

INSPECTION REPORT

COLDEN COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colden Common, Eastleigh

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116074

Headteacher: Mrs. Julie Mullane

Lead inspector: Mark Evans

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th February 2004

Inspection number: 263881

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	230
School address:	Upper Moors Road Brambridge Eastleigh Hampshire
Postcode:	SO50 6HW
Telephone number:	01962 712111
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Alan Teatherton
Date of previous inspection:	15 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With two hundred and thirty pupils on roll, roughly half boys and half girls, Colden Common is about average in size. It serves a village situated between Winchester and Southampton. The village itself is comparatively rural, but the majority of the population work in the nearby cities and towns. The pupils are reasonably evenly spread throughout the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to most other schools: there are fourteen children identified as having special educational needs, including two who have Statements of Special Educational Need. Overall, this is six per cent and one per cent respectively, below the national averages. The nature of the special educational needs varies, but includes moderate learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Less than two per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority groups other than British-White. There are no children of travellers, refugees or asylum seekers, nor are there any pupils who speak a language other than English as their mother tongue. There are no "looked after" children. The mobility of families is not an issue. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is under six per cent, below the national average for primary schools. The pupils are taught by ten full-time teachers, including the headteacher, in nine classes: the average class size is twenty-six. Almost all children entering the school have pre-school experience, with most having had five terms of playgroup experience. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average, but has dropped steadily since 1998. Since the last inspection a new Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Chairman of Governors have been appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20999	Mark Evans	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, the foundation stage, art and design, music.
32468	Jane Manfield	Lay inspector	
32747	Kathy Faulkner	Team inspector	English, design and technology, religious education.
17546	Chris Wonfor	Team inspector	Special educational needs, science, geography, history, physical education, personal social and health education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Colden Common Primary School is a very effective school, with many outstanding features.

Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are well above average. The school is very well led and strongly supported by parents. It provides very good value for money: it provides a very high quality of education at a cost per pupil that is just under the average.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very high standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology;
- The vision and creativity of the headteacher are exemplary;
- The school's very strong sense of community and positive ethos;
- The curriculum is outstanding;
- Leadership throughout the school is very good and day-to-day management is outstanding;
- Teaching is very good: all lessons were at least satisfactory, seven out of every ten were very good or better and one in five was excellent;
- Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good, both within the classroom and around the school;
- Relationships with the parents and carers and the care provided for pupils are very strong;
- The school has good links with local community, but has more to contribute.

The school has improved further in all aspects of the provision, since the last report. All key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed: indeed some have been turned into major strengths, for example the curriculum and the provision of religious education. Communication within the school and strategic management are now very strong. Access to professional development for all staff is greatly improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 reason for the apparent mismatch between the grades above is that this (the 2003) cohort was a lower attaining group overall than previous years. Thus the pupils attained standards that were above or well above the national average, as well as above what would have been expected from their prior attainment. This was nevertheless, well below the expected level for this kind of school. Inspectors' evidence looking at the current year 6 pupils, support the judgement of **good** achievement and **well above average** attainment in English, mathematics and science, at all key stages.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Their attendance and behaviour are **very good**, their attitudes to school **excellent**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Almost always, pupils are really happy to be in school. The quality of the teaching is very high: it is frequently creative and stimulating. Pupils learn fast and enthusiastically. The curriculum is particularly strong: it is an innovative tapestry of the national curriculum subjects linked together in a way that makes learning easy and exciting. Staff relationships with parents and carers are very strong.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance, leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The governing body makes a very strong and effective contribution to the success of the school. The headteacher's excellent leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and school improvement team, has given a very clear direction for the school: her vision for the future is exciting and imaginative.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the school: pupils report that they are particularly pleased with the way that they are consulted and respected by staff at the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no major issues that the school needs to address.

The governing body, headteacher and staff at the school may, however, wish to consider the following minor points;

- [1] Develop links into the local community further;
- [2] Expand the work it does with other educational institutions, for example in training new teachers;
- [3] Explore the reasons that some parents do not feel that the reports on pupils give sufficient detail.
- [4] Further formalise the management of the Foundation Stage;
- [5] Raise awareness amongst teaching staff about how to further improve pupils' spiritual development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards attained by the pupils at the end of reception and at the end of year 2 and year 6 are well above average: pupils achieve very well. There are particular strengths in speaking and listening and in information and communication technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are high throughout the school;
- Information and communication technology: standards are very much higher than average;
- Achievement in the creative and physical subjects, which is very strong;
- Standards in religious education, which have risen very significantly.

Commentary

1. Pupils' test results at the end of year 6, compared to all schools, were above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science, as the table below demonstrates.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (29.2)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.6 (27.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.0 (30.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. However, compared to schools that have a similar intake of pupils, results in tests taken by year 6 pupils last year were average or well below average.

3. It is the former, not the latter, that is supported by the findings of inspectors, both in the classroom and looking at the pupils' work. The school was well aware that this cohort of pupils was a lower attaining group overall than previous years, which is why the statistical comparison is less complimentary.

4. In fact, the statistics mask a significant increase in attainment for the particular group of pupils. In writing, twenty-eight per cent achieved levels higher than was expected given their prior work. In reading, sixty-six per cent of the pupils made more than the nationally expected two levels progress in four years. In science, forty-five per cent made more than two levels progress over this period.

5. Pupils at the end of year 2 did well in comparison to all other schools in reading, writing and mathematics. But compared with schools that have pupils of similar prior attainment, they did not do as well as they should, especially in mathematics. The reason for this is clear: despite everyone's best efforts, this particular group of pupils experienced a brief period of disruption in their education, caused by staff changes and a series of temporary teachers. Inspectors looked at the group carefully, and firm action taken by the school has greatly improved the situation. Now, a year later, the group is doing well. It has made up all lost ground and the pupils are mainly working at level 3 or more in all subjects. This is above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.8 (15.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.3 (15.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Throughout the school, the standards attained in information and communication technology are very high indeed. Some pupils in year 6 are working at levels expected of a fourteen year old. The knowledge and understanding of some of the year 2 pupils too, is very advanced. Indeed, a number of pupils' attainment levels caused inspectors to have to check what had been observed against National Curriculum documentation for secondary schools, so unusual is it to see this level of work.

7. Although not many lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology, geography and history, there was a great deal of pupils' work to analyse: the pupils were also very keen and confident talking about their work. Standards observed were above average and often well above average. In particular, the understanding of the links between, for example, geography and history, and art and science, was often outstanding and illustrated a very deep as well as a broad knowledge of these subjects. It is clear that the subject knowledge of the teachers and the fluent cross-curricular approach to teaching have had very significant effects. Pupils with special educational needs met over seventy per cent of their targets this year, up from fifty per cent last year.

8. The standard of pupils' attainment and understanding in religious education are also particularly noteworthy, because this was an area of significant weakness at the time of the last inspection. Pupils now learn the right things, at the correct stage of their schooling, and again, demonstrate a deeper knowledge of Christianity and Judaism in Key Stage 1 and of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism in Key Stage 2, than would normally be expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

9. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good and their attitudes to school are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitude to learning is exemplary;
- Behaviour in classes and around the school is very good: attendance is well above average;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good: social and moral are particularly strong;
- Pupils mature well as they progress through the school.

Commentary

10. Pupils are happy: they are keen to come to school. They are enthusiastic about lessons and enjoy learning. They demonstrate an exemplary attitude to their work. Pupils are encouraged to learn independently and in lessons pupils work hard and constructively. They also value the variety of extra curricular clubs and events provided by the school. Those in year 6 enjoy running lunchtime dance and other fun clubs for the younger pupils.

11. The school sets high expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour is consistently very good. Pupils are friendly, considerate and polite to adults and each other. Staff and pupils know and understand the procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and any incidents that do occur are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant and relaxed.

Pupils are proud of the school's outdoor facilities and use the different areas and play equipment well.

12. Attendance is well above the national average and unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality. These ensure that any changes in pupils' attendance are quickly noted and actioned. There was one short fixed term exclusion during the school year prior to this inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.8	School data :	0.3
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.

13. As pupils progress through the school, they are keen to take on responsibility and the school provides many opportunities for them. The school council includes all year groups and is very effective in allowing pupils to make their views known. For example, the animal names for each of the classes were proposed and agreed through this forum. Pupils value this and feel that they make a real contribution to the way the school works. Older pupils have additional opportunities, as play leaders for the younger children, classroom helpers, and assembly monitors. In lessons, pupils also have the opportunity to evaluate their own learning. Even the youngest pupils use 'thumbs up' to indicate how well they feel they have achieved.

14. The school encourages pupils' awareness and understanding of the world around them. The daily act of worship meets statutory requirements and opportunities for spiritual and moral development go well beyond this. A good example is an assembly theme of dreams, which took the children from learning about Native American Indian beliefs, to considering their own thoughts and the consequences of their actions.

15. Pupils' social and moral development is excellent. The principles that enable children to distinguish right from wrong are fundamental to the school's ethos. Younger children understand the difference between good ('kind', 'thoughtful', 'brave') and bad ('mean', 'rude', 'selfish') behaviour. Older pupils are compassionate and respectful of others' needs and interests. All pupils demonstrate curiosity and imagination in exploring different cultures of past and present times. They understand that societies and individuals of different cultures will be diverse in the way they follow their beliefs. The school actively promotes individuals' self esteem. As a result, pupils of all ages are confident when they speak and feel they can try things out. Children coming into the reception/year 1 class for the first time feel well supported and settle quickly: by the time they reach the end of year 6, pupils are self-assured and well equipped to continue learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

16. The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**: the curriculum it provides is outstanding. Teaching is very good. Relationships with the parents and carers are very strong: pupils are cared for very well.

Teaching and learning

17. The quality of teaching is **very good**, for reception children and for pupils in years 1 to 6: as a consequence, pupils throughout the school learn **very effectively**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good throughout the school – seven out of every ten lessons seen were very good or excellent.
- One in five lessons observed was outstanding: no teaching was unsatisfactory.
- Learning is very good throughout the school.
- Assessment is very good – it is effective and used well to focus teaching at the correct level for individual pupils.
- Use of learning support assistants and other support, for instance in the library, is excellent – they make a real contribution to the high quality of provision.

Commentary

18. Teaching is very good indeed and this was a characteristic right through the school, not just in one or two classrooms. Similarly, the outstanding teaching seen by inspectors was not focussed on one age range, but at all levels. There are particular strengths in the way that teachers and all staff work together to create a really powerful resource for one another. This was something that was seen in classrooms, but also around the school, where teachers sought one another's advice and support in a natural and uninhibited way. This is certainly one reason why the general standard of teaching is so high, because teachers are constantly learning from each other. The teachers' subject knowledge is also high: in information and communication technology, in particular, this has a clear effect on teaching methods and on the impact that the teachers have on managing to promote the best learning. Teachers are also creative and willing to take a risk, to inspire and enthuse their pupils, even with the inspectors in! This further demonstrates the confidence of the teachers and their assured manner has huge benefits for the pupils' learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7(21%)	18 (53%)	7 (21%)	2(6%)	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.

19. Another aspect of teaching that is particularly strong, is the fluency with which teachers talk about cross-curricular issues. Most of the excellent teaching was based on this high level of confidence with the curriculum. For example, there were science lessons that focussed on flower parts where art and design was very much part of the lesson, and mathematics lessons that could easily appear to be designed to explore information and communication technology skills. The teachers' planning is very effective and clearly operates as part of an internal system to support the school's teachers and learners. The foundation of the successful teaching at Colden Common is this: teachers work hard, at different times helping or relying on one another, using a system that has been created to support the effective learning of the pupils. A further example of this is given below, in the discussion of assessment. Teachers' use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is very good. It is, in the main, an integral part of life at Colden Common School, although a few parents do not find the system as consistent as they would like.

20. Unsurprisingly, because the teaching is so good, pupils' learning is also very good. But the pupils themselves put a great deal into the school experience: they apply themselves with great vigour and enthusiasm and their productivity is excellent. They frequently work on after the lesson is finished or talked about their learning at playtime or lunchtime. Imagine the surprise of the inspector who was treated to a hugely extravagant bow by one of the year 1 pupils, as he passed down the corridor: year R/1 had just been learning about royalty and court customs! Not only do pupils work hard when closely supervised by the teaching staff, their capacity to work both independently and collaboratively is also excellent. This links to the high quality social development of the pupils, mentioned above.

21. Assessment is very good in most subjects and outstanding in the core subjects. It is thorough and constructive, and proves that assessment does not need to be overly time-consuming or arduous, to be effective. It is used to respond to pupils' individual needs, and to help them develop understanding of how they can improve further. It is less well established in subjects such as music, but is improving quickly to be comparable with the core subjects. There is excellent support for all pupils with particular educational needs, including those gifted and talented. The special needs co-ordinator, the able child co-ordinator, learning support assistants, and also all other members of staff combine to provide this support. Special educational needs are very important to all staff and they all take a clear collective responsibility for these pupils. For example, the school thought that the special educational needs code of practice and the local education authority's scheme to support these learners did not highlight sufficiently early, some difficulties that individual pupils might be experiencing. So they introduced a special school category for those pupils worrying staff but not yet at a level to be considered by the code of practice. When originally introduced, older pupils were identified at years 5 and 6, but this was quickly deemed to be too late for the support to make an impact on the pupils' attainment. All recently highlighted pupils requiring intervention strategies have been identified earlier and are children and pupils from the reception year to year 2.

The curriculum

22. The curriculum is **outstanding**. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities and links with the community enhances its quality still further. The school makes the best use of its excellent accommodation and very high quality resources to enhance pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is outstandingly innovative and offers pupils the opportunity to learn with enthusiasm, excitement and considerable enjoyment;
- Constant evaluation and review of pupils' learning, both by teachers and pupils is excellent;
- Curriculum planning is exemplary, including the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

23. There has been a significant improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection when several subjects were identified for improvement and religious education was judged to be unsatisfactory. It is now an outstanding example of how a curriculum can be designed not only to improve standards and raise pupils' attainment but also for their enjoyment. The curriculum at Colden Common has been completely re-written during the past two years under the very positive and creative leadership of the deputy headteacher, to reflect better the changing nature of curriculum planning and the specific interests of the school's pupils. It is very innovative and draws extensively on the expertise of staff, in teaching subjects that are stimulating, exciting and very up-to-date. For example, the use of cross-curricular links throughout the school is inspiring. Each topic skilfully draws on the use of key skills, including literacy and information and communication technology, to enhance pupils' learning. For example, the project on the Aztecs draws in all other subjects to provide an extremely rich learning experience. One of the geography topics in Key Stage 2 is entitled 'What's in the News?': lessons are not planned in advance, but according to what is actually happening at the time that the pupils and teacher get to the topic. Combine this with the excellent accommodation and high quality resources, and it is clear why the pupils have a really great time learning.

24. The school makes excellent use of themed weeks for art and science that includes visits out of school, as well as inviting visitors into school. A physical education day is planned for the near future. There is a very strong emphasis on providing extra activities to enrich the curriculum and motivate pupils, both during and outside the school day. Large numbers of pupils attend these clubs

and workshops that include a wide range of sporting, music and art activities. The foundation curriculum is very well planned alongside year 1 and more than meets requirements.

25. The quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum is exemplary. The entire curriculum is planned to ensure that as they learn and move through the school, pupils develop their skills in a systematic way. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's desire to enhance children's writing, but not to the exclusion of achievement in other subjects. However, it does provide numerous opportunities for pupils of all ages to produce outstanding examples of writing in many genres. The curriculum is meticulously monitored to ensure that all programmes of study are being taught and developed throughout the school within the agreed time allocations to ensure balance. This is very important as all classes, with the exception of year 2, have pupils of different ages. All staff are involved in the development of the curriculum as class teachers and as subject managers. Each subject manager plans, monitors and evaluates their own subject, which in turn is monitored by the key stage managers, then by the deputy headteacher as whole school curriculum manager. In addition the headteacher visits classes to observe teachers and pupils: finally, the governing body monitors the curriculum manager's action plans and evaluates progress through visits to school and also by inviting them to make presentations to the governing body.

26. Provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs is also exemplary. All pupils throughout the school are set learning targets either within groups or individually. Pupils with identified special educational needs, including those deemed by the school to be giving some concern, but before they reach the level of the special educational needs code of practice, are given work that is very well matched to their particular needs. Pupils participate in the setting of their own targets, either writing these themselves or asking a teacher to scribe for them. Those pupils who are achieving well beyond the national average are also supported to ensure they reach their full potential. The special needs co-ordinator provides outstanding support for staff and pupils and is supported by highly effective learning support assistants who sustain pupils' individual learning programmes. Targets for individual education and behavioural plans are detailed and reviewed frequently: they are monitored by teachers, learning support assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. Regular meetings to review pupils' progress are held at an appropriate time to allow parents to attend. The special needs co-ordinator and the headteacher review progress of individual pupils on a systematic and regular basis, to ensure that support is effectively and efficiently targeted. All staff show tremendous respect to those pupils who require additional help so they are never treated differently. For example, individual targets are often written on the back of group target cards and additional resources are subtly handed out to pupils while others are working.

Care guidance and support

27. Procedures and systems to ensure the care and welfare of the pupils are **very good**. The school provides them with very effective support and guidance: throughout the school, the pupils' views are genuinely acted upon by staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff systematically seek the views of pupils and act upon them: this gives them an overt and powerful signal, that the pupils' interests are at the heart of what goes on at Colden Common Primary School;
- The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent: there is an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust;
- The procedures and systems that ensure the day-to-day safety, care and welfare of the pupils are well established and effective.

Commentary

28. As soon as you enter the building, it is apparent that Colden Common Primary School is a caring place with a strong community ethos. Teachers, managers, support staff, lunchtime

assistants, administrators, pupils: all are welcoming and open with visitors. This is an indication of a happy and effective institution that places relationships high on the list of priorities. The care and support of pupils were strengths at the time of the last inspection and they continue to be so. It is clear that everything the school does, has the improvement of the pupils' well-being as its central aim. The school regularly seeks the views of the pupils, both formally and informally. Of even more importance, it acts upon these views swiftly and decisively, showing all involved that the school is very much a place for the pupils. Whether designing the murals to decorate the playground sheds, or developing better ways of using the playtime periods, the pupils know that their views count.

29. One of the obvious reasons for the sense of community apparent at the school, is the high quality of relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils, whatever their needs or background, feel included in all aspects of school life, feel safe and are confident in their teachers and support staff. They reported to inspectors that they know their concerns and ideas about school life will be taken seriously by staff. Teachers know their pupils very well. The whole school is actively involved in the further development of pupils' social, moral and personal skills.

30. The school pays very good attention to the day-to-day safety, care and welfare of pupils. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety: pupils involved in minor accidents or who feel unwell are treated with great kindness by the administrative staff when they are sent to the medical room. Child protection is handled professionally and appropriately. The caretaker and cleaner maintain the school building to a very high standard of cleanliness. There is ongoing daily support by the older pupils for the younger pupils: at lunchtime, 'leaders' organise games and help generally. Year 6 read with younger pupils, and look after them during activity weeks such as science week when classes are purposely mixed by age. This further enhances the community feeling in Colden Common Primary.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

31. Since the last inspection, partnerships with parents and others have strengthened. Parents are very supportive and involved, links with other schools are very effective and the school works well with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision of information, which is valued by parents;
- Children benefit from very good arrangements for starting and moving on from the school;
- The school has good and improving links with the wider community.

Commentary

32. Parents' views expressed through the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting were very positive. Most parents feel that their children settle into school very well, make good progress and are encouraged to become mature. Parents are supportive in a number of ways: regular class helpers, running after-school clubs and involvement in an active school association, for example.

33. The majority of parents are satisfied with homework routines and the pupils' homework and reading logs provide a good link between teachers, parents and pupils. The school provides very good information on the curriculum and school activities and events, through both written communication and meetings for parents. The annual report includes information about progress in each subject, progress in personal and social development and the pupil's own comments on what they have achieved and their targets for the coming year. The report format was changed in 2001/2002 following a survey of parents' views. Feedback from parents on the new format was very positive. Although most parents are pleased with information on their child's progress, a minority feel that they could be better informed.

34. Nearly all parents feel that the school is approachable and the majority feel that their suggestions and concerns are taken into account. The school promotes an 'open door' policy and

the procedure for dealing with parental complaints is clear and included in the school prospectus. Teachers, including the head teacher, use early morning playground duty as an opportunity for informal discussion with parents. The head teacher regularly attends the school association meetings, which provide a forum for discussion of school matters as well as fundraising and social events.

35. The Colden Common School Association plays an active role in involving parents and the community in school life. The association raises funds for additional and much valued school resources, such as outdoor play equipment and climbing apparatus. Events such as the fashion show and mother's day bazaar include local residents and organisations.

36. The school knows the locality well and involvement in village events is valued by both school and community. These links with the community are being further developed and increasingly beneficial. Recent work with the Parish Council and the Environment Agency have resulted in funding for improvement of school grounds and sponsorship for a school 'save electricity' project.

37. Links with other schools are good. The school has very effective connections with local playgroups and as a result most children are familiar with the school before they start in reception year. Work with other primary schools and playgroups helps to share expertise and ensure that pre-school children are well prepared for school. As pupils prepare to move to secondary education, the links with Kings' School are also very effective. A range of visits and meetings for pupils, parents and teachers at both schools help to ensure smooth transition. However, the school has a great deal to offer other educational institutions, and further development of these links is therefore desirable.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

38. This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. The school is very well led and management is excellent. The leadership of the head teacher, ably supported by the deputy head, senior managers and the governing body, is outstanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an imaginative, creative and forward-thinking approach to strategic planning;
- The governing body provides very effective support and challenge to the school's leaders;
- Leadership of the curriculum is excellent: management is confident and well informed;
- Staff are valued, motivated and work very effectively as teams.

Commentary

39. The head teacher was appointed in 2000 and immediately began to establish a clear educational direction for the school. Following recruitment of a new deputy head, senior manager and a number of teaching staff, a very effective management structure has been created. As a result, the school has been able to develop the strategic vision and plans for school improvement, focussed on enhancing pupils' learning and achievement. The strategic plan for 2003-2005 is innovative in its approach to raising standards. The focus is on improving pupils' underlying skills of communication and the quality of thinking across the curriculum. This approach is supported by detailed and consistent plans at subject level, for management and development. The governing body actively monitors and measures the success of the new approach. At the time of this inspection, the new strategy is well underway and evaluation by staff and governors is very positive. Evidence from inspectors' lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work confirms this judgement.

40. The governing body works very effectively with the school and is a major contributor to the improvements in leadership and management since the last inspection. Governors' involvement in the recruitment and deployment of staff during 2002 provided an opportunity for the governing body to really get to know the school and its strengths and weaknesses. The new chair of governors has instilled a business-like approach to the way the governing body works, which is appreciated. As a result, it is very efficient, understands school priorities and has a work programme that meshes well

with the school's development cycle. The chair and head meet weekly and governors with curriculum responsibilities talk regularly with subject managers. In addition, staff provide updates at governing body meetings. These very good communication links provide information to successfully monitor the school's progress against plans. Good, open relations allow the governing body to both support and challenge senior management: it is effective in shaping the direction of the school.

41. Financial planning, which includes the governors, the headteacher and the administrative officer, is very good. The school budget is currently slightly in deficit, which places a restraint on provision of specific resources, such as interactive white boards and leadership/management time for the deputy headteacher. However, management is informed and committed to obtaining best value for the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	628,961.00	Balance from previous year	18,841.96
Total expenditure	616,489.30	Balance carried forward to the next	31,113.66
Expenditure per pupil	2,309.00		

42. The management structure now supports a very efficient split in responsibilities between two key teams. The senior management team is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, whilst the school improvement team is responsible for promoting high standards in teaching and learning. This approach provides each team with a clear focus and both areas are managed very effectively. There is excellent communication between senior management team, key stage managers and staff. At the heart of this is the close collaboration between headteacher and deputy headteacher, who between them have inspired an ethos which places the pupils' needs at the centre of everything that the school does. As a result, plans are implemented positively and successfully. The support provided to teaching staff, parents and pupils by the administrative officer and assistant is of the highest quality.

43. All staff have clear roles and responsibilities, although management in the Foundation Stage needs to be formalised to ensure this clarity in the future. It is evident from the teamwork and progress made that staff are inspired by school leaders and feel motivated and valued. Procedures for induction of new staff are very good. Performance management is well implemented at all levels, including learning support assistants who play an important role in the school's inclusive approach to helping each child achieve his or her potential. Staff objectives are linked to the curriculum and school strategic plan. This is effective in making sure that the school's direction and focus are clearly understood and work towards them is monitored. Professional development is driven by school plans and individual roles; staff have opportunities to develop in subject, leadership and management areas.

44. Evaluation and assessment are intrinsic to the way all staff identify what needs to be achieved and how to achieve it. The school has rigorous procedures to analyse and interpret data on test results, targets and progress of all pupils. This ensures that targets are appropriate and outcomes are clearly understood. The strategic plan is supported by more detailed shorter-term development plans. Success criteria are set and progress is effectively monitored by school management and the governing body.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Children start school in September on a full or part-time basis and become full-time during the Autumn term. All children have attended a pre-school group before commencing at Colden Common Primary School. Good links have been established with the pre-school providers and the teachers visit the two local playgroups before the children begin school. Parents receive detailed information and induction arrangements are good and this means that the children settle into school easily. Assessments made on entry show that children's attainment is above average for children of this age, though this has dropped significantly over the last few years.

46. This year the number of children admitted to the school is below the school's agreed admission number. The school has organised the children in mixed-age group classes so that all reception children are taught with the year 1 pupils. This is having a beneficial effect on standards of attainment. All the reception children are making very good progress and will attain or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year. This represents good achievement. Year 1 pupils also achieve well.

47. There has been very good improvement in provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection, when there was no up-to-date policy, long-term planning or teachers with an early years qualification. All these concerns have been thoroughly addressed. Both teachers are suitably qualified and skilled in the teaching of young children. A curriculum policy for the early years is now in place and teachers' plans are focussed on the progress towards the achievement of the early learning goals. The learning support assistants have copies of the plans, and the opportunity to discuss them. As a result, they know which individuals and groups of pupils to support, and how. Teaching and learning during the inspection was very good. The teachers work in close partnership to manage the learning of the children. This could now be further strengthened by making more formal arrangements for the management of the foundation stage.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

48. Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and achievement is good;
- Quality of relationships with adults and other children are very good.

Commentary

49. The children's achievements in this area are good. Children are encouraged to become self confident and independent learners through well-planned and constructive activities. They are keen to share their ideas with adults and children in whole class teaching sessions. The teachers and teaching assistants work well together to give the children a secure and safe learning environment. The children show a clear understanding of classroom procedures and their achievements are recognised through praise, smiles and the use of "thumbs up" signals. The teachers set high expectations of behaviour and the children respond well to this. In a numeracy lesson, the children were able to follow the instructions for working on a computer programme without any adult help and organised themselves quickly. When one child was having a problem, another child showed him what to do in a kind and caring way.

50. The quality of the teaching is strengthened by warm and caring relationships. The adults provide very good role models for the children and an atmosphere of politeness and respect is

engendered. During a role-play activity at a royal restaurant, a parent volunteer very ably supported the children helping them to write an order and design a pizza.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

51. Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop speaking and listening skills
- The teaching of writing is good

Commentary

52. The very good provision in this area helps the children to make very good progress, including those with special educational needs. Children with the most significant learning difficulties are supported effectively by the teachers and learning support assistants. The programme of work is well structured and linked to the national literacy strategy. Overall standards are above average by the time the children start work on the national curriculum. Teachers and assistants help the children to communicate in all areas of learning. Learning support assistants are well briefed and help the teachers make assessments for the foundation stage profile by noting down the progress of the children. After listening to the story of "The Pizza Princess" with the year 1 pupils, the reception children acted out the story by dressing up as the characters from the story. With the guidance of the teaching assistant, they were able to re-enact the story showing the sequence of events and demonstrating the individual characteristics of the Princess, such as greed and rudeness. The children understand that print conveys meaning. The range and choice of books is very good. The children use the library on a weekly basis to select books to take home to read, which supports their learning well.

53. The children are encouraged to form letters correctly and are taught using a cursive script. This is a new approach to writing within the school, but already most of the children write their name correctly. There is very good attainment. Others are able to write a simple sentence "I like..." and make recognisable attempts at spelling such words as 'ham', 'mushrooms' and 'peppers'. The staff's understanding of how children learn to write is good: this helps the children feel that they are real writers, even when they are just starting to form letters. The children are also able to use the computer to write simple captions for their paintings.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

54. Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is taught in a structured and practical way and children have good opportunities to work in a collaborative way.

Commentary

55. Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent and the children are attaining above the expected level. The planning of lessons is based on carefully linking the early learning goals with elements of the national numeracy strategy. Most children can count by rote to ten and mathematical language is used in whole class sessions. Children understand the language of position and use it well in play situations. Counting skills are reinforced through singing and number jingles when the whole class is together. The children are learning to recognise and name common shapes such as square, triangle rectangle and circle. This is extended into beginning to know the language associated with 3-D shapes such as 'edge' and 'face'. Handling and describing these shapes in a

class game reinforced learning well. The children were learning to work in a collaborative way in independent tasks such as using the solid shapes with a partner to make a model and taking it in turns with a shape matching game on the computer. They are encouraged to assess what they have learned through visual strategies such as “thumbs up”. The excellent relationships between the adults and children ensures that the children’s efforts are always valued: this has a good effect on their self-esteem, encouraging them to try hard and learn well in mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

56. Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and the children achieve well.

Commentary

57. The teachers are providing a range of well- planned activities linked to other areas of the curriculum. After listening to the story of the Pizza Princess, the children made a real pizza. The teaching assistant gave the children the opportunity to explore the colour, texture and shape of a range of vegetables before choosing the ingredients for their own. The children then made a copy of their pizza by shaping and stretching coloured play dough to represent the vegetables. The children’s understanding of the wider world is developed through the character of Barnaby Bear. The children talk about the different countries that Barnaby Bear has visited and the different kinds of clothes that he needs for varying climates. The children begin to record their decisions pictorially carefully drawing the contents of his suitcase and the flag of the country he is visiting. Teaching is based on what the children already have experienced and this enables the children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world: learning in information and communication technology is of a very high standard. There is a good range and quality of role-play resources to support this early learning goal.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

58. Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and the children achieve well.

Commentary

59. Children make good progress and standards are above average. Children are developing their hand control through the use of crayons, pencils, paints, the computer mouse and construction kits. These experiences are also helping the children to improve their drawing and writing. They are making very good progress in their physical control and awareness of space both indoors and in the outside play area. In a physical education lesson, the children understood the importance of a warm-up and noticed that they experienced physical changes such as their heart was beating faster and their face had turned red. They are developing a good understanding of the use of space and awareness of others. Teachers give clear instructions, encourage children to demonstrate good examples of their work and work in partnership to create and copy simple sequences. The outdoor play area provides good opportunities for children to practise these skills in a more independent way. For example, the children use the trikes to pedal and push themselves along using a bigger space, but are still aware of others.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

60. It was not possible to see sufficient teaching and learning to form a secure overall judgement of the provision in this subject, and the main strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

61. The children make good progress in developing creative skills. They learn to draw and paint using a range of materials. The attractive displays in the classroom and other areas in the school show the value placed on their work. The shared area has a range of resources and children are able to select independently. They enjoy a good range of practical activities, which enable them to explore imaginatively. They use the equipment provided for role-play very well. The Royal Palace enabled the pupils to dress up as Kings, Queens, Princesses, royal servants and chefs and play, draw and write in character developing the personality and behaviour as they imagined them to be. The children make good progress in developing creative skills and are on course to attain the early learning goal at the end of the Reception Year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

62. Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good: pupils' attainment is also very good;
- Leadership and management of the subject are good;
- Individual pupil and group targets are helping pupils improve further;
- Teachers' marking for improvement is giving pupils clear guidance on to the next steps in learning;
- Literacy skills are applied effectively in other curriculum subjects: the pupils are given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and presentation is of an exceptional standard.

Commentary

63. Standards in English have been maintained since the last inspection. The test results in 2003 show that standards for seven year olds in reading were above the national average and well above for writing. The more able pupils attained well above the national average in writing, this is an improvement on the previous year. In 2003, tests show that the attainment of eleven year olds in English was at the national average for pupils of average ability, but the more able pupils attained above the national average. Inspectors' observations show that overall attainment is above average throughout the school.

64. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is above average. The very good and sometimes excellent teaching seen across the school enables pupils to progress to a high level in their learning. Lessons are well planned and employ activities that are well matched to pupils' skills and knowledge. All pupils are set high expectations in terms of achievement. For example, in a year 2 class pupils were challenged to think of adjectives to compare and contrast the change in character of "Burglar Bill". Pupils recorded their adjectives such as 'kind', 'caring' and 'sensible' on whiteboards: these were used and applied in the writing task. Teaching assistants, who play a pivotal role in lessons, support pupils with special educational needs very well. They have clear direction from the class teacher and encourage the less able pupils, so that they have the same opportunities for learning as their peers. Pupils are consistently challenged to extend their thinking. In a years 4 and 5 lesson, a "quick think" activity demanded that the pupils produced a bank of vocabulary associated with the task of describing the rain forest. The pupils described the setting using words and phrases such as 'torrents', 'rustling', 'as green as a Christmas tree' and 'canopies of jade green leaves'. The teacher continually supported the learning to maintain enthusiasm and excitement. By year 6, the majority of pupils read and write for a wide range of purposes to an above average standard. The pupils enjoy the learning; planned opportunities including using the library and computers, develop their research skills. The library has excellent resources and is regularly used by all classes to develop library skills. Even the youngest pupils confidently use the computerised system to take out and return their books.

65. The leadership and management of English are good. The subject leader's ability, knowledge and commitment to improvement is making a significant difference to pupils' attainment. She is well supported in this by the school improvement team. Pupils' progress is monitored, work samples are collected and analysed to show strengths and weaknesses in learning. Common assessment writing tasks are administered twice a year across the school and marked against agreed criteria. As a result, the whole staff are highly skilled in understanding progression in writing. This in turn helps the teachers to plan more effective lessons and highlights areas to develop such as a focus on the more able pupils' writing skills. The nominated governor is closely involved, regularly reporting to the governing body on the progress towards the developments in English as outlined in the school's

strategic plan. She also supports the pupils as a voluntary school librarian that gives her an additional insight into the outcomes of the decision-making of the governing body.

66. Regular whole school evaluation of pupils' progress in English is helping the teachers to set individual and group targets. The targets are regularly referred to in lessons and the pupils know what they need to improve upon. Group targets are displayed in classrooms and pupils have individual target cards. The teacher acknowledges achievements of the targets and the older pupils are encouraged to identify their own areas for improvement. The less able pupils work with a partner to discuss and agree areas for improvement. Checklists to help pupils meet the criteria for writing and know what they need to include when writing in a particular genres, such as myths and legends, supports achievement of their target. The teachers use marking for improvement and ensure that there is a good balance between commenting upon achievement, whilst still highlighting areas for improvement. Helping pupils to understand what they have done well - "some super phrases" - and directing them to something that could be improved - "paragraphs need to be indented". This consistency of approach in marking, individual and group targets and self-evaluation is making a positive impact on pupil attainment across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. The development of pupils' literacy skills through other subjects is very good. Particular planned writing opportunities have been made with history, geography and religious education. This is enabling the pupils to be challenged to write in a more purposeful and effective way, in a range of styles. The use of subject specific vocabulary linked to topics such as 'Florence Nightingale', 'The Passover' and 'The Rainforest' is helping pupils to write with improved effect. Displays of rainforest poems, Passover diaries, and pupils' role-playing in 'hospitals' and 'royal dining rooms' illustrate the very good outcomes of pupils' achievements. The presentation of pupils' work is of an exceptional standard.

68. There are good planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. The very good teaching encourages pupils to discuss, debate and answer questions with confidence. Focussed questioning ensures that all pupils are expected to, and do, respond thoughtfully. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the learning support assistants, who work unobtrusively with them during whole class teaching sessions. Drama is used across the school to encourage creative thinking. During a Key Stage 1 assembly, pupils were given the opportunity to take on the characters in the story and demonstrate through informal talk the behaviour of the characters. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were given specific roles and were required to use mime and gesture to describe the character to a partner. Such activities are helping to develop the pupils' communication skills to a very good level.

MATHEMATICS

69. Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are well above average;
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well: teaching and learning are very good;
- Leadership is very strong and effective;
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support learning.

Commentary

70. Mathematics was strong at the time of the last inspection, and this strength has been developed further. Standards of attainment are well above average at year 2 and year 6: this has been the case over a number of years. When test results are compared with schools that have a similar group of pupils, the comparison is occasionally not as flattering to the school, as in 2003. The

reasons for this are explained above: over time, there is a firm and clear trend for higher than average attainment in mathematics. For example, in a reception and year 1 lesson, pupils had to guess three-dimensional shapes, and did so by asking questions such as “Does it have curved face?” and “Does it have a point?”. In years 5 and 6, pupils could express measurements in millimetres, centimetres and metres, with accuracy, and could use conversion graphs when representing kilometres and metres in miles.

71. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. Whether they are high attainers, in the middle of the group or have special educational needs, pupils are encouraged and cajoled into giving of their best. Very accurate planning means that pupils work at activities that are well matched to their abilities, but still give challenge. As in other subjects, there is huge crossover between different parts of the curriculum: in an excellent lesson for years 3 and 4, the teacher was as careful with the revision of vocabulary (such as ‘sum’, ‘total’ and ‘difference’) as would have been appropriate in a literacy lesson. The pupils’ attitudes to mathematics are very positive: this boosts achievement further, because they are keen to learn and to consolidate their learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive individualised help from learning support assistants, but so do other pupils within the class, as needed. The assistants add significantly to the quality of education in mathematics. Teachers use specific questioning well, challenging pupils at levels appropriate to the individual, but never letting the pupils become complacent.

72. The leadership of the mathematics co-ordinator is very good: she has a clear overview of teaching of the subject within the school. Assessment is also very good. Pupils’ answers on national assessment examinations are closely analysed and weaknesses identified. Plans are then quickly put in place to rectify the weaknesses: this is a clear sign of a co-ordinator not resting on any laurels! The progress made by different groupings of pupils, is checked, including between different classes: similarly, standards of attainment and achievement of boys and girls are scrutinised.

73. The use of information and communication technology is excellent: on many occasions, it would be difficult to know whether a lesson was “a maths lesson” or “an information and communication technology lesson”, without looking at the teacher’s planning. An example of this was an excellent lesson on formulae and spreadsheets, with a year 4 and 5 class. Information and communication technology is also used to make practising mathematical skills fun: repetitive work, made motivating by good selection of an appropriate computer programme, leads to pupils who enjoy making sure they really know mathematical concepts in a range of different contexts.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. There are very good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in contexts other than ‘maths lessons’. Pupils use graphs in literacy lessons, to calculate exchange rates and measure volume in science experiments on absorbency. There are excellent links made to history through the regular use of timelines and to design and technology work in which pupils measure accurately and draw plans of musical instruments and Aztec cloaks they are creating.

SCIENCE

75. Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of curriculum planning is excellent: leadership is very strong;
- Teachers’ subject knowledge and their skill in the assessment of pupils’ developing skills is exemplary;
- The quality of teaching and learning is very high.

Commentary

76. The subject manager for science, together with colleagues, has planned a curriculum that is stimulating and exciting for pupils of all ages. As a result, pupils love their science lessons: they listen carefully, show very high levels of concentration and are often totally engrossed in their learning. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when it was reported that although standards were above average, pupils achieved less than might have been expected in investigative and experimental science. This has now been addressed and standards are now well above average at both key stages. Throughout the school pupils are attaining at levels well above those expected for their ages. Leadership of science is very strong. High achievement is due to the attention teachers pay to individual pupils' learning needs and styles. The school has worked hard to raise the profile of science both as a specific subject but also in its role in cross-curricular topics.

77. Pupils' learning is carefully tracked throughout the school by the subject manager, to ensure they are achieving as well as they can. Careful and systematic assessments of pupils' skills over time are used as a basis for planning. For example, planning utilises pupils' love of practical science to improve their learning in other areas of the curriculum. The pupils clearly understand what is expected of them: in the front of their science books, teachers attach a description of what level the pupil is working at, highlighting what they need to do to improve. In the back of the books, is a detailed list of appropriate scientific vocabulary with cross-curricular references to other subjects, such as mathematics. Information and communication technology is also extensively used in science for control, data handling or research purposes using the internet or CD-ROMs. In another science lesson, pupils had to draw a flower as part of their experiment, but instead of simply sketching the flower quickly, the teacher took the opportunity to reinforce their drawing skills and enhance their learning.

78. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and will modify their teaching to ensure pupils fully understand what is expected of them. For example, in a reception and year 1 science lesson, the teacher asked questions about their favourite sweets, which she already knew were 'Smarties', and then asked them if they all tasted the same, and how did they know? The whole class were completely engrossed: the teacher had clearly recognised the intrinsic motivating force of candy-covered chocolate drops! They asked questions and made suggestions, such as "We could taste them" and "Use our senses" which the teacher applauded, thus motivating the pupils even more. She then skilfully continued her questioning until a year 1 pupil suggested that they could only do this experiment if it was fair, and then went onto to suggest a way of doing this, showing very high achievement indeed! Support staff sat with the youngest children, and those with special educational needs, who all succeeded in their learning and made very good progress.

79. In another exemplary lesson with year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher prepared an excellent range of learning resources to capture pupils' imagination. They were discovering how insects pollinate some flowers. The teacher brought in enough tulips for pupils to work in pairs, so they could clearly see the different parts of a flower. In addition, the teacher had prepared a microscope linked to a computer to enable pupils to see various parts of a flower magnified to aid their understanding of pollination. Pupils were absolutely absorbed with this information and communication technology link and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, trying to guess what they were looking at. The teacher had very high expectations of the pupils, in terms of their use of scientific language and expected them to answer questions using appropriate vocabulary.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

80. Provision in information and communication technology is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is well above average at all levels within the school;

- Teachers' confidence in the subject and the very high quality of subject leadership combine to produce a very high standard of teaching;
- Pupils' learning is of a very high standard, both within information and communication technology itself, and using it in other subjects.

Commentary

81. A great deal of further progress has been made, since the time of the last inspection. Many pupils are working at levels expected of pupils two or more years older: all pupils are working at the expected levels or higher, and achievement is excellent. There are three reasons for this success:

[1] The cross-curricular nature of learning;

[2] The confidence of the teaching and other staff;

[3] The quality of subject leadership and management.

82. First factor in this very successful picture, is the cross-curricular nature of learning at Colden Common, mentioned above in the section on the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, partly because they receive well focussed individual help from learning support assistants, but also because the expectations of all the pupils is high, and they rise to the challenge. For example, year 4 and 5 pupils working on formulae within spreadsheets, demonstrated their expertise and confidence quite spontaneously by discussing whether to use keyboard shortcuts to copy them or to use the 'handle' to pull the formulae down the worksheet.

83. The second reason why standards are so high is the confidence of the teaching staff. The use of information and communication technology is just part and parcel of a teacher's daily life at Colden Common, and this has two effects. The first effect is that teachers' own confidence levels are very high: high enough to ask for help when they need it, without embarrassment, whether it is in the planning of a lesson, in tweaking part of a scheme of work in light of further experience with it, or in using control technology with the pupils. In an excellent lesson on the programming and control of robot vehicles with year 5 and 6 pupils, the teacher set up resources all over the information and communication technology suite and in half of the main corridor. There were gales of laughter as pupils got the programming wrong, then cheers as they gradually improved things. The confidence of the teacher to set up a situation where the pupils learnt with such enthusiasm was exemplary. The second effect is that pupils see the staff using information and communication technology all the time – administrators writing letters, governors helping in the library, teachers planning work – these all help to give an important message to the pupils.

84. Finally, the subject is very well co-ordinated. Both day-to-day management and overall leadership are excellent. The programme of study in place is seen as a starting point: teachers are encouraged to be creative and the benefits are plain to see. The co-ordinator leads by example and has had a major impact on the standards attained. Assessment procedures are strong and the subject is very well resourced, although there are no interactive whiteboards and equipment for data capture is limited. The information and communication technology suite is very well used, as are the older computers dotted up and down the main corridor: pupils' interest and focus is such that wherever they are working, they remain on task and fully concentrating on the activity.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is excellent. It is used in all subjects: indeed, it is simply a commonplace tool for learning throughout the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

86. No lessons were observed in geography and only two lessons were observed in history at Key Stage 1. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2. However, as pupils' work was analysed and careful attention was paid to pupils' work displayed around the school it is possible to judge that they are attaining very well in both subjects and at both key stages.

87. In geography, pupils follow a detailed curriculum programme that builds on their skills and knowledge of local, national and international places. They use Barnaby Bear's travels around the world to contrast life in different countries to that of their own; they study rivers, rainforests and comment on conservation issues. Geography is extremely well linked to other subjects and pupils have opportunities to study the subject outside the classroom, in the school grounds and in the locality.

88. In history, pupils from a young age learn about the chronology of historical events. Many young pupils can talk with enthusiasm and confidence about Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. They have produced eye-catching paintings of this significant event and can explain where the fire started and how it spread. They know about Samuel Pepys' diaries and are aware of Tony Blair and his political role. Through role-play, including an excellent range of learning resources, pupils can clearly explain why Florence Nightingale is so important to today's nurses.

89. Both subjects have capable and enthusiastic managers, who support high achievement amongst the pupils. Teachers are very enthusiastic about both subjects and this promotes considerable interest in the pupils. Very skilful curriculum planning incorporates other subjects such as literacy, art and design, information and communication technology, mathematics and music. There is an outstanding range of learning resources: these are used to enhance and develop learning, making it individual to each pupil.

Religious Education

90. Provision in Religious Education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and resourced using the locally agreed syllabus ("Visions and Insights") and meets fully the statutory requirements;
- Teaching and learning observed was of a high quality;
- Standards attained are consistently good and above expectations for the pupils' ages;
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

91. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for the teaching of religious education since the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching plans have been reviewed and developed with the guidance and support of the local education authority inspector for religious education. Progression in learning is secure across the school. Pupils' own experiences are closely linked to all new learning. Pupils now learn about Christianity and Judaism in Key Stage 1 and Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism in Key Stage 2, fulfilling the statutory requirements. Teachers have attended training, both within the school itself and by visiting other schools to see good practice. Their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject have improved greatly. Through this strong team approach, the provision has grown to the point where the school has positively embraced all necessary changes and the quality of pupils' learning has increased greatly.

92. The teaching observed was of a high quality, because of the careful planning of the lessons, ensuring that the pupils begin to have a balanced understanding of the major faiths studied. Teachers make the lessons interesting by using carefully prepared resources and sharing personal experiences with the pupils to underpin their understanding. In Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge is built upon: they remember different Christian stories about people that Jesus met and how the meetings changed their lives for the better, such as Blind Bartemeous and Zaccheus. They are beginning to see how Jesus' positive example influenced attitudes and behaviour. In the two lessons observed about 'The Passover' in Key Stage 2, the pupils were required to understand the symbolism in the Jewish Seder Meal. Both teachers used personal examples of a special family celebration to illustrate this. The pupils were then given the opportunity to talk and discuss with the class their own experiences. As a result, pupils were more easily able to understand the symbolism of food linked to the Jewish Passover. Pupils really enjoy the religious education lessons and work hard, with sustained concentration. They are motivated by the variety, pace and interest in the lessons. The effective questioning, praising of the pupils, valuing of efforts, teacher support and intervention ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to make above the expected progress. Homework tasks set reinforce the learning further.

93. The subject leader manages the subject very well and there is a governor linked to the subject. The governing body is informed and involved. The subject is regularly monitored through lesson observation and work sampling. A comprehensive portfolio has been developed that shows the development of pupils' work from the reception year to year 6. This is annotated and shows full coverage of the subject. Assessment systems are well established and medium-term plans are adjusted to reflect the outcomes of this assessment. The subject leader regularly attends conferences and training courses to further develop her expertise and share this with the school staff. The subject is well resourced and artefacts and books are well organised. Displays around the school value the priority of the subject within the school. The Hindu festival of Holi and the paintings of Jesus described using "Textease", exemplify the quality of the pupils' attainment in religious education. The action plan identifies the links with English and history giving ample opportunities for cross-curricular teaching and learning. Collective worship makes a good contribution to enriching religious education learning. Local ministers regularly lead school assemblies bringing the opportunity for the pupils to learn about the local places of worship within the community. The local education authority has acknowledged the very good provision within the school and is using the school as a model of good practice.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

94. No design and technology lessons and only two art and design and one music lesson were observed, making overall judgements on the provision in these subjects insecure. However, inspectors looked at teachers' planning, analysed work on display, examined pupils' sketchbooks and saw pupils performing music in the one lesson and singing in assemblies. Further improvements have been made in all three subjects, since the time of the last inspection.

95. The standards of art work displayed around the school and in pupils' books is very high. One of the art lessons seen made excellent use of information and communication technology, and the pupils were obviously very used to this. Some of the abstract paintings produced at the end of the lessons were of a standard very much above average. Based on Picasso's abstract phase, and close analysis of one of his portraits, pupils were able to talk about and put into practice their ideas. One boy told the inspector that he wanted to change the shape of the features, as well as the position and colour. For a year 2 pupil, this demonstrates an advanced and creative understanding of the task, not just an adept copying of another's work. In a years 5 and 6 lesson, also using information and communication technology as the central tool, pupils were able to demonstrate their wide-ranging skills, which include those of design and technology as well as art and design. They created shapes to repeat as wrapping paper, working meticulously and producing high quality results. The pupils are able to attend an after-school club to develop their interest in the subject further.

96. Music is an important part of school life, and the confidence of teachers who are not specialists is well supported by the co-ordinator. Pupils sing confidently and competently, with mainly clear diction and in a tuneful, expressive manner. Some find rhythms difficult to copy outside of a song, but are working hard to improve their ability to do so. The scheme of work in place is a very useful means of ensuring that this aspect of musical learning will improve progressively, as pupils move through the school.

97. In design and technology, discussion with the subject leader, analysis of pupils' work and displays in the school show that there has been good improvement since the last inspection. There are now written plans and guidance linked to the school's topic cycle based on national guidelines showing progression across Key Stage 1 and 2. Assessment and evaluation of learning are built into lesson plans. A collection of design and technology evidence illustrates the variety and range of designing and making skills that the pupils acquire throughout both key stages. For example, pupils design and create finger puppets in the reception class: in year 2, the pupils are taught to design and sew hand puppets. The pupils in years 3 to 6 are able to demonstrate that they can design and plan, make and evaluate using a variety of materials and tools. A display of musical instruments, designed and made by the pupils, from the Aztec topic involved the appropriate use of wood, bamboo, plastic and cardboard. The attractive and functional outcome indicated that the pupils could plan and design, select materials, cut and join with accuracy for a clear purpose. Parents, artists and other members of the community support the pupils' learning in this subject. The pupils were involved in the designs that were painted on the outside sheds, to improve the outdoor learning environment for all the pupils.

98. All three subjects are co-ordinated by enthusiastic and talented managers. They have very good knowledge and an excellent range of skills: this allows them to lead by example, but they are also skilled in making other teachers feel secure enough to take on the teaching of these subjects in a confident and effective way.

Physical Education

99. Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and pupils achieve very well;
- There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities during and after school.

Commentary

100. All pupils at Colden Common have many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of physical education activities. Physical education features strongly both within curriculum planning and outside the school day. Pupils of all ages and abilities follow a detailed curriculum that is also very well linked to cross-curricular topics. For example, dance features prominently throughout the school. During one dance lesson, the warm-up consisted of stretching exercises using the characteristics of an Indian dance, giving it special links to religious education and to multicultural understanding. The teacher placed great emphasis on the use of the hands and arms to portray meaning, which the pupils responded to magnificently. In other lessons, teachers lead by example, clearly demonstrating what they want pupils to do. They are knowledgeable and inspire pupils to attempt different movements, for example, during a very good gymnastics lesson, one teacher asked pupils how they could move from one part of the hall to another using only their hands and feet. She made suggestions but allowed pupils to make their own decisions and then through demonstrations, asked pupils to evaluate each others' work and make suggestions how it could be improved. All pupils change for physical education into appropriate kit: not all teachers do, though, which misses the opportunity to be good role models.

101. Pupils have well developed skills: in games young children can dribble a ball and pass reasonably accurately while others can link gymnastic movements together using different parts of their bodies. Older pupils regularly swim and year 6 pupils have the opportunity to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities such as archery, climbing and abseiling during their residential week. The subject manager further enhances provision by the use of sports coaches to run clubs and workshops for pupils throughout the school. She arranges for school teams to participate (very successfully) in local tournaments: this contributes well to pupils' self-esteem and achievement. Pupils are highly motivated to achieve and their behaviour is excellent. They treat all equipment with care and certainly look after each other during lessons, often spontaneously applauding an individual effort.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

102. Insufficient lessons were seen to provide a secure overall judgement on pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. However, work sampled and conversations with pupils, parents and teachers suggest that provision is very well established: pupils are supported effectively as they mature. Accordingly, as the parents report, pupils are happy at school and progress well.

103. Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is very much part of overall curriculum planning: it features in all timetables throughout the school. It is supplemented by 'Circle time' and 'Bubble time' for all pupils. They all understand how these work and use the times to help them communicate with staff and with their peers, whether this needs to be in confidence or not. Pupils' personal development features strongly within the school. In addition to school-based activities, the subject manager makes regular contact and liaises with the Police and Fire services; the school is a regular participant in Hampshire Local Education Authority projects such as a visit to do with Industrial waste, linked to a geography topic. There is a very effective school council who have actioned many changes to the school's environment in the playgrounds and school uniform.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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