeracy skills is also underdeveloped and the use of their literacy skills is too restricted in format.

85. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory as it was when the school was last inspected. However, it varies significantly in different parts of the school. In Year 2, teaching and learning are good. Analysis of the pupils' work in Year 2 shows that, although standards in one class are better than they are in the other, pupils are generally challenged. The curriculum is generally well covered and the marking of work is supportive and questioning. Most pupils are at average standards and significant numbers are at above average levels. However, the analysis of the work of Year 1 pupils shows that teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The books contain very limited amounts of low quality, poorly presented work of below average standards. Work in both of the classes containing Year 1 pupils is essentially the same for pupils of all abilities.

86. There is a similar pattern in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are, overall, good although they range from satisfactory to very good. However, unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Year 3 and satisfactory teaching and learning in Year 4 mean that the pupils' progress slows down. The fundamental reason for weaknesses in teaching in Years 1, 3 and 4 is the school's lack of adequate assessment procedures. This means that teachers often pitch work at too low a level thus making the scheme of work based on national guidelines ineffective. In addition, the work for pupils of different ages and abilities is frequently too similar. Weak assessment procedures also mean that the pupils essentially have no real idea of how to make their work better. In some cases, teachers' expectations of the pupils are not high enough. Where extension work is provided for able pupils, they generally have to complete the same work as the rest of the class before it is available to them. As a result, they do not always attempt it because time runs out.

87. The co-ordinator took on the role at the start of the current school year. He gives the subject good leadership although it is clear that, before his appointment, leadership in the subject was unsatisfactory. This is because the substantive holder of the post was absent through illness and the leadership was only covered on a temporary basis during this absence. The present co-ordinator has a good grasp on the strengths and weaknesses of the subject which he has gained through monitoring teaching and learning and examination of the pupils' work. He has correctly identified the need for consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, improving assessment procedures and the effectiveness of curricular planning and more use of ICT to support the subject as the main areas for improvement in order to drive standards up. The co-ordinator has already started to address some of these areas of concern successfully.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are strengths and weaknesses in curricular provision of the subject.
- The pupils enjoy ICT and have secure basic skills.
- The relatively new co-ordinator has suitable plans to improve provision
- Resources are variable.
- Assessment procedures are inadequate.
- ICT does not support the pupils' learning in other subjects well enough.

Commentary

88. Standards in ICT are average in Year 2 and in Year 6. These are the same judgements as those made when the school was last inspected. They represent satisfactory achievement and improvement since the school's last inspection. In Year 2, pupils have word processed their work in English and used the Internet for find information, for example, about the United Kingdom. They have also programmed a robotic toy, used ICT to support their art work and played simple games. There was little evidence that they had reviewed and modified their work. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have produced work at appropriate levels in similar aspects of the subject to those seen in Year 2. For example, Year 5 pupils have word processed fables. In addition, Year 6 pupils have a suitable knowledge of spreadsheets. Weaker aspects of curricular provision in Years 3 to 6 are control technology, the use of E mail and the understanding of sensors.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. Additionally, as in that inspection, teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Strengths of the teaching and learning include clear explanations which show a good grasp of the subject, setting work that the pupils find interesting, good relationships and appropriate support when pupils encounter difficulties. Similar weaknesses in teaching and learning, over direction of the pupils, lack of challenge for the most able and weak class management, were noted by this and the school's last inspection.

90. Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils show and express confidence when using computers. They have a good grasp of basic functions such as control of the mouse, opening and operating programs and using the keyboard. They work together well and are not afraid to make and learn from mistakes. The pupils enjoy using the Internet to find information. The school has introduced an appropriate policy for use of the internet.

91. The co-ordinator has taken up the role very recently and has made a satisfactory start to managing the subject. He has recognised and, in some cases, already started to address the major weaknesses in the subject in an Action Plan for its development. Plans include improving the provision of resources. There are strengths in the school's resources, for example, its new laptop trolley and a good digital camera. However, some of the older equipment has faults which, for example, prevent pupils from storing or printing their work regularly. In addition, shortages of software, for example, have limited the school's ability to teach the pupils to use simulations. Resources to address these issues have been purchased and, in some cases, put into use recently.

92. The action plan for the subject also contains plans to update the scheme of work and to set up assessment procedures. There are no whole school assessment procedures at present. This reduces the effectiveness of the planning as teachers do not have sufficient information about how well pupils have done in the work they have previously covered. This means that they cannot be sure that the work set is at the right level to ensure that pupils maximise their progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There was very limited evidence of the effective use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. Evidence of the use of ICT in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and music was found. However, in no case was this use

consistent, well planned or in sufficient depth. There is very little display of work involving ICT in the school. The co-ordinator's Action Plan recognises the need for improvement in this aspect of ICT.

HUMANITIES

94. Not enough evidence was gathered during the inspection to make valid overall judgements about provision and teaching and learning in **history**. Indications from the lesson seen, analysis of work, talking to pupils and looking at displays and planning are that standards in history are average in both Year 2 and Year 6. In a lesson observed, older pupils compared census returns in Ashingdon in 1841 and 1881. Although the lesson was well prepared and effectively encouraged pupils to raise their own questions for research, the lack of cooperation of some pupils led to unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Evidence shows that pupils enjoy being time detectives and using historical sources to find out about the past. Year 6 are studying the Victorians and how technological changes shaped the history of the times. Year 5 pupils have looked at how the Ancient Egyptians were dependent on the riches of the Nile for survival. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have studied how archaeology helps us to draw conclusions about the past and have examined the impact of invasion such as the Roman conquest of Britain. Younger pupils are developing a sound awareness of the passing of time as Year 1 pupils ask simple questions about the past and identify similarities and differences such as old and new houses and toys. Year 2 pupils are also satisfactorily developing their sense of time and change in their study of Louis Braille. ICT is used adequately to support research and literacy skills in the subject are satisfactory. Sound attention is given to the teaching of key historical skills although pupils' ability to identify and explain different interpretations is the weakest element.

95. One geography lesson was observed and a meeting with the co-ordinator was held. No other evidence was gathered. In the Year 5 **geography** lesson seen, standards were average but teaching, learning and achievement were good. The lesson was well planned and there was good support for pupils with SEN. The teacher's lively manner generated a good response from the pupils who behaved well and worked hard and co-operatively in groups. The pupils were considering the availability and use of water in varied climatic regions. The teacher challenged them successfully to think deeply about this topic and the effects of not having easy access to clean water. This was particularly effective when the pupils worked in groups comprised of those who had considered water in different climates from themselves. The pupils devised deep and pertinent questions and improved their understanding of the importance of water considerably. There was a well developed link with literacy in the application and extension of their speaking and listening skills. Control was firm but natural and generated good working relationships. Discussion with the co-ordinator revealed that she had only recently taken up the role although an experienced geography co-ordinator in the past. She has identified suitable priorities for action such as curricular planning and assessment procedures. However, she has not been able to monitor the school's provision in the subject and does not have direct access to a budget for it. Although resources are broadly satisfactory, there are shortages of maps, the range of books available and aerial photographs.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

- Teachers encourage pupils to have thoughtful views on religious issues.
- Missed opportunities for younger pupils to wonder at the mystery of nature.
- There is not enough use of ICT.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are encouraged to respect religious and cultural diversity.

96. Pupils' attainment in the subject is average in Year 2 and Year 6 and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Across the school, achievement is satisfactory. This is the same as the findings of the last inspection so improvement has been satisfactory.

97. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Two lessons observed, looking at displays and pupils' books and talking with them and teachers show that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the basic concepts of world religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. Teachers keep a sound balance between imparting knowledge and enabling pupils to reflect on important questions and to make a personal response. They also encourage pupils to relate this learning to their own lives and feelings. In a lesson about New Life and Growing Things, younger pupils discussed the story of Johnny Appleseed and how they must look after plants and animals. However, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because there were missed opportunities to develop a sense of wonder and excitement through observation of the beauty and order of the natural world.

98. Teachers also effectively develop pupils' ability to compare festivals and rites of passage in different religions. Year 2 pupils have looked at Christian and Sikh weddings and Year 5 pupils have compared Christian and Hindu funerals as part of their work on beliefs about life and death. Pupils in different year groups have also looked at the reasons why Jesus told stories and have explored simple meanings of parables like *The Good Samaritan* and *The Lost Sheep* and their universal messages of love, kindness and forgiveness. Younger pupils have visited St Andrews Church and have looked at the role of the vicar as part of their topic on Special People. In a good Year 6 lesson about the bravery of the Jews in the face of the Holocaust, the teacher's sensitive approach encouraged pupils to reflect and to form questions in their minds. As a result, they were able to empathise with the plight of Anne Frank and to explore the qualities of heroism in a mature and thoughtful way. Across the school, there is a degree of challenge in teachers' perceptive questioning but they do not make enough demands on more able pupils in their written work to enable them to think more deeply about the subject.

99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum but her monitoring role is not well developed. ICT is not used adequately in the subject. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflect upon the symbolism of light in different religions, learn about social responsibility and read stories like the *Ramayana* that illustrate moral codes. Through studying festivals like Shavuot, Divali and Christmas, they learn to appreciate the rich diversity of religious faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

100. No lessons in design and technology were seen during the inspection. One art lesson and two music lessons were observed. Inspectors did not obtain enough evidence to make judgements about provision in these subjects. Inspectors also heard pupils singing in collective worship and examined teachers' planning documents and samples of pupils' work.

101. Only one lesson in **art and design** was observed during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered through looking at displays, sketchbooks belonging to older pupils and talking to pupils but it was not enough to make reliable judgements. Vibrant and colourful displays of artwork show that the subject is valued and has a good profile in the school. As they move through the school, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to experiment with colour, size, shape and pattern so that they show increasing confidence in developing the detail of their work and in using various media and techniques. Year 5 pupils have decorated their work in the style of Clarice Cliff, Year 3 have printed pictures using contrasting colours and Year 6 have created 'faces' collage. The multicultural week acted as a good stimulus to pupils' creative skills in Year 4 's Rangoli patterns, Reception children's lion masks and Years 1 and 2's Kites and Dragons of China. Sketchbooks are used soundly to record observations and to develop pupils' ideas. The work of some older pupils shows good attention to line, detail and expression, for example, in the way Year 6 pupils have created movement in their drawings. In the one lesson observed, younger pupils were experimenting with tools and techniques to represent their recent visit to the church. Inadequate planning and guidance meant that the supply teacher had difficulty in coping with its organisation which led to unsatisfactory

teaching and learning. ICT is not an integral part of art and design and a limited amount of three dimensional work was seen during the inspection.

102. In DT, samples of pupils' work show that they are given an appropriate range of experiences in the subject. Year 1 pupils have made moving pictures that incorporate 'sliders' while pupils in Year 2 created lever constructions to make moving monsters and designed and made vehicles with axles and wheels for a cartoon character. Year 4 pupils designed and made monsters which used the principle of pneumatics to open the monster's mouth. The work on display showed good attention to detail and the finish of the product. Pupils in Year 5 tested different types of bread and developed criteria for testing and evaluating sandwiches. Year 6 pupils have evaluated a range of slippers and are in the process of designing and making their own. During the inspection, they were learning to use backstitching for strength and to provide durability.

103. In **music**, older pupils sing with enthusiasm, although not always tunefully. In a lesson for Year 5 pupils, the quality of teaching and learning was good and pupils achieved well. The teacher made effective use of a commercial scheme to teach pupils to compose chants which became progressively more challenging as pupils changed the chant as it moved around the circle. The teacher moved the lesson on at a brisk pace, encouraging pupils to 'feel' the music. There were opportunities for pupils to collaborate in small groups, to perform as a whole class and to evaluate each other's performance. Pupils made good progress in exploring and understanding repetition and contrast in lyrics and rhythm and most were able to maintain their own part against several others. Pupils are taught all elements of the curriculum through the use of a scheme of work that is linked to the nationally recommended guidelines. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn to play a range of instruments, both with the subject leader and visiting music teachers. The orchestra meets weekly and has played on a number of occasions in music festivals and to groups outside school, such as a local hospital. A choir has also been established. Year 2 pupils take part in a local music festival. The annual performance at Christmas also contributes to pupils' overall musical experience. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in PE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in swimming in Year 6 are very good.
- The subject is well supported by extra curricular activities and competitive events.
- Assessment and monitoring procedures are not good enough.
- There are strengths and weaknesses in resources and accommodation for PE.

Commentary

104. Two PE lessons were seen during the inspection. These observations indicated above average standards in dance in Year 2 and average standards in gymnastics in Year 6. This represents good achievement in dance and satisfactory achievement in gymnastics. Swimming was not seen during the inspection but the school's records show that standards are well above average. Most pupils swim at least 25 metres safely and unaided using a recognisable stroke by the time that they leave the school in Year 6. However, many do considerably better than this. This represents very good achievement in swimming. Since the school's last inspection, standards and teaching in Year 2 have improved, standards and teaching in Year 6 remain the same and high standards in swimming have been maintained. This represents a good improvement, particularly given the difficulties such as frequent changes of staff that the school has faced.

105. Teaching and learning in the Year 2 dance lesson seen were good. The pupils started and finished their movements well, showed good awareness of the audience and responded well to the beat of a tambourine. However, they sometimes bunched and failed to make good use of the space

available. The teacher increased the difficulty of the pupils' task by asking them to work in pairs. They did this well with good support from the teacher who used appropriate vocabulary such as "rigid" and "floppy" to develop the pupils' movements. The pupils evaluated each other's work well. They recognised strengths and weaknesses, for example, "lack of poise".

106. Teaching and learning in the Year 6 gymnastics lesson observed were satisfactory. Strengths of the lesson included its clear structure and the inclusion of all of the elements of performance, evaluation and understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. The pupils performed balances in small groups on the floor and small apparatus with average degrees of poise, control and imagination. They were restless when setting out apparatus and the teacher made them start again and stressed the need for safety. This slowed the pace of learning. Additionally, there was not enough stress on improving the pupils' individual performance and developing the poise and quality of their movements.

107. The school provides well attended netball, hockey, rugby, dancing and karate clubs. Year 6 pupils visit an outdoor and adventurous activities centre. The school takes part in competitive fixtures, for example, in netball and swimming, against other schools with some success. These activities support the development of the pupils' PE well.

108. The subject is satisfactorily managed by the headteacher who is an experienced PE co-ordinator. She has reviewed curricular planning, observed some teaching and learning and ensured that PE is allocated a suitable amount of teaching time throughout the school. However, because of other demands on her time, she has not gathered enough information about the subject to produce an action plan for its development. This means that weaknesses in the monitoring of the subject and the development of whole school procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are not being addressed. The headteacher plans to hand over the management of the subject to another member of staff when this is possible.

109. The school has an adequately sized hall but this is used as a passage way which interrupts lessons. The school has marked a clear yellow line around the edge of the hall for people to follow when PE is taking place for safety reasons and in order to reduce the effect of these interruptions. The good sized field and the swimming pool support PE well and there is an adequate hard surfaced area for the subject. Learning resources are broadly satisfactory. However, there are shortages of small apparatus and some equipment is old and worn.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is well planned in the curriculum as a discrete subject and integrated also into other subjects.

Commentary

110. No overall judgement can be made about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching or improvement since the school's last inspection. The arrangements for the delivery of this subject are good. There is a variety of well-planned activities throughout the school. These include time-tabled personal and social lessons, circle times and themes in assembly. Pupils decide on the rules they consider most appropriate for their class, discuss feelings, laws in the wider society, healthy lifestyles, safety issues relating to, for example, roads and fireworks. The school also fully involves the pupils in the running of the school through its school council.

111. Two lessons were seen during the inspection, in Year 5 about developing positive attitudes and in Year 6 where the pupils considered the influence of advertising. In both the teachers showed they have a good understanding of the subject. In addition to encouraging pupils to form their own opinions, the subsequent discussions both in groups and as a whole class helped to develop a wider understanding.

112. The co-ordinator for this subject area has only recently been appointed to the post. She is planning to extend the existing work by, for example, using pupils to design the conservation area and enabling pupils to build up portfolios of certificates relating to good work and other achievements.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

