

INSPECTION REPORT

CANVEY INFANT SCHOOL

Canvey Island

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114980

Headteacher: Mrs J Landsberg

Lead inspector: Mrs L Murphy

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 262875

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	239
School address:	Long Road Canvey Island Essex
Postcode:	SS8 OJG
Telephone number:	01268 683257
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr T Belford
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community infant school is average in size and serves an area of mixed housing in Canvey Island, Essex. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average nationally. The majority of pupils are of White – British heritage. Eight per cent of the pupils are from other ethnic heritages of which the main ones represented are Mixed-White and Black Caribbean and Asian. Three per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language though none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is broadly average at 13 per cent. The nature of pupils' special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, hearing, visual and physical impairment. Very few pupils have a statement of Special Educational Need and very few pupils are in public care.

Although the school has an average proportion of pupils transferring in and out of the school over the academic year at times the transfers affect particular year groups to a much greater extent. The attainment of the children on entry to school has recently been well below what is expected of pupils of their age though for the present group of reception children attainment on entry is below average. The school is suffering from continuing staff absence.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, geography and physical education
13828	Mr R Ibbitson	Lay inspector	
25623	Mr J E Cox	Team inspector	English, design and technology, information and communication technology and special educational needs
20523	Ms D Bateman	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, music, religious education and the Foundation Stage curriculum

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Canvey Infant School is an **effective** school. The pupils achieve well because the school is well led and managed, the quality of teaching and learning are good and pastoral care is very good. Governance is also very good. Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but this represents good achievement because of pupils' lower starting points. A barrier to raising pupil's attainment has been a significant rate of unavoidable staff absence over a long period. Because the school achieves its success with higher than average costs it provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- standards in dance, art and music are above the level usually expected of pupils by the end of Year 2;
- standards in reading, mathematics and science are below average though importantly the pupils achieve well because of the effective teaching and learning; pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well as a result of the very good provision for them;
- the headteacher, staff and governors have created effective teams which provide a good quality of education and very good care and welfare of the pupils;
- the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good because of the very good provision for their spiritual, moral and social development;
- links with parents and the community are very good though the rate of pupils' attendance is well below average; and
- the school does not ensure equal curricular and learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of the school has improved soundly since the last inspection and the previous key issues have been addressed satisfactorily. In addition good gains have been made in improving pupils' achievement, the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their care and guidance, the curriculum, and the leadership and management of the school. Standards are lower than at the last inspection because the pupils start school at a lower level than in 1998.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	D	D	E	E
writing	E	C	C	C
mathematics	D	C	D	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.*

The above table shows the school's results in the national tests. Taking the last five years the trend in the school's average results for English and mathematics was broadly in line with the national trend.

The pupil's achievement is **good** in Year 1 and Year 2. The inspection judgement is that though standards in the present Year 2 are below average in reading, mathematics and science pupils have made good gains from a well below average level on entry to the school. Standards are average in writing and are above expectations in the creative subjects of art and design, music and dance. In other subjects pupils attain at an expected level for their age. Pupils who have special educational

needs make very good progress because of the very well organised provision which is of very good quality.

Children's standards in relation to the early learning goals are on course to be below the level typically expected of children by the end of their year in the reception class. The pupils achieve satisfactorily.

In 2002 and 2003 the school was beset by staff absence which adversely affected the pupils' achievement.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. This results in very good attitudes and behaviour. The rate of pupil's attendance is well below average because a small number of families fail to ensure that their children attend regularly, because parents take children on holiday during term time and because of extended visits abroad by some families.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the teaching and learning is **good**. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour. Lessons are planned well and the pupils are given much encouragement to succeed. Skilled teaching assistants add much to the work of groups of pupils. The curriculum is sound with shortcomings in the provision for the children in the reception classes. Relationships with parents are very good. Links with the community are also very good. The quality of care, guidance and support are very good features of the school's work. These aspects come together to provide a **good** quality of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership by the headteacher provides a very clear sense of purpose and influences others to meet the school's aims. Very good support is provided by the deputy headteacher. Effective management ensures good links between professional development and the school's needs. Financial management is very good and has led to significant improvements in the accommodation which enables the pupils' independence to be nurtured very well. The governing body has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is very well led. Statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard and their views are fully justified. In particular they like the fact that staff expect pupils to work hard and children like coming to school. Their children make good progress and are given appropriate homework. Parents are comfortable approaching the school because it is well led and managed.

The pupils are very satisfied with the school. They like their teachers because they are kind, have a sense of fun and know the children well. Pupils especially like reading, mathematics, art and design and working with computers. The pupils like the 'golden time' when they can choose activities. They earn this special time through being well behaved, kind and working hard each week.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in reading and in using and applying skills and knowledge in mathematics and science;
- provide equality of opportunity for the children in the Foundation Stage; and
- improve the rate of the pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is below average. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in the reception classes and well in Year 1 and Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2 though a reading project is raising standards well in Year 1;
- higher attaining pupils in Year 2 benefit from working together in one class;
- the pupils are below average at using and applying their mathematical and scientific skills;
- by the end of Year 2 the pupils' creative development is good; and
- the pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.8 (14.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.6 (16.7)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 82 (86) pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The table above shows the school's results in the national tests for the last two years. Standards are generally lower in 2003 than the previous year because of the higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs in 2003 and the higher proportion of pupils joining the school after the reception class. Over a five year period the school's trend is broadly similar to the national trend. Over a three year period girls have out performed boys in writing and reading. The school has taken successful steps to address this such as widening the range of books to include non-fiction books to interest boys but also to increase the range of the girls' reading. The grouping of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 is also providing extra challenge to boys as well as girls, indeed, in the present Year 2 the majority of higher attainers are boys.

2. Standards in the six areas of learning for the pupils in their reception year are likely to be below those typically expected for the pupils' ages. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in personal and social education, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. The curriculum that they receive varies from class to class and is inconsistent in quality. Younger reception children experience an appropriate and practically based curriculum but the curriculum for older ones draws too heavily on work that is better suited to children older than they are.

3. Parents rightly consider that their children make good progress. The children in Year 2 started school with attainment that was well below that expected nationally for their age. They achieve well in the basic subjects but nonetheless do not reach the required standards in reading, mathematics and science. This is because the pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their growing knowledge and understanding of mathematics and science to apply their learning in a wide range of situations and to solve problems. Their skills at numeracy are at an average level and the pupils achieve well because they are well taught. In science the pupils gain a sound body of knowledge and their scientific understanding grows well. The school does not have a consistent approach to teaching a whole class how to experiment and investigate and has not yet found the

best way of deploying teaching assistants to promote an enquiring approach to learning in these subjects.

4. The leadership of the school has taken a strategic, successful view of improving the level of the pupils' reading. To do this it has carefully and thoughtfully introduced a reading project some while ago which has developed so far to include the pupils in the reception and Year 1 though has not yet reached the pupils in Year 2. The school is successful in teaching the pupils about letter sounds and words because staff use the approach very regularly and they consistently teach it well. The dividends are evident in the standards of reading in Year 1 and in the pupils' enjoyment of finding out about letters and the sounds they make and how they are placed together to make words. The quality of the pupils' writing has improved well. As a result of their confidence in reading they are developing independent writing well.

5. Another way in which the school's leadership is influencing the pupils' achievement is through the decision to partially group the pupils in Year 2 by their level of attainment. A class of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can forge ahead so that the proportion of pupils set to attain a level higher than typically expected is good.

6. In Year 1 and Year 2 the pupils make very good advances in their achievement in the arts. In art and design the pupils are very adept at observing the world about them and producing art of good quality. This is because the teaching is very good. In dance the pupils made very good gains and achieved very well in interpreting music and moving confidently and with finesse to portray a range of stories and feelings. The pupils use their good understanding of music to improve their dance and to take much enjoyment from making music together. This is as a result of the very good teaching in music. The staff are particularly confident and enjoy this teaching and their enthusiasm is reflected in the pupils' creative responses.

7. The pupils who have special educational needs benefit greatly from the specific support they receive in lessons and when working in small groups with the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The pupils' individual education plans are very well written, with achievable targets that closely match the pupils' needs. Consequently, by Year 2 pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Pupils in public care are provided with extra help if they require it and a close check is kept on their achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development and the provision for it, are very good. Their attendance is well below average. There have been no exclusions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have very good attitudes to school and enjoy their learning;
- their behaviour is very good and the pupils treat each other and staff with respect;
- the school works very effectively to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development - cultural development is not as strongly promoted; and
- in spite of the school's best efforts the rate of the pupils' attendance is well below the national average.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.6
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.

9. A significant number of pupils have a poor record of attendance and the overall rate is well below the national average. Though most of the pupils attend school regularly and punctually some do not. The attendance rate is adversely affected by a few parents who do not ensure their children attend school regularly and by some parents who take their children out of school for holidays. The rate of attendance is also adversely affected by extended visits overseas by some families. A recent project, working in partnership with members of the local education authority's Education Welfare Service, is helping to improve matters. The project is aimed at supporting parents and carers to ensure that children attend regularly and are discouraged from taking time off for holidays in term time. On the whole the pupils who do not attend regularly achieve less well than the other pupils and those absent through holidays miss out on whole parts of topics being studied.

10. The pupils behave very well and are very clear about the difference between right and wrong. All adults have clear and consistently high expectations of how the children should behave. Pupils are involved in deciding on the rules of their classroom and they value the rewards they receive for working hard and behaving so well. They understand and observe the rules of the school, which are sensitively displayed throughout the school to provide reminders of what is expected. The pupils absorb the values transmitted to them by all staff who are very good role models. The pupils play constructively at break and lunchtimes because the school provides a wide range of structured activities, games and equipment within the playground. The adults effectively develop the pupils' skills in playing games including team games. The very good behaviour in the school contributes to the progress the pupils make in all areas of their learning and personal development.

11. The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and the pupils develop very effective relationships and are very friendly and tolerant of each other. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment within the school. Most parents are confident that the school deals immediately and very effectively with any issues that arise. Pupils have reasonable opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to life within the school.

12. Many children start school with under-developed social skills, confidence and self-esteem. The quality of teaching and the range of activities provided ensure that the pupils make very good progress in their personal development, for example they learn about how to be a true friend. Parents like the high standards that are set within the school and how the children rise to them. Parents like it that their children want to 'have a go' even if they may 'get it wrong'. Parents find this very encouraging. One parent said children set high expectations for themselves and are not satisfied with second best work.

13. The pupils understand the importance of the diversity of cultures, festivals and religions in Britain today. This is in part because a thorough programme of assemblies is supported by displays with relevant objects of interest to develop the pupils' understanding of different cultures. Local religious leaders are regularly invited to participate in assemblies, which they do with great enthusiasm and sensitivity. This ensures that children are aware and respect their local cultural and religious heritage in which they live. It is not developed through lessons as strongly as other aspects of the pupils' personal development. Assemblies make a very good contribution for pupils to reflect on deeper issues and the creative arts provide lots of opportunities for the development of spirituality. The school has a very good relationship with a variety of community partners. They are very active in

fund raising for local and national charities. Very good use is made of opportunities to broaden pupils' views and participation in society such as when the choir perform at the local community centre.

14. Pupils who have special educational needs have very positive attitudes to learning. They relate very well to other pupils and staff and are confident to participate in assemblies where they can talk about their celebrations and beliefs.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

15. The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good and as a result the pupils learn at an effective rate. The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched by out of school activities. A weakness is in the provision in the Foundation Stage. The care and guidance provided by the school is very good. The school's partnership with parents is also very good and the school has very good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give a very good level of encouragement to the pupils and insist on high standards of behaviour;
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection though the teaching in the Foundation Stage varies in quality too much;
- the teaching of reading in the reception and Year 1 classes is good;
- the pupils who have special educational need are very well taught;
- the pupils work very hard;
- the overuse of worksheets limits learning in aspects of mathematics and science and limits the fostering of pupils' spirit of enquiry; and
- the deployment of teaching assistants and the marking of work are not always as effective as they could be.

Commentary

17. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated and the proportion of good or better teaching has more than doubled since 1998. Parents rightly identify teaching to be of good quality.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	9 (22%)	21 (51 %)	11 (27 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

18. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is variable because there has been insufficient monitoring of the curriculum and teaching to ensure that good practice is spread and so children in each class have equally good teaching. In classes where the pupils in reception and Year 1 are taught together activities are not always sufficiently based on an appropriate curriculum for the reception children. This means that overall the teaching is satisfactory though there is some good teaching in the class of youngest children. Strengths overall are in the very good management of the children's behaviour which means that the children are ready to listen and prepared to learn.

19. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science and pupils learn at a good rate. Teaching draws on a secure knowledge of the subjects taught and lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils develop a keen understanding about working hard and making progress. Explanations are clear and good use of questioning helps to improve the pupils' understanding of the subject and at the same time develop their skills at speaking and listening. Lesson plans are methodical and are used well to meet the needs of pupils' differing attainments. Plans for literacy and numeracy are detailed and this leads to pacy teaching and learning.

20. The teaching and nurturing of creativity through dance, music and art and design is very good. The teachers' subject knowledge is very good and so the subjects are taught confidently and energetically. The tasks are engaging and challenging and foster the pupils' imagination and inventiveness very well. Parents like the fact that children are allowed to express themselves. The pupils strive to reach high standards; they are uninhibited and glad to do their best in an atmosphere of strong support and enrichment. Underlying this teaching is the fact that basic routines are well established so no time is lost on the mundane.

21. The satisfactory teaching lacks the pace and fun found in the good teaching. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in the Foundation Stage. Staff know their children well and have established good relationships. Teaching assistants effectively support children when working with groups but they are not always effectively deployed when the teacher is teaching the whole class.

22. Teaching assistants are skilled at working with small groups of pupils. The assistants are well briefed and organised and manage their responsibilities effectively. This means that in many lessons, because there are two adults in the classroom, more pupils benefit from direct teaching in small groups. The questioning by teaching assistants is not yet of the quality found in the teachers but they are very willing to take part in professional development to do the best by the pupils that they can. When the teacher has the whole class grouped for discussion, often at the beginning and end of lessons the assistants are under-deployed and this is a waste of a valuable resource. In a significant number of lessons insufficient time is left for the concluding plenary session. This means that summaries of learning are too quick and there are lost opportunities to assess how well the pupils have understood new concepts and ideas.

23. The pupil's very good behaviour is an important factor in the good headway that they make in gaining knowledge and understanding in the subjects they study. Relationships between teachers and pupils are of high quality; adults are good role models and have the respect of their pupils. Adults really encourage the pupils to reach their personal best and provide classrooms that are conducive to good learning and the development of independence. Through an early reading project the teaching of letter sounds is good. This promotes pupils' independence in spelling and writing and helps much in their reading.

24. The good quality of marking in English is not reflected in other subjects where there is little written dialogue with pupils to explain how improvements can be made or to identify when key milestones have been achieved. The school's policy for marking is not used thoroughly enough and is insufficiently well monitored.

25. In practical work in mathematics and science, worksheets are used too frequently in some classes. This limits the pupils' opportunities to record in a range of ways and it restricts their understanding and knowledge of the practicalities of applying their skills to experiment and make discoveries. When scientific investigations are planned, or problem solving activities in mathematics are taught, the organisation of the lesson does not always lend itself well to the needs of all the pupils. This is often related to the precise tasks given to the majority of the class if the teacher is concentrating on working with a small group.

26. Teachers plan work that matches very well the ability of pupils who have special educational needs. Great care is taken to ensure that the pupils have access to all lessons. A range of strategies is employed to help the pupils, for example, in a lesson in the computer suite, the program being used was amended to make it easier for some pupils to read. Pupils with special educational

needs receive very good targeted support in literacy and numeracy from the teacher for special educational needs. Very good methods, such as making pupils act as the teacher to explain how to work out calculations, enables them to achieve very well.

The curriculum

27. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Curricular enrichment is good through a range of lunchtime activities. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and resources for teaching and learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A reading project is helping to raise standards in reading;
- there is very good provision for the pupils personal, social and health education and for the pupils who have special educational needs;
- the key issue from the last inspection has been addressed and effective links are made between subjects;
- provision for the pupils' personal development is very good;
- the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is insufficiently developed in some classes; and
- a range of clubs adds interest and broadens the curriculum.

Commentary

28. The curriculum is mostly based on national schemes of work and ensures that the pupils' knowledge and skills are developed systematically. Statutory requirements are met. Planning for literacy and numeracy is clear and good use is made of the national strategies. The key issue from the last inspection which was to develop a long-term framework, develop schemes of work and to ensure consistency in planning has been addressed well. The aspect of ensuring that the roles of subject leaders include monitoring and evaluation is satisfactory although not all have had the opportunity to directly observe and then improve the quality of teaching in their subject. The reading project is planned well and is having good impact on standards in reading especially in Year 1 where the pupils are benefiting from the groundwork in the reception class. The curriculum is clear and staff are well trained to implement it.

29. The resources and accommodation have been improved since the last inspection especially for the younger reception children in the provision of an outdoor play area. However, in some classes there is an inappropriate Foundation Stage learning environment such as no role-play areas and limited opportunities for the children to exercise choice and develop independence. Older reception children have not been given open access to use the full range of outdoor play resources, which impedes their development. Resources have improved in geography, physical education and information and communication technology since the last inspection. The range of books has been broadened to include a selection of non-fiction books to promote the reading of boys and to widen the scope of the girls' reading.

30. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good because teachers plan work for them very well and they are very well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. This enables these pupils to access all areas of the curriculum. Their individual education plans identify clear targets based on thorough analyses of their difficulties. Their targets, which include behaviour as well as literacy and numeracy, are precise and manageable. Very good arrangements are in place for pupils to receive individual, high quality support when withdrawn in small groups to work with the special educational needs' teacher.

31. Links between subjects are building up well. This means that the curriculum has more meaning for the pupils. Art and design, English, mathematics and history are good examples of where the curricular planning brings together the different disciplines. The integration of information and communication technology in other subjects, however, is a weakness. Though the suite of

computers is used for teaching a range of subjects the computers in the classrooms are insufficiently used to better promote information and communication technology as a day-to-day tool for learning across subjects. This is in part because the planning does not always make opportunities for a cross-curricular approach clear enough.

32. Visiting experts such as theatre groups, artists and musicians add variety and depth to the curriculum. A range of curricular interests is encouraged for example through a gardening club and extra tuition in music through recorder playing.

33. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education including citizenship is taught through discrete lessons and also through other subjects. The curriculum makes sure that the pupils are taught about healthy eating and care of their bodies. This includes an understanding about the use and misuse of drugs. Questions are answered sensitively about sex and relationships with a clear focus on relationships. These aspects are underpinned by appropriate policies and the school's very inclusive nature.

Care, guidance and support

34. The school has very good arrangements for the care and welfare of its pupils and ensures that they are given very good guidance and support. The pupils' achievement including personal development is regularly checked. The school takes on the pupils' views satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for child protection are very good;
- health and safety arrangements are very effective and access for all pupils is readily available;
- the pupils receive very good guidance;
- the school seeks the views of the pupils though there is no formal process for this.

Commentary

35. The school's very good procedures for child protection ensure that these matters are dealt with carefully and sensitively. All staff are well aware of the need for vigilance in such matters and the school works very well with specialist agencies as necessary. This includes a very good level of liaison for the pupils who are in public care. The very good health and safety procedures ensure a healthy and safe environment and all statutory requirements are fulfilled. Members of staff with a first aid qualification make sure that pupils who are sick or have injuries receive prompt attention. The school's accessibility plan ensures that pupils who have disabilities can be accommodated. Some modifications are still to be done but there is easy wheelchair and cloakroom access. Thought has also been given to the use of appropriate colours and signs in the recent building modifications to assist partially sighted pupils. Parents are very pleased with the level of care their children receive.

36. Good arrangements exist for the induction of children new to the school. Parents are offered an induction meeting where they can talk to class teachers and afterwards tour the school. The induction programme includes plenty of opportunities for the children to sample school life prior to attending full time. This effectively eases the transition for them from home to school.

37. The school has a range of informal methods to seek the views of the pupils. These views are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. There are no formal systems to ensure that the voice of each child or each class is heard.

38. Through the very good relationships that children have with their teachers and ancillary staff they are well supported in their academic and personal development. Pupils receive very good guidance and advice from caring teachers. Respondents to the parent questionnaire state that their children say they have a known adult in the school that they can readily go to if they are worried. Parents and inspectors agree that there is always a calm atmosphere within the school and the

children always seem to be looking out for each other. This represents an overall improvement since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

39. The school's very effective partnership with parents and the community are strong contributory factors in the children's learning. Links with other schools are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with parents include very good information to parents about the school and their children's progress;
- a minority of the parents do not respond well to the school's efforts to engage them in ensuring their children attend school regularly; and
- very good links with the community broaden the curricular opportunities that the school offers.

Commentary

40. The school has continued the very good partnership with parents noted at the last inspection and this is a major contribution to children's learning. Parents have very positive views of the school and consider it a happy, safe and inclusive environment in which children can learn and develop. Through its very good links with parents the school is aware of their views and tries to ensure that any concerns parents may have receive prompt attention and can be discussed.

41. Information to parents about their children's progress and in general about the school is very good. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements and give parents a good idea of their children's progress throughout the year. Monthly newsletters are brief but informative and well presented. Consultation meetings held each term enable parents to meet class teachers and talk about their children's progress. A shortcoming is the support from a minority of parents who have yet to make sure that their children attend school regularly and receive a continuous education. Those pupils who miss out on lessons through absence do not on the whole perform as well as others in their academic work.

42. The school has several exceedingly useful links with the community that benefit the pupils' learning very well. The family learning project for example provides opportunities for parents to attend classes in computer skills and in literacy and numeracy. The courses are run every year by outside agencies and are well attended. Through the courses parents have a greater understanding of what their children are doing at school and are better placed to support them. The school promotes and supports the local library and arranges visits to the school and awards certificates to children who have read books from the library. Links with the St Nicholas Family Centre which works directly with families in need and distress are wide ranging for example the centre receives harvest gifts from the school for distribution to needy families.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

43. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The governing body fulfils its role very well and fully meets its legal requirements. The way other key staff manage the curriculum is good. The leadership of the school is good and so is the management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are good. High aspirations are set;
- the governing body understands its role very well and is very well led;
- very good systems are in place to monitor the budget. Assets are used well to benefit the school;

- leaders inspire and motivate others and create very effective teams;
- key staff manage the curriculum including innovation well but the monitoring of teaching is insufficiently well planned; and
- the leadership and management of special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

44. The leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher is an experienced practitioner, who, in consultation with staff, governors, parents and pupils, has identified what needs to be done to raise standards and improve the school buildings to the benefit of pupils and staff. As a result, a comprehensive school improvement and development plan has been put together. The headteacher leads the school well and has a very clear vision of how the school is to develop. The headteacher has promoted effective teamwork and has motivated and developed the confidence of staff by giving them responsibility for major areas of the curriculum. The way in which the headteacher and deputy headteacher work together is a strength. It sets the tone for other professional relationships and management systems. Financial management systems are very good and enable the schools' assets to be used well to achieve educational priorities.

45. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to overcome barriers to progress caused by staff absence over recent years though the school is still beset with long-term absence. The re-forming of the senior leadership team is helping the school to forge forward. Staff have quickly taken on new responsibilities and have a range of forums for professional discussion and action. It is continually assessing the curriculum to ensure it meets the school's aims. Thorough analysis of pupils' performance has led to the introduction of systems to raise academic standards, for example innovative practice in reading which is successfully raising standards in the reception and Year 1 classes. The management of teachers' performance is well organised and is used to inform the school development plan. However, there is no organised system for subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning in lessons and this in part accounts for some variation on the quality of the teaching and curriculum. Well over ninety percent of parents agree with the statement in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school is well led and managed.

46. The governors play a very active part in the life of the school and are fully supportive of the headteacher and the staff. They are led by a positive and forward thinking chairperson, who strives hard to involve as many staff as possible in decisions made about the running of the school. Governors challenge the school in what it plans to do to ensure that decisions benefit all users. Their understanding and challenge cover all aspects of the school's work. Communications with and between governors and the school are good. The governors receive regular reports about the curriculum and school life from the headteacher and other staff. There is a good system of monitoring by governors and this gives them a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has an appropriate Race Discrimination policy in place with good procedures to record and monitor any incidents.

47. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. There are very good systems in place to monitor the pupils' progress. The introduction of a liaison book, in which all teachers make comments about the progress of pupils, means that pupils' progress is constantly assessed and the work they are given amended accordingly. The special educational needs co-ordinator and her assistant support the teachers, pupils and parents very well. Very good links have been established with the wider community, for example, outside agencies run classes in behaviour and anger management from which the pupils benefit.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	557561
Total expenditure	544969
Expenditure per pupil	2299

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	43978
Balance carried forward to the next	31386

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with much strength in the teaching of the younger reception children. There has been a decline in standards on entry to school since the last inspection. Children achieve satisfactorily and as a result most children are on course to reach a level below each of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. There are some weaknesses in the organisation of the curriculum. Younger reception children are provided with a good play based curriculum with many opportunities to extend and explore their imagination and interest in exciting topics. The structure and organisation of the curriculum for the older reception children has a number of shortcomings. Their education programme is arranged through individual subjects more in line with the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. This prevents children having sufficient time for choosing activities both within and outside the classroom.

49. The children in the Foundation Stage do not receive the same access to the curriculum during their reception year. Children who receive three full terms of education make better than expected progress compared with children who do not start full time education until the summer term. There is insufficient time made available for the monitoring and evaluation of the Foundation Stage provision.

50. The school has developed useful strategies to find out what children already know, understand and can do when they start school because the children come from a wide range of pre-school settings not all of which provide appropriate information to the school. Once teachers have assessed the children this information is well used to support children with special educational needs but is not consistently used to support the teaching and learning of all children. However, a strength is the way in which the children's work is rigorously monitored for how they recognise letters of the alphabet and simple individual words. The school has not consistently adopted systems for observing and assessing the children that reflect the recent government guidelines.

51. In **creative development** insufficient teaching was observed to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The younger reception children are provided with a good play based curriculum with many opportunities to extend and explore their imagination and interest in exciting topics that encompass the Early Learning Goals. The use of the outdoor play environment for the younger children to explore sounds and texture is good and effective use is made of different materials such as clay and recyclable materials to explore textures. The role-play areas for the younger reception children are used well by both boys and girls. There is a lack of good quality role-play areas for the older reception children and this inhibits the opportunities the children have for using their imagination. The children's opportunities to make choices and to use independently resources for learning vary unacceptably from class to class.

52. Otherwise the children experience an appropriate range of creative activities and their skills improve. They use colours to paint good quality pictures and use a variety of materials such a card, glue and cotton wool to create Christmas cards which provides good opportunities for cutting and sticking. Younger children have the use of a 'Sound Garden' where they can explore the difference sounds made by a variety of materials suspended in clear plastic bottles. Children enjoy singing and do so regularly. In some classes music is regularly played as children play outside and as they enter the classroom and this lends to a quiet working atmosphere with plenty of opportunity for the children to develop a spiritual awareness.

53. Insufficient teaching was observed to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. The children bring little knowledge of the world around them when they start school. A sound curriculum helps them to experience a range of topics

and vocabulary. Their use of computers and other equipment is well planned and integrated into most sessions. Good quality teaching in information and communication technology allows the children to develop good skills in using the computer. Children can use a mouse and the keyboard to create pictures involving changing colour and an art program to create compositions of a beach. Those from higher attaining children are particularly detailed. The children enjoy developing their design and technology skills by creating models from recyclable materials.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

54. Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-balanced interwoven provision promotes good learning for the younger reception children;
- all staff are good role models and consistently promote good behaviour;
- some children are asked to spend long periods of time sitting on the carpet listening, which overtaxes their concentration;
- there are insufficient opportunities for the older reception children to develop their independent learning skills; and
- admission arrangements and links with the home ensure that children soon settle into school.

Commentary

55. Admission arrangements are effective and ensure that children settle quickly and easily into the school routines. Parents are made to feel welcomed and their contributions are valued. Staff are sensitive to the needs of the young children effectively supporting both children and parents to separate at the start of the school day.

56. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Opportunities for personal development are interwoven well into every session and children achieve soundly. Not all children have had playgroup, or similar, experiences before they enter the reception classes but teachers and teaching assistants promote the children's good behaviour and positive attitudes to school because they are consistent in their approach. Younger children learn to be independent and active learners, for example sharing tools and materials. Older reception children have insufficient opportunities to develop their independence and use their social skills in less directed activities. Children behave well even when they are required to sit quietly and listen for, at times, long periods.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

57. Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Letter sounds are taught well in every class and assessments of how well the children do in this are very good;
- children are individually well supported in developing their reading skills;
- children can copy letters of the alphabet and a few can copy simple words with increasing accuracy but early creative writing opportunities are not consistently provided;
- children who have special educational needs make good progress especially with their speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

58. The quality of teaching is good including when letter sounds are taught during whole class sessions. Many children come to school with little experience of books and generally weak language skills. From this low starting point they make good progress and achieve well. Reading skills,

particularly letter sounds, are taught consistently well across all classes and most children know that print can tell a story. Higher attaining children read simple books unaided and with good accuracy. There is generally sound support from home in reading which helps children's progress. Their speech develops gradually through interaction with adults and children's vocabulary broadens. Children can copy some letters and a few higher attainers can copy simple words. There are insufficient opportunities especially in independent play activities to encourage the children to have a love of writing their own stories or recording their feelings.

59. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and provided with the support they need. Particular emphasis is placed on developing their skills in speaking and listening. Adults take much care to speak clearly and make sure that children respond orally to simple questions and in short discussions.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

60. Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Younger children use a variety of art and design activities to support the recognition of shape, number and patterns;
- teachers build on what children know, understand and can do when they start school and use this knowledge well to support number activities;
- older children are not regularly provided with opportunities to use their mathematics skills within play activities; and
- insufficient opportunities are provided for older children to initiate their own learning.

Commentary

61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children start school with very little knowledge of mathematics, though some can count from one to five successfully often without understanding what they are saying. Teachers build on this knowledge appropriately and number activities are emphasised. Children learn to recognise numbers and to count successfully.

62. Art and design is used well to help the pupils identify and use shapes. This was the case, for example, when children used sponges and paint to print repeating patterns. Younger children use a variety of play based resources such as bead threading, sorting and sequencing activities that precede basic number work. Not all children within the Foundation Stage have access to these exciting activities because the older children are asked to copy numbers without fully exploring how they can be used in other situations.

63. In group work teaching assistants help the children to count and come to a better understanding of number but teaching assistants are not always effectively deployed when the teacher is working directly with the whole class.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

64. Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in dance;
- hand and eye coordination is well developed for younger children within the outdoor play area; however
- the use of the outdoor area for older children is underdeveloped and they miss out on the rich and stimulating experiences that are provided for the younger children.

Commentary

65. Children do very well in dance because the teaching very effectively encourages the children to listen to music and to interpret it. In a very good lesson seen the children changed quickly into their shorts and T-shirts in preparation for a lesson in the hall. While they waited for others to finish they spontaneously danced in the classroom. The teacher grasped the moment and played music that they enjoyed. The children's behaviour was very good and much enjoyment accrued before the formal lesson had begun. Excellent relationships together with lively exposition that was challenging and inspiring meant that the children's learning was very pacey and they quickly improved at letting their feelings flow freely as they danced to music from a range of countries. The pupils' expression improved very well.

66. Overall, the youngest reception children make good progress while the older reception children's progress is limited due to an inappropriate curriculum. Younger children develop a good understanding of moving in and out of spaces and handling small apparatus such as a bat and ball with growing confidence. Younger children regularly use a variety of resources, which ensure that they develop their skills with increasing confidence. Younger children have access to climbing frames as well as other exciting resources for them to develop skills in aiming and throwing a ball into a basket, or hitting a ball with a bat. Older children do not have such a variety of opportunities to develop their physical skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

67. Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well;
- marking is used well by some teachers to show pupils how well they are doing and how to improve;
- the school has put in place good strategies for raising standards in reading but this has not yet impacted on pupils by the end of Year 2 where standards are below average;
- teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills;
- the monitoring of teaching is under-developed;
- classroom assistants are used well in some lessons to support pupils but are underused in other lessons;
- information and communication technology is not used enough in English lessons.

Commentary

68. Overall, standards in English are below average. Standards in writing have risen over the last few years because of good teaching and pupils attained average results in the national tests in 2003. However, standards have fallen in reading because pupils start school with below average language skills and not enough attention has been paid in the past to raising standards. Standards in reading in the 2003 tests were well below average. Pupils' achievement is good in writing and satisfactory in reading. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are average and they achieve well in this respect.

69. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school. This is because they are very well supported in the classroom and when taught in small groups. The work they are given is very carefully planned and they are given a great deal of encouragement. The school is working hard to raise boys' achievement. Consequently, the progress made by boys is sometimes better than that made by girls. However, because boys have a lower starting point, girls attain higher standards than boys.

70. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils benefit greatly from the many opportunities teachers provide them with to improve their speaking and listening skills. Most pupils in Year 2 speak confidently and make themselves understood. Some younger pupils have a restricted vocabulary, which hampers their ability to communicate effectively. However, teachers work hard to overcome this by:

- explaining unfamiliar words and using the correct technical vocabulary;
- encouraging pupils to discuss their ideas in lessons; and
- expecting pupils to justify their answers and opinions.

71. The pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory. Standards are below average in Year 2, where not enough pupils reach higher levels. However, the school is making strenuous efforts to raise standards in reading. A review of books has been carried out. This led to the purchase of a wider range of books to provide more interesting material, particularly for boys. The school is now in its second year of participation in the Early Reading Research programme, through which pupils have intensive sessions aimed at teaching spelling by looking at letter sounds and the way words are built up. Early results show that pupils are making good progress. Pupils in Year 1, who started the programme last year, are rapidly gaining in confidence and their reading is improving. Pupils regularly take home books to read and the reading record is a good form of communication between teachers and parents. Pupils know what they have to achieve because their reading targets are

clearly shown in the reading record. The library is well set out and has imaginative displays to capture the pupils' interest. Pupils use the contents and index pages to find information. However, although all the non-fiction books are coloured coded, very few of the pupils know how to use the system to find books. Although pupils say they have books at home, very few could name any authors.

72. Standards are average in writing. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and the rate of improvement in writing has been slightly better than the national trend. This is because teachers plan lessons well. The good support that teachers and classroom assistants give through good questioning helps pupils to develop their thoughts. Teachers give clear instructions both in lessons and by providing a list of the objectives to be taught during the week and this keeps pupils' minds on the task. Some higher achieving pupils have individual targets in their books. Pupils write in a variety of styles, ranging from instructions for playing games to letters to councillors and imaginative stories. Most pupils develop legible handwriting. However, some pupils are falling into bad habits because they do not hold their pencils correctly and their posture is inappropriate. Teachers do not always correct these faults.

73. Overall, the standard of teaching is good and there is some very good teaching. The best lessons move at a good pace and pupils are kept busy. Very good planning and imaginative teaching is a feature of these lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils were convinced they had seen an alien visitor during a drama lesson, so well did the teacher involve them in the activity. In these very good lessons and many of the good lessons, good use is made of classroom assistants in the main part of the lesson. However, classroom assistants are not always used effectively in the introduction and concluding parts of lessons. Teachers use questions skilfully to assess what pupils know and to develop their learning. Pupils respond very well to the good teaching they receive and they have very good attitudes to learning.

74. The newly appointed subject leader has a clear view of what needs improving. Careful analysis of test results has enabled the school to put strategies in place to raise standards in reading and writing. However, these are not closely monitored to see how well these strategies are being used in lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in subjects such as science. However, teachers miss opportunities to use the computers in classrooms to develop word processing skills and to give pupils experience of presenting their work in different ways.

MATHEMATICS

76. Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and as a result the pupils learn at a good rate;
- planning is clear and learning objectives are shared with the pupils; and
- the ability to use and apply pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding independently is underdeveloped.

Commentary

77. The standards attained by pupils in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below the national average and below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The boys achieved below the level of the girls. However, over a five year period there is no significant difference in the pupils' attainment by gender though there is a group of higher attaining boys currently in Year 2. These test results match the overall judgement of the inspection, that pupils'

attainment is still just below average, especially in Year 1, though significantly the pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by adults. 78.

The decline in standards since the last inspection is as a result of a combination of staff absence, increased numbers of pupils joining the school in Year 1 and Year 2 and a lower level of attainment on entry. Most pupils who start here in the reception classes make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieve national standards at the end of Year 2. A relative weakness is in the pupils' ability to apply their skills to solve mathematical problems.

79. In Year 2, in lessons observed, most pupils are confident in using numbers up to 100 and beyond. They understand how the place a digit occupies changes the value of the number. Mentally they can calculate the doubling of numbers and are aware of mathematical vocabulary such as 'perimeter'. They choose appropriate operations for additions and subtraction and recognise sequences such as odd and even numbers. There are shortcomings in some classes in the opportunities for pupils to articulate how they have calculated a problem and the link between addition and subtraction as well as multiplication and division are not explored effectively within all lessons. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are well supported and challenged to add and subtract two-digit numbers mentally, explaining their own strategies for working out $14 + 85$, for example.

80. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use the three-part lesson as described in the National Numeracy Strategy. The teaching is knowledgeable and confident and uses strategies that ensure that most pupils are challenged and achieve well in lessons. Learning objectives are clear and shared with the pupil so that all know what is expected by the end of each lesson. Teachers especially in Year 2 have high expectations, which are seen in the level of challenge in the tasks set through effective planning. Teachers consistently apply positive behaviour strategies to promote very good relationships and attitudes to learning. Within some classes there is an over emphasis on the use of worksheets that limits the opportunities for pupils' to investigate and explore mathematical ideas. This impacts on the way in which they can present, organise and discuss their work so that they can learn from their findings. Pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, which covers all aspects of mathematics with a strong emphasis on basic numeracy. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils when working with groups but they are not always effectively deployed at the beginning and end of lessons when the teacher works directly with the full class.

81. A new subject leader already has a good understanding of the strategies that are needed to ensure a consistent improvement in standards. There are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards of teaching and learning. The use of data analysis is under developed and the present assessment system does not provide either the co-ordinator or teachers with a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge that pupils achieved. The school therefore does not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are achieving which impacts on its ability to set clear targets.

82. The school has not set itself challenging targets for mathematics and there is uncertainty about the effectiveness of teacher's assessment of pupils who have transferred from Year 1 to Year 2. The school has rightly identified weaknesses in using 'jottings' to support mental calculation of number. Very limited use was seen of jottings to support teaching and learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

83. Mathematics is used to support some other areas of the curriculum such as some work with computers and the school's Walk to School Week. Overall, the use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

84. Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result the pupils achieve well;
- the use and application of scientific knowledge to experiment is not as good as other aspects of science;
- the marking of pupils' work is variable and does not always give them clear guidance about what they have to do to improve;
- the pupils' scientific vocabulary is underdeveloped; and
- the pupils enjoy science and work hard.

Commentary

85. The results of the teacher assessments in science in 2003 placed the pupils below the national average and below the average of similar schools. The inspection similarly judges standards to be below average. A barrier to raising pupil's attainment has been a significant rate of unavoidable staff absence over a long period which has adversely affected the pupils' achievement. Nonetheless, the pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.

86. The good teaching includes effective deployment of teaching assistants to help pupils in small groups. The adults are well briefed and manage the pupils well. Adults have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and pupils respond by being keen, alert and ready to work hard. Smoothly organised activities mean that the pupils cover much ground in a short time. However, the quality of questioning by adults other than teachers is insufficiently rigorous in helping the pupils to think really hard and to make connections between scientific concepts. Conversely questioning by teachers encourages a deeper and extended response because the questions encourage pupils to work things out for themselves and to link different aspects of their work to gain a better over-view of the scientific principles being taught. The quality of marking varies from class to class. At best teachers enter into a dialogue with the pupil and mark when key objectives are achieved. At other times marking is brief and generally consists of praise which is not linked to the learning objective and is generally insufficiently diagnostic to be helpful to the pupils.

87. A focus on encouraging scientific vocabulary is beginning to improve the pupils' understanding of science but there is some way still to go to bring up the level of their speaking to that expected in science. This was the case in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher quickly discovered that the pupils' understanding of fair testing was muddled in part because they mixed up the scientific terminology with the every day usage of being fair with each other. Because the curricular planning highlights terminology to be used this is improving the grounding in developing scientific vocabulary. The pupils' below average level of vocabulary in science adversely affects their ability to discuss their work clearly and precisely. This means that often their explanations can be rambling and miss the point.

88. The pupils receive a reasonable grounding in most aspects of science and have good opportunities for using their skills at writing to record their work. This encourages their independence. In experimental and investigative science and in the use and application of what they have learned pupils' skills are weaker. The teaching is still coming to terms with how best to teach experimental science and what activities to plan for the groups of pupils who are not directly working with an adult. When a teaching assistant is present the pupils are better organised and have increased opportunity for practical investigation. In Year 1 those not working with the teacher in an investigation were given research tasks but needed much help to concentrate in their task. In one lesson seen in Year 1 where pupils experimented to see if all light sources give out the same amount of light the quality and extent of resources was insufficient for the pupils to be able to appreciate the differences in their testing of torches.

89. The pupils take much enjoyment from science and are keen to learn new facts and to discuss their knowledge and ideas. They work hard and present their work well when not using worksheets which can inhibit their thinking.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

90. Provision in information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good resources for the subject but computers in classrooms are not used enough to support the pupils' learning in other subjects;
- the subject leader is knowledgeable and supports colleagues well;
- there have been recent improvements in staff expertise;
- there are good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs; and
- monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

91. By Year 2, pupils' skills in information and communication technology are at the expected level. Good teaching is enabling pupils to achieve well, resulting in good improvements being made since the previous inspection. National funding has been spent wisely to improve resources and provide training for staff. Consequently, staff confidence and expertise have improved. Teachers adapt well to new technology because they receive good support from the subject leader. The recent acquisition of a touch-sensitive display board has made it easier for teachers to conduct whole-class sessions.

92. The pupils are learning to use information and communication technology for word processing, drawing, data handling and control while working in the computer suite. However, although computers in classrooms are often switched on, they are not used enough to practise computer skills or support other subjects. Pupils learn to print their work and they confidently use the features of programs to present their work attractively and create special effects. Some pupils, however, are unsure when using the keyboard, having difficulty, for example, in finding particular keys. Pupils enjoy lessons in the computer suite and treat the equipment with respect.

93. Teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan lessons well. They make very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Classroom assistants support these and other pupils well and programs are adapted to overcome pupils' disabilities. Teachers explain lessons clearly and have high expectations of pupils' independence. Pupils respond in a mature way and try hard, confident in the knowledge that when they have a problem, help is at hand. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to show pupils how to use icons to carry out functions such as printing and saving their work. They show pupils how to use short cuts, for example to correct spellings. In the computer suite, new skills are taught while learning in other subjects is reinforced. For example, Year 1 pupils made good gains in mathematics in pattern making and sequencing by highlighting numbers on a square of 100 numbers.

94. Leadership and management in the subject are good. The subject leader is knowledgeable and provides very good support for colleagues, successfully leading training and the introduction of new equipment. The school's scheme of work is thorough and follows nationally recognised guidelines. Work is assessed at the end of each topic but assessment procedures do not yet ensure the school gets full value from them. For example, although there is a collection of pupils' work, there is not a comprehensive portfolio showing levels of attainment which would enable teachers to judge standards accurately. Too little emphasis is given to the monitoring of teaching and learning so that the use of information and communication technology in all subjects can be checked.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. During the inspection very little use was seen of information and communication technology outside the lessons in the computer suite. However, work on display shows that pupils use

computers in other subjects, for example, for writing tasks in English and to record and present information in mathematics. They use a digital camera to take photographs of each other, which they use when painting self-portraits. In design technology pupils use a drawing program to show their designs. Shortcomings are in the use of the computers in the classrooms.

HUMANITIES

96. Too few lessons were observed in geography and history for a full range of judgements to be made. However, evidence from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work and discussion with the subject leaders shows standards to be at a level typical for pupils' ages by the end of Year 2 in both subjects. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

97. In geography the pupils have a sound understanding of their local environment and its physical and human features. The school has addressed the weakness found at the time of the last inspection by making sure that the scheme of work includes a study of a distant locality. In the lesson seen pupils in Year 2 made good gains in finding out about Tocuaro in Mexico when they sampled Mexican food. The pupils say that they like geography because they find out interesting facts that they can share with their parents. The leadership and management of the subject have improved since the last inspection when it was underdeveloped. A consistent system for assessment has been developed but has yet to be fully used across the school.

98. In history the quality of teaching in the lesson seen in Year 2 was good. Indeed the teacher had very good subject knowledge and the lesson planning was well supported by a good scheme of work. Pupils develop an appropriate sense of past and present often through the good use of visits to give pupils first hand experience of the subject. For example, the pupils in Year 1 visited the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood to find out for themselves about old toys. Resources such as videos are used to support teaching and learning to develop pupils' understanding of for example events surrounding The Great Fire of London. The pupils in Year 2 are aware of some of the sources of evidence such as from Samuel Pepys' diary, which they know was written using a secret form of shorthand. Pupils develop an appropriate sense of history within their local community and have a good understanding of the cause and effect of a devastating flood that covered Canvey Island in 1953.

99. Insufficient use is made of computers to support learning in history though better use is made of numeracy and art to support pupils' understanding. Links are made with literacy when pupils write confidently and at length describing the sequence of events surrounding The Great Fire of London. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' writing skills. The use of assessment is underdeveloped and does not provide teachers in Year 2 with a clear understanding of the skills and knowledge that the pupils have achieved during Year 1. The school therefore does not have an accurate picture of how well the pupils are achieving.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A knowledgeable co-ordinator ensures that effective use is made of resources including artefacts;
- the pupils have good attitudes to the subject; and
- too little use is made of expertise that is available in the wider community.

Commentary

101. Overall, standards at the end of Year 2 meet the learning intentions set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils who have special educational needs do well in relation to their prior learning. Standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained and in some aspects improved.

102. All pupils are familiar with the Nativity story and why it is important to Christians. They can record the main sequence of events and the pupils in Year 2 use appropriate vocabulary such as 'annunciation' They have experienced learning about a range of other religions and can talk quite knowledgeably, for example about the use of 'mendi' patterns at Diwali. This builds on well from the way in which the pupils in Year 1 learn about their own friendships and the friends of Jesus and why they were important to Him.

103. Pupils respond well to religious education. They listen with interest and their involvement is high when teaching is linked to their experiences and matters of concern to them. They like to talk about their own experiences and ask appropriate questions to their age, for example why Mary and Joseph did not use an aeroplane for their long journey to Bethlehem. Much of the recording for religious education is by speaking and listening. The overuse of worksheets, at times, deprives pupils of opportunities to present their work in an organised way so that they can better discuss their findings and articulate their thoughts and draw upon their skills in literacy and in formation and communication technology.

104. The subject leader makes sure that a range of artefacts and other resources is used to support the teaching and learning. This helps the pupils to remember what they have learnt and how certain artefacts are of great importance to particular faiths. This level of provision is not fully extended to make sure that there are links with a range of faith communities and that parents use their expertise and local religious leaders contribute to the pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

105. In **physical education** only two lessons were observed and they were in dance. Standards in dance are above those typically expected for pupils in Year 2 and the pupils achieve very well. The pupils explore a range of actions with good coordination and control. They are able to comment productively on the work of their classmates and identify strengths and aspects that could be improved. In Year 2 the pupils were very well taught and not at all self-conscious. They collated a series of actions into a dance sequence with assurance and great confidence. They drew on their knowledge of literacy and music listening intently to the piece being studied, kept good time to the beat and offered good ideas from the story they dramatised. Their facial expressions and body posture reflected the mood of the music well. The pupils are very mature and on occasion when they mistakenly brush close to each other they smile, say 'sorry' and continue their work. Spirituality was developed well in this lesson one pupil closed her eyes to let the music seep through her body. A shortcoming was that the teaching did not urge attention to finer details, such as stretching fingers and toes, to polish the pieces and reach yet higher standards. The school is well resourced for physical education and provides the pupils with sports equipment at play times and lunch times and this enables them to develop their skills well. The subject is well led and managed and adds much to the school's links with parents and the community through sponsored sports events and the use of outside sporting agencies and clubs to deliver training and to work with the pupils. The school is well on its way to spending a minimum of two hours a week on the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Provision in art and design is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those usually expected of pupils in Year 2 and the pupils achieve very well;
- the teaching is inspiring and adds much to the pupils' spirituality;
- art is used to help the pupil's illustrate work in other subjects;

- the use of sketch books is underdeveloped.

107. The standards reached represent an improvement since the last inspection. This is because the quality of teaching is very good and much improved and far more consistent than in the past. Together with the use of a national scheme of work this enables the pupils to quickly build their skills step-by-step. The enthusiasm and interest shown by the staff adds much to the pupils' sense of pleasure gained from art and design. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 where the quality of teaching and learning was very good a very effective discussion got the lesson off to a very good start by encouraging the pupils' views and developing their spoken language. The pupils naturally used terms such as 'three-dimensional' and 'sculpture' and were able to give reason for their preferences. The pupils confidently gave advice to others about how to go about their work with different media and pupils listened carefully wanting to improve their efforts. The lesson was very well organised and managed and excellent relationships gave pupils the courage to work independently and create their works of art in an adventurous and meaningful manner. The atmosphere was very conducive to learning and self-discovery with focused praise and consideration from adults asking question such as 'Are you happy with your picture?' which led naturally into improvements. A relative weakness was in the quality of questioning from teaching assistants as these made too few demands of pupils and did not make them think before answering

108. The view is taken that 'there is no right or wrong' in the pupils' work. This strongly provides the pupils with encouragement to experiment and to find fulfilment from their work. Spirituality is developed very well through the subject. The pupils experience the feel and touch of a range of materials and adults encourage the pupils to appreciate colour and form all around them.

109. The pupils achieve very well. In drawing, in particular, the pupils' skills are high with much detail and life evident from careful observations. This is in part because art and design is used well in other subjects. The use of sketch books is underdeveloped and so the pupils have too little opportunity to see how their work in a range of media can be developed and to track how they can refine it. However, the pupils have very regular opportunities to develop the fine detail seen in many of the drawings and sketches of the average and higher attaining pupils through work in other subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Provision in design and technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of the teaching and learning is good and the teachers' planning is thorough;
- the monitoring of teaching and planning is underdeveloped;
- the action plan for developing the subject is good.

Commentary

111. By Year 2, standards are what is expected for pupils of this age and their achievement is good. The thorough planning ensures that the pupils' skills are developed sequentially. Younger pupils learn cutting and sticking skills when making faces on paper plates and these skills develop well to enable the pupils later to produce sliding and winding mechanisms by joining materials with glue, staples and split pins, and using spindles.

112. The quality of teaching is good. In a lesson in Year 2 the teacher's enthusiasm encouraged good discussion which enabled the pupils to evaluate their models and suggest improvements. When all pupils used the same sort of cardboard cylinder and the same winding mechanism, their choices of what they could make were restricted. However, pupils showed in their discussion that they could think of alternative ways of making the model. Teachers' planning is good. In a lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher taught pupils the correct sequence of making a Christmas card with

moving parts, stressing the need to mark out, cut, assemble and join materials. Pupils were given the chance to think about how they could improve their design taking into account the characteristics of the paper and card.

113. The subject leader is relatively new to the post. However the action plan shows clear and accurate ideas about the way the subject needs to be developed. Weaknesses in planning, highlighted by the previous inspection, have been addressed by adopting nationally recognised guidelines and the scheme of work is based on these guidelines. Although appropriate arrangements are in place to assess pupils' work at the end of each topic, not enough attention is paid to monitoring teaching and learning and teachers' planning.

MUSIC

114. Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching by the subject leader provides specialist teaching which enhances pupils' learning and develops the subject knowledge of adults where it is weaker;
- singing is good and the use of music to support learning in other subjects is effective;
- well-planned lessons help pupils to achieve very well; and
- there are good opportunities for the pupils to develop their music through extra curricular activities.

Commentary

115. The pupils achieve very well because of the very good specialist teaching. The teaching is well planned and resources are used very effectively. The provision for music has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum delivered through the scheme of work provides good support for teachers with weaker subject knowledge and further help comes from a knowledgeable subject leader. From time to time the subject leader teaches other classes providing teachers with practical ideas of how the pupils' learning can be accelerated.

116. Music supports other areas of the curriculum. It is well used, with a wide variety of mainly classical and some non-western music played during assembly and in lessons. The school is well resourced with a wide variety of tuned and percussion instruments that reflect many different cultures which are accommodated in a new music room. All children enjoy singing and can sing with both rhythm and in tune even when not accompanied by instruments. They can sing in unison and use rhythmic pattern to perform in harmony.

117. The choir and recorder club makes an extensive contribution to the extra-curricular provision and is appreciated by both the school and the local community. Pupils enjoy music and parents welcome and enjoy the three major productions their children take part in each year. This offers the pupils many opportunities to develop their performing skills and encourages their progress in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

118. Two lessons were seen in this aspect. The pupils are developing into very thoughtful and considerate young people. The school sees pupils' personal and social development as integral parts of its overall provision and teachers promote very caring and thoughtful attitudes in pupils in line with this ethos.

119. Teachers provide good role models for the pupils. They set good examples, such as by insisting that nobody speaks while someone else is giving an opinion. Teachers show how they value the contribution of all pupils. For example, when pupils struggled to find the correct words to

say what they wanted, the teacher was very patient and encouraged pupils to try so that their opinions were heard, and then praised them for their efforts. In connection with the coming of Christmas, pupils discussed the needs of very young babies. They showed a good understanding that older people have responsibilities towards babies. Pupils understand the need for safety rules. They understand, for example, why the playground is divided into different play areas so that pupils can choose to play in the way they feel most comfortable.

120. Strategies such as 'golden time' encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and develop mature attitudes. Pupils show a polite curiosity with visitors and are friendly towards one another. They help each other spontaneously such as when a pupil dropped her pencil case on the floor, other pupils helped her pick up the pencils without being asked. The school has committed to becoming a healthy school as set out in the school development plan and there is already much impact evident. For example, the playtimes are healthy and happy times for the pupils and give opportunities for much physical activity as well as occasions for the older and younger children to mix socially. The pupil's understanding of community is much advanced through times such as assemblies when the school comes together and through activities such as sports days when parents are involved.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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