

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREAT TOTHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Maldon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115244

Headteacher: Mr P J Foreman

Lead inspector: Brian Padgett HMI

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 February 2004

Inspection number: 264046

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	445
School address:	Walden House Road Great Totham Maldon Essex
Postcode:	CM9 8PN
Telephone number:	01621 891091
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Catherine Stynes
Date of previous inspection:	9 November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Great Totham is a large primary school serving the village of Great Totham and the surrounding villages to the north of Maldon, in Essex. There are 445 pupils on roll. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school are usually above average, although this varies from year to year. Nearly all pupils are of white British background, with no pupils speaking English as an additional language.

There are 36 pupils on the school's special needs register. These children have a variety of learning difficulties, with no category of need predominating. The population served by the school is relatively stable. Nevertheless, about a third of the pupils in each year group leave or join the school during the course of their primary education.

The school is the main base for outreach music education in the county. It achieved 'Investor in People' status in 2002, and a Department for Education and Skills Achievement Award in 2003. The school is a Teacher Training Agency Partnership Promoting School, running the graduate teaching programme and the teaching assistant foundation degree, and is also involved in providing placements for teachers in training with Anglia University.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21823	Brian Padgett HMI	Lead inspector	Science, physical education
11084	Jane Hughes AI	Lay inspector	
32578	Neil Sortwell HMI	Team inspector	English, French, information technology
10779	Eric Craven HMI	Team inspector	Mathematics, special educational needs, art, design technology, music
24342	Denise Franklin AI	Team Inspector	Foundation stage, geography, history, religious education

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) were joined on this inspection by additional inspectors (AI) appointed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Great Totham is a very effective school.** It is led and managed very well and provides very good care for pupils, good teaching, and a rich and stimulating curriculum. Pupils generally achieve well throughout the school, and standards in English, mathematics and science build progressively to be well above average in Year 6. The school is held in high regard by parents, and pupils are very happy. With below average costs, it provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the excellent challenge and support provided by the governing body, and the very strong contribution to leadership and management of senior staff.
- The very good care for all aspects of the development of all pupils.
- The overall good quality of teaching from a keen teaching staff.
- A rich curriculum that is evolving imaginatively to broaden and extend pupils' experiences.
- Pupils achieve well overall, and a high proportion of pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by Years 5 and 6.
- The enjoyment and involvement of pupils in the school.
- The confidence of parents in the school.

The school has improved significantly since it was last inspected in 1998. All the issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with very effectively. Much of what was good has been improved further. Many of the teachers are new to the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Pupils' achievement is good overall.** Pupils make sound progress in Foundation Stage classes, and the current cohort is set to exceed the early learning goals for pupils at the end of their reception year. Progress is good for pupils aged 5-7. Standards are currently about average, although higher in reading and writing. Standards are lower than usual because there are fewer higher attaining pupils in the current Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts. Achievement for pupils aged 7-11 is good. Standards build steadily as a result of good teaching. By Year 6, standards are well above average, as reflected in the consistently good results in national tests and pupils' success in the entrance examinations for selective grammar schools.

**The school's contribution to pupils' personal development is very effective.** Teachers exercise a very positive influence on pupils' attitude to learning and behaviour, so that they become mature and responsible, and sensitive to the needs of others. New pupils are made welcome and settle quickly.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**, particularly pupils' self awareness, and their moral and social development. The school discourages unnecessary absence vigorously, and attendance is well above average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education**, overall. A high proportion of the teachers are new to the school or new to teaching. Teaching is generally good. It is at its best in Years 5 and 6, though throughout the school teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they successfully encourage pupils to achieve their best. Pupils of all abilities learn effectively. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory although there is scope for further development.

The school has developed an imaginative and stimulating curriculum to meet the needs of all its pupils. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is very good. As pupils get older, they appreciate the range of opportunities they have in lessons, through extra curricular activities, in the “aesthetics afternoon” each Friday, and through well-established residential experiences. All staff take great care to ensure pupils are safe and very well cared for, and the school works very effectively with parents and all its partners in education, from playschools to universities, to promote the best opportunities for its pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The governors are exceptionally capable and well organised and form a very strong governing body. They deal with their responsibilities in an exemplary fashion, and meet their statutory obligations in full. They work in close harmony with the headteacher, providing him with both challenge and support. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. His unswerving commitment to the best interests of the pupils, his openness to new ideas, and his ability to manage these ideas through to successful implementation are fundamental to the school’s success. He has confidence in his staff and has delegated significant responsibility to them. They have responded very well, and display a high degree of teamwork and coherence. Senior managers are highly influential and manage their responsibilities very well. Other teachers with management responsibilities often provide enthusiastic leadership, driving forward developments with considerable energy. Capable administrative staff ensure the school operates smoothly and efficiently.

## **PARENTS’ AND PUPILS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school’s relationship with parents is very good. The school was criticised in the last inspection report for over-formality and a lack of approachability. These issues have been successfully resolved and communications are much improved.

The vast majority of pupils really enjoy coming to school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

In order to develop the quality of education further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- continue to develop the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage classes are likely to exceed the early learning goals for pupils at the end of their reception year. By Year 2, standards in reading and writing are above average, standards in mathematics and science are about average. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average.

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

- Nearly all pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and the able and talented.
- High standards are sustained at Year 6 because they receive consistently good teaching.
- Pupils are making good progress in IT.

#### **Commentary**

1. In the Foundation Stage, children are set to exceed the early learning goals for the end of the reception year in all the areas of learning. Pupils attain above average results in the national tests at ages 7 and 11. Results have been improving for several years, at a rate above the national trend. Broadly, pupils are a term or more ahead in reading, writing and mathematics by 7, and two terms or more ahead in English, mathematics and science by 11. The school has a good record of success in 11+ examinations and many pupils enter the county's selective grammar schools.
2. Pupils make good progress in nearly all classes. The best progress is made in Years 5 and 6, when teachers build very effectively on the good foundation laid in previous years. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 make good progress even though standards are not as high as usual. There are fewer higher attaining pupils in Year 2 than in previous years, and a higher proportion of Year 1 pupils have late birthdays and are relatively immature. This affects their attitudes to work. The school has introduced the Foundation Stage for pupils entering the reception classes since the last inspection. Sound progress has been made in developing the six areas of learning appropriate to this key stage, but more remains to be done in providing pupils with their full entitlement to learn through play.
3. Pupils with SEN and pupils who are able or talented make good progress. There is good co-ordination between class teachers and special needs staff to ensure needs are identified and met, through a range of provision in and out of the classroom. Able and talented pupils are well provided for through more challenging homework tasks, through extra curricular activities, and in the "aesthetics afternoon", where there are opportunities to focus on specialist skills and knowledge related to sport, the creative arts and ICT.
4. Pupils' standards in IT are about average at ages 7 and 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
5. Standards in history are above expectations, and standards in religious education are broadly in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Work of a good standard was seen in art, design technology and in personal, social and health education, and work of broadly average standard was seen in geography and physical education. However, insufficient work was seen in all of these subjects for an overall judgement to be made on the quality of provision within them.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.3 (16.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (29.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.5 (30.4)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour improves as pupils get older, and is very good, overall. There is very good provision for pupils' personal development and their spiritual, cultural, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance rates are well above average and punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy school and work hard. They form very good relationships with adults and other pupils.
- Pupils' very good behaviour makes the school a very orderly community.
- Pupils grow in maturity as a consequence of the very good guidance they receive.
- Very good attendance ensures pupils build steadily on their learning.
- The school could prepare pupils more thoroughly for life in a modern, multicultural society.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils settle quickly and get on with their work because teachers establish well-ordered classrooms and make clear what is expected of pupils. This is not always easy to accomplish. For example, several of the Year 1 pupils have limited concentration and immature behaviour. They are settling well because teachers and assistants make this a priority and ensure this happens. Discipline, when required, is firm, though praise and persuasion are used far more often. The sound foundations built in the Foundation Stage and developed well in Key Stage 1, pay dividends in Key Stage 2, where good attitudes are well established.
7. Behaviour outside of classrooms is very good. Pupils' relationships are very good with all the adults. Pupils' everyday contacts in school are positive, and this adds greatly to the sense of enjoyment and security pupils experience, and which parents appreciate. There have been no exclusions from the school.
8. Personal development is very good overall, with significant strengths in the development of pupils' moral and social awareness. There are strengths in the development of cultural awareness, particularly of life in the third-world. Pupils show maturity and good sense. They are very polite and take good care of visitors. Their values are developing very well, and by

Years 5 and 6, they are responsible young people, the girls in particular. The school has recognised this and is giving considerable weight to pupils' voices in structured lessons on personal, health and social education (PSHE) and by the creation of a school council. Pupils are responding well to the new opportunities to influence school life.

9. Attendance is well above average. Pupils like coming to school. In addition, the school takes an uncompromising stance on attendance and expects parents to make contingency arrangements to ensure children can attend when the unforeseen occurs. The headteacher and governing body will not authorise holidays in school time, so unauthorised absence is slightly higher than usually found.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.5
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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good. Teaching is a strength, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is very good, and pupils are cared for and guided very well. The school's partnership with parents, the community and its links with other schools and agencies are very good.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching, learning and assessment of pupils' work are all good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and use it well to extend pupils' understanding.
- The purpose of each lesson is explained to pupils, so they know what they have to learn. This is not always clear in the Foundation Stage.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive.
- Pupils with SEN are taught consistently well, and make good progress.
- Assessment to determine pupils' standards is very effective; assessment to match work with pupils' needs is developing well.
- Learning assistants make a strong contribution to teaching and care.
- Where teaching is not good, it is often because teachers have taken too long to introduce the purpose of the lesson, or that they have not matched work carefully enough to the needs of the pupils.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	7 (13%)	27 (52%)	17 (33%)	-	-	-

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

10. Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection. In the previous inspection report, assessment was a key issue for improvement, now it is a strength. Although good teaching is present throughout the school, the best teaching is in Years 3 to 6. All teaching graded 'very good' or better was observed in these year groups. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall. Children settle well into school routines in their reception year, and teachers ensure through good use of language that they are clear about what is expected of them. Learning was good when teachers set pupils to play and work in small groups. However, children are often taught in large groups for too long, and do not have sufficient opportunities to learn through play or exercise, independence of choice.
11. Teachers have good command of the subjects they teach. They teach them confidently, using the correct specialist language for each subject, and pose questions that stretch the understanding of the more able pupils. They are at ease and familiar with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Learning objectives are introduced at the beginning of most lessons, and in the best ones, there are effective reviews of learning to check that the objectives have been achieved. Underpinning the good teaching are very good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils.
12. In the minority of lessons that were satisfactory, teachers talked for too long when introducing work to pupils. When this occurred, a small number of pupils, often boys, became restless, the pace of the lesson slowed and the focus was lost. In other lessons, teachers taught to the whole class without ensuring the individual needs of pupils were fully met.
13. Children with special educational needs make consistently good progress. Teachers and special needs staff have very detailed knowledge of their learning needs. They are well supported in class and very well taught when they are withdrawn for one-to-one sessions. Able and talented children are given every opportunity to excel.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum and opportunities for enrichment are very good. The quality and range of resources and the accommodation are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is stimulating and well planned, particularly for Years 3 to 6.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits and many pupils are involved in these.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is good.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is not as well planned as in the rest of the school.

## **Commentary**

14. The very good curriculum provides challenge and stimulation for most pupils. The school makes very effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and recommended guidelines to plan interesting activities for pupils. All statutory requirements are met, including those for religious education. The school has successfully resolved the issue in the last inspection and is now meeting requirements for collective worship. The school ensures that the different learning needs of pupils are met in the core subjects of English and mathematics by organising pupils in groups according to their ability. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in these subjects. The school organises lessons to boost the attainment of particular groups of pupils.
15. The weekly "aesthetics afternoon" enriches the curriculum. Subjects include art, ICT, French, music and drama. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the sessions. However the

'options session', another curriculum initiative offered to children in Years 1 and 2, does not fully meet the need for identified pupils to continue to learn through play and investigation as part of their normal lessons.

16. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and the arts. Many pupils take part and the school ensures equality of opportunity. Good use is made of the expertise and facilities offered by local secondary schools; for example, to provide rugby training. The school has become the centre for outreach provision for music in the county, with sessions for the community that follow on from those for pupils.
17. Curriculum provision for children in the reception class is satisfactory. The school has made considerable progress in introducing the recommended guidelines for children in the Foundation Stage, based on the early learning goals. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to learn through play and investigation, or develop independence, and not enough use is made of experienced teaching assistants. This is because children spend too much time in large groups with too little activity.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are often withdrawn from classes for specific teaching. This is very well managed to ensure that pupils do not always miss the same lessons. Provision on the whole is very good, an improvement on the strong position at the time of the last inspection. Individual education plans are of very good quality. Although pupils on the school's register of able and talented pupils are not always provided with specially prepared work in lessons, their ability and talent is recognised and celebrated. Such pupils appreciate this sensitive attention. Special projects, often carried out as homework, provide an outlet for able pupils to excel.
19. The school has adopted an effective programme for developing pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex education and drugs awareness education. It is closely linked with other aspects of the curriculum and is a central part of the school's provision for pupil's personal development.
20. Resources and accommodation are good. Staffing is very good. Some parents expressed concerns about the quality and quantity of books available for pupils' use. However, the quality and range is good. Provision for ICT is very good and has improved significantly since the last inspection with the opening of the new computer suite. This is having a positive impact on improving standards in this subject. The school site is full to capacity, and maximum use has been made of the space available. The hall remains too small to accommodate the whole school in comfort.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The care, support and guidance of pupils are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school takes great care to ensure pupils are safe.
- Each pupil is treated as an individual and every effort is made to act in each child's best interest.
- Staff listen to pupils and take account of their opinions.

## **Commentary**

21. The school places pupils' welfare as its top priority, and ensures that each child is safe. Very effective procedures have evolved to cover all aspects of children's welfare, such as the very good arrangements for medical attention. All of the many groups of adults employed at the school are conscientious in their duty of care. Child protection issues are sensitively addressed by the headteacher, and the school has built up strong working relationships with outside support agencies, such as the Traveller children support team.

22. Teachers have very detailed knowledge of each pupil's strengths and needs from the rigorous assessments each class undertakes, and from thorough marking of pupils' work. Educational targets are identified and shared with pupils, so they also know what they have to do to improve. Equal weight is given to pupils' academic and personal development. Though the pupils attain high standards, the teachers work to promote the development of 'the whole child'. Every individual child is important, and this has been communicated effectively to all the staff. Pupils new to the school, including those who have been unhappy elsewhere, settle quickly.
23. The school is increasingly seeking the views of its pupils. They are enthusiastic about the school council and the extent to which their views are heard. Significant changes have been made to the lunchtime arrangements as a result of the council's ideas, and pupils are more confident in the playground now that school council members are on hand to mediate over minor problems, and that there are quiet areas to enjoy around the grounds. The council has a full agenda for future development.

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

The school's partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

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

- The school's links with parents have greatly improved and are now very effective.
- Parents play an important part in the education of their children at the school.
- Very good links have been forged with the community.
- Innovative links with other schools provide specialist expertise to raise standards.

#### **Commentary**

24. The partnership with parents was considered a weakness at the time of the last inspection. It is now a considerable strength. The school actively seeks the support of parents and it is much stronger because of their involvement. The relationship is very good, but is not an easy one. Many parents have high expectations of the school and are vocal if they sense that their expectations are not being met. On the other hand, the school is completely committed to its pupils, and expects parents to give an equal level of commitment.
25. Parents make a very significant contribution by the support they give to hearing children read, and providing feedback to teachers. Parent governors form at least half of the governing body. Many parents come into school to share their expertise; for example, in the "aesthetics afternoon" each Friday, when they lead sessions in drama, ICT and art, and in the gardens, at after-school clubs, or during school visits. The Parent Teachers and Friends Association raise large sums of money to benefit the school and a number of charities.
26. The quality of communications between the school and home is very high. Parents express astonishment at the thoroughness of the headteacher's letters. This has developed as a response to a parent body that expects accurate information. The headteacher has built up a very efficient administrative team.
27. Visitors from the wider community are welcomed into the school. There are strong links with the local church. Local businesses support the school's fundraising by donating prizes. Local residents read with the children, and pupils pay visits to senior citizens' functions throughout the year. Music is a strong feature within the school and specialists from outside the staff enable over 100 pupils to participate in high quality musical experiences. There are well-established residential trips for older juniors to Cromer and Belgium, and the latter have led over the years to close contacts with families in Europe, increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of life outside of England.

28. The school has developed highly beneficial links with other schools and colleges. Staff at all levels participate in the local schools' consortium for training and professional development. Transition to secondary schools is well managed, and the school actively seeks the support of secondary schools to broaden opportunities for pupils. The school is heavily involved in the training of teachers, local support services and local providers of pre-school services, thereby completing the range of beneficial educational contacts the school could make.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The governance of the school is excellent. The leadership of senior staff and subject managers and the effectiveness of management are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership.
- The governing body makes a major contribution to the school's strategic direction.
- There is very effective delegation of responsibility for management and leadership in school, and teachers generally manage subjects well.
- There is very efficient financial and administrative support.
- Development planning occasionally lacks a clear focus on outcomes.

### **Commentary**

29. The headteacher is utterly committed to the pupils. He has established a clear vision for the school and is responsible for the excellent ethos, where each child is valued as an individual, and supported to achieve their best, academically and in their personal development. In this vision he is very successful, since this is a high attaining and very inclusive school. The headteacher is an innovator. He is a good listener, open to ideas, and possesses a fine eye for detail that enables him to see developments through to their intended conclusion.
30. The headteacher is supported and challenged by an exceptionally competent and thoughtful governing body. It is well organised and works effectively in committees. It monitors the performance of the school closely and holds it to account. Individual governors use their expertise well to support the development of the school and the subject leaders; for example, in ICT. It is highly involved in securing the future direction of the school. However, in this respect, it should focus more closely on the intended outcomes for pupils in order to evaluate its success more carefully. It fulfils all its statutory duties.
31. The school has not appointed a deputy headteacher. The two senior managers, each responsible for a key stage, are very effective in their leadership and management roles. Delegation of responsibility is now a feature of leadership, and is proving very successful with the new and enthusiastic subject managers appointed in recent years. They provide good and often very good subject leadership. Teachers and the many support staff, teaching and non-teaching, are empowered, and accept responsibility willingly. Crucially, the headteacher and staff are supported by a very efficient administrative team who shoulder many of the tasks that would otherwise keep the headteacher and teachers away from the pupils.
32. Staff who are new to the school are very well supported and their continued professional development is given a high priority. Lunchtime supervisors have benefited greatly from professional development opportunities as the school worked towards achieving "Investors in People" status. The management of initial teacher training and the graduate teacher programme is very good and the school is making an excellent contribution to the training of new teachers.

33. The headteacher and governing body have been successful in securing external funding through bidding and parental support. Governors are successful in harnessing financial and other support from within the community. The governing body ensures that it gets best value in using its resources and prioritises carefully when budgets are tight.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	940,367
Total expenditure	922,625
Expenditure per pupil	2,073

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37,670
Balance carried forward to the next	55,412



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

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

34. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. From year to year, there are significant variations in children's levels of attainment on entry to the school, though overall, it is above average. Most children are in line to exceed the early learning goals for pupils entering Year 1 in nearly all areas of learning.
35. Teachers plan suitable activities using the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, plans are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that the purpose of each activity is clear, or indicate how the needs of children with different abilities are being met. During some sessions, support staff are not effectively deployed; for example, to support children who find it difficult to concentrate. Assessment procedures are sound and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage profile for each child is currently being introduced.
36. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has made substantial progress in improving the resources and the quality of the learning environment in introducing the Foundation Stage. An attractive and stimulating classroom has been created, made better still by the construction of a partly covered outdoor area for the children.

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

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

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

- Children settle quickly into school routines.
- The behaviour of a small number of children is not as good as it should be in some sessions and they are not always managed well.

#### **Commentary**

37. All children, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. Most are expected to exceed the early learning goals by Year 1. Children generally settle quickly into school and know the daily routines. They answer their names during registration and change independently for PE lessons. They are beginning to be responsible for their own learning and plan their own activities on two afternoons each week. This is having a positive impact on their personal and social skills development.
38. Children form good relationships with adults around them and are happy to share equipment. They play in harmony with their classmates. For example, they take turns on wheeled toys and give each other rides. They understand what is acceptable behaviour and have a good awareness of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. However, during some taught sessions, a minority of children find it difficult to sit still and concentrate. They are not always managed well.
39. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Teachers generally have high expectations of behaviour but there are not enough opportunities for children to make choices and to be responsible for their own learning through structured play activities both indoors and outdoors.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good marking explains clearly what children know and can do.

### Commentary

40. Many children start reception with good language and communication skills. They make satisfactory progress. Children who find learning difficult make good progress because they receive additional help from the support staff.
41. Children speak confidently in a range of situations, such as in the playhouse. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, recognise familiar words in text and talk about the pictures in detail. More capable children read simple text with expression. In writing, they are already writing at least one simple sentence, sometimes using punctuation. Less capable children use letters and marks to communicate meaning.
42. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Planning is satisfactory but the use of the same planning sheet as the rest of the school favours the more formal lessons that are not always appropriate for all children. During independent activities, children are provided with an appropriate range of activities. Children's books are marked in detail and teachers' comments indicate the context of learning and what each child has achieved. This supports the assessment of children's learning effectively.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Marking is good and teachers set simple targets for the children to achieve.
- In some lessons too much time is spent teaching all the children together.

### Commentary

43. Children of average ability add two numbers accurately to equal 5. Less capable children count reliably to 10 and select the correct number to represent up to ten objects. Many children use mathematical language appropriately; for example, when describing and comparing the size of objects.
44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are using the Foundation Stage guidance in their planning and lessons are generally based on the national numeracy strategy. One consequence is that children spend too long sitting still at the beginning of lessons and often become restless. Support staff are not always used effectively at these times. Teachers use praise well to support learning. Marking is of high quality and teachers set individual targets for children.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that pupils enjoy.

## Commentary

45. Good teaching and organisation, particularly during the 'activities afternoons', give children plenty of opportunities to develop this area of learning. Most children achieve well. They use tools and materials carefully to make things. For example, a group of children explained clearly what materials they used to make kites and aeroplanes. Children complete simple programs on the computer and older children, who have been in school since September, confidently print their work. They describe significant events in their families and contribute thoughtfully to discussions after listening to stories from the Bible. Teaching and learning are particularly effective when indoor and outdoor facilities are used fully to provide children with exciting and stimulating activities. In these sessions, support staff are used well to support children's learning. They are fully involved, working with groups or individual children.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned but insufficient use is made of the outdoor area.

## Commentary

46. By the end of Foundation Stage, most children move around the classroom and large spaces with confidence, showing good awareness of space. They have an appropriate understanding of safety. They handle tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with increasing control. In a physical development lesson in the hall, children moved confidently in response to music.
47. Good features of teaching include the effective use of praise to promote children's confidence and good behaviour. Lessons are well planned and teaching overall is satisfactory. However opportunities for children to use the outside area to develop their physical skills are currently limited to two afternoons each week, and the children are not making enough use of this facility.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

48. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of teaching or standards in this area of learning, but work seen was good. Work on display covered a wide range of media. Children paint pictures that are of a good standard. In music, children explore different sounds made by instruments and other objects.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is very **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are above average and pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching overall is good with some very good features in Years 3, 5 and 6.
- Teachers' assessment of learning is very good.

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Provision for pupils with differing abilities is generally very good, but more able pupils could do even better in some lessons.
- Boys do less well than girls in writing.

## **Commentary**

49. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection and are generally well above average. The school has made good progress in raising standards in reading, spelling and writing. National test results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 were well above average in reading and writing and higher than in similar schools. Test results for Year 6 pupils were above average but relatively few achieved above the expected level in writing. When compared to these pupils' results in the tests in Year 2, very good progress was achieved.
50. The standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school is very good. Teachers give pupils good opportunities for speaking and listening in all subjects and this is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils speak with confidence and maturity within formal and informal settings. Teachers effectively demonstrate the language that they expect pupils to use. Older pupils make good use of specialist language when discussing texts in English lessons and, as a result, pupils analyse their own language and writing with increased clarity.
51. Pupils have very good attitudes to reading. Standards are never less than good in all classes, and are very good in Years 5 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, there was little teaching of reading strategies and the progress of more able pupils was limited by the insistence they read all of the books in the reading scheme before moving on. There is now an appropriate balance of reading scheme books, class readers and freely chosen books and care is taken to ensure pupils read books that match their reading level. The quality and range of books available is good.
52. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school has introduced classes for English, arranged by writing ability from Years 3 to 6. This initiative, together with others in spelling, is having a very positive effect on standards of writing, since it enables work to be more closely targeted to pupils' needs. Pupils' ability to write at length and in a range of styles is increasing, though writing for a range of purposes and audiences is not as well developed. Generally, boys continue to do less well than girls in writing. However, in the Year 6 higher ability set, boys are bridging the gap. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in English. More able pupils achieve well. The quality of their written work; for example, on autobiography, is very high. However, much of this work is completed at home and there are few opportunities for them to pursue their own writing in lesson time. The best teaching was seen in Years 3, 5 and 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils develop literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities. Pupils' work is assessed carefully and targets for further improvement are set by teachers alongside pupils. The quality of the marking is very good and pupils know what they have to do to improve.
53. The subject is very well led and managed. The work of teachers is monitored well and the strengths and weaknesses of teaching identified.

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

54. There are well planned opportunities for pupils to use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. However, the full potential of ICT to produce, store, edit and publish pupils' work has not been fully realised.

## French

55. French is taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6. No lessons were observed so it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Documents and a small sample of work were examined and discussions held with a group of Year 6 pupils. The teaching policy identifies the importance of developing pupils' cultural awareness as well as their language skills. Conversations with Year 6 pupils indicate that they make good progress. French is a well-established part of the curriculum that enriches the learning experience of older pupils. Tasks are imaginative and based on pupils undertaking practical activities. A strong feature of the programme is the visit to Liege in Belgium, where pupils are immersed in French language and Belgian culture. Pupils establish pen pals and correspond through e-mail.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall with particularly strong provision in Years 5 and 6.
- Additional support for pupils is good and has a significant impact on the achievement of the most able and less able mathematicians.
- Insufficient investigative work is provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

### Commentary

56. Pupils make good progress between Years 3 and 6, with the most able mathematicians making very good progress. Standards at Year 6 are well above average. Over half of the pupils attained the higher level, Level 5, in the most recent national tests and similar results are expected this year. Standards at Year 2 are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. A smaller proportion of these pupils are likely to achieve above average results in the national tests than in past years.
57. By Year 2, pupils' number work is particularly strong. Many pupils are adept with number combinations; for example, they readily recognise number patterns and fully understand the links between addition and subtraction. However, they have fewer opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills or undertake mathematical investigations to solve problems for themselves. Progress is good throughout the junior years and pupils gain relevant experience in all areas of mathematics. By Year 6, pupils carry out complex calculations; for example, they convert Euros to sterling using a given exchange rate. They have good knowledge of co-ordinates and data handling, and the most able have a good understanding of aspects of geometry. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils preparing for common entrance examinations are given additional lessons before school. This teaching provides opportunities for more detailed explanations to support pupils' understanding of mathematics.
58. Teaching is good throughout the school with some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils. Pupils of different abilities are taught separately, and work is closely matched to ability. As a consequence, the most able mathematicians are fully challenged and those pupils with special educational needs have modified tasks and are taught in small groups where they receive more individual attention. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils' work is generally marked carefully, so that pupils know what to do to improve. Very good teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and high expectations, such as in a Year 6 geometry lesson when able pupils were encouraged to work their findings about angles within triangles into a formula that would apply generally to all triangles. Information about pupils' performance is analysed to monitor

individual pupils' progress and to set targets. Pupils are moved between ability groups as their progress dictates.

59. Subject management is satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. Her influence on teaching and learning is developing well. Teaching is monitored and pupils' work is examined. Information gained is used to help teachers to adjust their teaching.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. This is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, in geography, they use co-ordinates and grid references, in science and ICT they use information gathered to create data tables. However, opportunities are not planned consistently into programmes of work, so pupils do not always see the relevance of mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are consistently well above average by Year 6.
- Good links with speaking and listening skills in Year 2.
- In most classes, pupils record their findings for themselves.

### **Commentary**

61. National test results at Year 6 are consistently well above average, with boys achieving particularly well. High performance has been sustained from the time of the previous inspection. Standards at Year 2 are broadly average, and in line with teacher assessments.
62. The scheme of work is based firmly on the National Curriculum. All pupils follow the full programme of study. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 were studying forces. Year 6 pupils understood that a balance of forces was needed for objects to remain stationary. They knew that friction was a force that slows down moving objects, but they had only an emerging idea of the part it plays in grip and traction. Pupils of all ages enjoyed doing experiments most in science. Year 6 workbooks were full of experiments and of the data pupils had collected. In Year 2, pupils were experimenting running model cars down inclined ramps. They were investigating the distance the cars travelled as the height of the ramp was increased. When the teacher was present, they were able to come to an understanding that distance increased as height increased, though during their own experiments, other variables came into play, such as whether a vehicle had been pushed or allowed to move under gravity, and conclusions were not always the ones that had been expected. The school gives more attention to investigative work than at the time of the previous inspection, but pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to experiment more freely (younger pupils) or design experiments for themselves (older pupils).
63. Pupils' work indicates that the most effective teaching is in Years 5 and 6, where work is of a very high quality. Teachers mark pupils work regularly, but few comments are geared to helping pupils know what to do better and some comments are more about aspects of English than science. In Year 2, teachers assess pupils' work against levels of attainment and they know exactly what level their pupils are working at, and what is needed for improvement. A strength of the work in many classes is that pupils are required to record their findings in their own words, so pupils have to think things through carefully, and teachers know what they understand.

64. Subject management is satisfactory. Though the manager has no formal training in science, training is being undertaken and release time for monitoring has been arranged. There are good links with other schools and interested governors are being recruited to help. Science is also offered as an extra curricular activity.

### **Science across the curriculum**

65. There are clear links between science, mathematics and ICT. Science provides opportunities for the systematic development of speaking and listening skills, and cooperative working during investigations helps pupils develop their personal skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection and teaching is now good.
- Subject management is very good; and the support of the ICT governor is excellent.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use control technology.

### **Commentary**

66. There have been significant improvements in provision since the last inspection. The school now has a computer suite with an interactive whiteboard, and computers in classrooms are connected to the school network. More computers have recently arrived, raising the ratio of computers to pupils to the level recommended by the government. There are now sufficient resources and the school purchases technical support to ensure that the systems work well. A new scheme of work has been introduced.
67. Standards are in line with national expectations. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below expectations because the school did not devote enough time to teaching ICT. All classes now have at least one lesson each week in the ICT suite, and computers are used frequently in lessons.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Imaginative use of the interactive whiteboard was a strong feature in a very good lesson in a Year 3 class. Skills are now taught systematically, so pupils are making good progress, and achieve well. A good range of work is covered by pupils, though not enough work is undertaken on control technology. However, the school has recently purchased specialised resources for control technology and training for staff is planned.
69. Subject leadership and management are very good. There is good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection have been fully resolved. Additional funds have been secured and deployed effectively to create the computer suite and purchase software. Support for staff training and development are all very good. For example, training is provided each week to ensure the scheme of work is fully understood. An electronic portfolio of pupils' work is maintained by the subject leader. Work is marked to indicate the pupils' levels of attainment in ICT and this is helping to boost teachers' confidence in assessing learning. However, targets for improvement are not set and pupils are not fully aware of what they need to do to improve.
70. Governors' support in developing ICT is outstanding. The governor with responsibility for ICT designed the specification for the suite, trains the learning assistants and routinely works with

pupils. She shares the monitoring of ICT with the subject manager and is highly effective in the development of the subject.



## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. ICT is used well to support work in mathematics, science, English and history. The school has developed a substantial software library for this purpose.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

72. Insufficient evidence was available to support overall judgements on provision in geography. Two lessons were observed. In Year 3, pupils learned about weather conditions around the world and related them to their own experiences and how the weather affected the things they were able to do. In Year 6, pupils used Ordnance Survey maps to determine the route of a local river from its mouth, identifying local landmarks on the map. Pupils were confident and enjoyed the work. The teaching seen was good. From looking at samples of pupils' work, standards are about average.

### History

Provision in history is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed national expectations and good use is made of visits and artefacts to support pupils' learning.
- Literacy skills are used particularly well.

#### Commentary

73. Standards in history exceed the national expectations by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils have a good depth of knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and of the wider world. They evaluate sources of information and discriminate between those that are useful for a particular task. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers ensure that lessons are lively and interesting. For example, in Year 4, pupils listened to a recording of the Prime Minister's speech at the outbreak of the Second World War. They were highly motivated and showed empathy with the feelings and reactions of listeners of the time.
74. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and there is a commitment to first-hand experience and high standards. Visits to local places of historical interest are used frequently to support pupils' learning. Resources are of good quality and quantity. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well through history; for example, pupils in Year 4 used their literacy skills in writing simulated messages of celebration announcing the birth of Henry VIII's son.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a secure understanding of world faiths.
75. No lessons were observed but an analysis of pupils' work indicates that, by Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity for their age, such as the stories of Jesus. They are beginning to understand some of the important festivals celebrated by

people of different faiths as they compare Christian and Sikh wedding ceremonies, and Hindu and Christian naming ceremonies. By Year 6, pupils show an appropriate understanding of the beliefs of a number of faiths that are practised by people in Britain today. They study special places of worship, including a traditional Christian church. The revised Locally Agreed Syllabus has been in place since September 2003 and the school has successfully adapted its planning to meet its requirements. However, there is no overview of the topics covered in each year to ensure continuity and progression of skills, knowledge and understanding.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Design and technology, art, music and physical education**

76. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to allow a judgement on the quality of provision. Two lessons were seen in each subject.
77. The lessons seen in design and technology were about design (Year 2) and evaluation (Year 6). No making tasks were observed, though the displays around the school include rod puppets, models of high quality representing famous buildings, and fabric work in Year 6, also of high quality. Year 2 pupils were designing Mother's Day cards. The task was appropriately challenging, and highly relevant to pupils. The teacher managed pupils of different abilities well, though too little time was allowed for pupils to work on and improve their designs. Year 6 pupils were researching shelters of different kinds. The teacher captured pupils' interest very successfully by the use of artefacts and photographs. Pupils were provided with research tasks of different degrees of difficulty according to their abilities, and by the end of the lesson, pupils evaluated shelters by reference to their properties, construction, materials and location. Overall, standards at Year 2 are average, and at Year 6, above average.
78. Art was taught well in the lessons observed and the subject is very well managed. The subject knowledge of the teachers in the Year 3 and Year 4 lessons observed was good and very good respectively. The Year 3 lesson on mosaics was linked well to a history project on Romans, though links with mathematics, on shape and pattern, were missed. A wide variety of media was provided for pupils, and they planned and executed their designs well. Pupils achieved well in the Year 4 lesson based around observational drawing and the use of tone, texture, shape and line. The teacher's well chosen interventions and questioning about shading helped pupils' learning and improved their work significantly. More broadly, much art work of a good standard is displayed around the school, and the subject manager's portfolio demonstrates work across a wide range of media.
79. Two music lessons were observed, with a reception class and a Year 6 class. Reception class pupils learned simple action songs and learned about drums, and Year 6 pupils were creating vocal "sculptures" to represent the sounds of machines. The teaching in each lesson was satisfactory. At Year 6, pupils were working at the level expected for this age. In both lessons teachers missed opportunities to improve the quality of pupils' singing. There was good, tuneful singing during assemblies. There is a strong tradition of music within the school. It is prominent in extra curricular clubs and in particular, during the aesthetics afternoon. The school choir is very active in the community and the school is an important centre for music in the county.
80. Physical education lessons in gymnastics and games skills were observed, with a Year 5 class and a Year 2 class, respectively. In both lessons, pupils were working at the standards expected for their age. Pupils made satisfactory progress. Teachers took great care to ensure safety. The younger pupils improved their passing and stopping skills with footballs. The older pupils developed their ability to move at different levels and form strong bridged shapes at the end of each movement. The girls, in particular, showed good spatial awareness. In both lessons, pupils were not always as active as they should be in order to fully exercise their bodies. Subject leadership and management are very good. A new scheme of work is under development, aimed at improving skills progression. The manager

is promoting a number of links, with sports colleges and with the community, to increase the range of opportunities for sports and dance within the extended day. The inadequacies of the playing field are being addressed. In the summer months, the school uses its own pool to provide swimming lessons for pupils.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

81. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme is well established throughout the school. Several teachers are particularly skilled at helping pupils to express their feelings and, in their lessons, pupils gain significantly through discussions on a wide range of personal issues. Pupils receive important health and safety guidance from several visitors, such as the road safety officer, the school nurse and representatives of the emergency services. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school council; everyone agrees that the council is effective and that pupils' views are playing an increasing part in deciding what happens in the school. Children are learning what it means to live in a democracy.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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