

INSPECTION REPORT

FAIRHOUSE COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114899

Headteacher: Mrs J. McCutcheon

Lead inspector: Mrs A.Pangbourne

Dates of inspection: 26th-28th April 2004

Inspection number: 264394

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Long Riding Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS14 1QP
Telephone number:	01268 523960
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Martin Massey
Date of previous inspection:	February 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fairhouse Community Junior School draws most of its pupils from the local area. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are mostly unfavourable. Pupils' attainments on entry are very low, being generally similar to those in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. There are 15 pupils from ethnic minority heritages and five speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection, there were 210 pupils on roll. There were 85 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to significant behavioural difficulties, such as Tourette's syndrome and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This is a well above average proportion. Five pupils had a Statement of Special Educational Needs, four of these being for behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is above average. The school is taking part in the Excellence in Cities initiative and, until recently, was part of an Education Action Zone. The school received the Investors in People Award in 2003. There are proposals for the school to be amalgamated with the adjacent Infant school in September 2005 and, as a result, the school is in a period of uncertainty. There are significant difficulties with regard to staffing and the recruitment of governors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23818	Alison Pangbourne	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Physical education
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector	
11353	Janet May	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness** is **satisfactory** and improving. It gives sound value for money. Most pupils enter the school with very low standards and poorly developed learning skills but they rise to well below average by the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils and standards are slowly rising with more pupils reaching the standards expected for eleven-year-olds each year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Since her appointment last year, the headteacher has led the school forward successfully, despite significant barriers, such as the very high turnover of teachers, the inclusion of several pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, and the unsatisfactory learning resources, as a result of the school's previous financial management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is good leadership by the headteacher and a shared commitment to continual improvement from all staff.
- Behaviour of a minority of pupils is unacceptable and these pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Their behaviour affects the achievement of others, who are distracted.
- Whilst satisfactory, the quality of teaching in English and mathematics could be improved.
- Pupils achieve well in reading because the school ensures that they have good individual support.
- The curriculum and resources are unsatisfactory and information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and information is not used sufficiently to ensure that work is always well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teaching assistants contribute positively to the standards attained.
- The school promotes attendance very well and most pupils attend school regularly.
- There are good procedures to ensure pupils are well cared for and the way in which their views are sought and acted upon is good.

Overall, the school's improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. It is more effective now, but much of the improvement is relatively recent. Standards have risen in English, particularly in reading. Achievement, which was unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory. There is less unsatisfactory teaching and most of the key issues have been successfully addressed. A start has been made in improving assessment procedures but this remains a weakness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	E	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	C
Science	E	E	E	E

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

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

E means that results are similar to those in the lowest five per cent of school nationally.*

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Standards are well below average in writing, mathematics, science, ICT and history by the end of Year 6. They are below average in speaking and listening. They are average in reading and pupils achieve well. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), those who speak English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils, achieve satisfactorily. However, some boys do not do as well as girls, because several have significant behavioural difficulties, which affect their learning and the achievement of others. Pupils

do as well as those in similar schools in English and mathematics because the school has appropriately focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, but they do not do so well in science.

Pupils' personal qualities are **satisfactory** overall. Their attitudes are satisfactory. Behaviour, although satisfactory for most pupils, is unsatisfactory overall due to a significant minority of pupils, mainly boys, who show very challenging behaviour due to their complex needs. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **satisfactory** overall, as are attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall throughout the school. In the best lessons, clear explanations, brisk pace and interesting tasks encourage pupils to work hard and work well together. Where lessons are satisfactory, tasks are sometimes uninspiring and not always closely matched to individual needs. This is because assessment is not always used effectively. Teachers manage their pupils well and use teaching assistants effectively.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. ICT skills are not developed in other subjects. Resources are unsatisfactory and this impacts negatively on standards. The school provides well for pupils' pastoral needs and links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and **management** are **satisfactory** overall.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and has successfully introduced several new initiatives to raise standards. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. Sound leadership is provided by most other staff, although the leadership and management of science and ICT are unsatisfactory. The leader of these subjects left a term ago and although a teacher has taken over responsibility for science this term, there is still no leader for ICT. Management is satisfactory. The very high turnover in staff has impeded the development of the role of the subject leader and other initiatives. The governing body is mostly new since the appointment of the headteacher and governors fulfil their role satisfactorily, although they have been unable to ensure that statutory requirements for ICT are fully met without a subject leader. The budget is carefully managed and monitored to recoup the over spend from previous years.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are satisfied with the work of the school. They like the way that their children are expected to work hard and that they are helped to settle into school. Some parents had concerns about the behaviour of a minority and bullying. They also felt that they could be provided with more information about their children's progress. The team agrees with their positive views but judges that the information provided is good, that bullying is not an issue and shares their concerns about the behaviour of a minority. Pupils like getting help when they are stuck and that they have to work hard. They also have concerns about the behaviour of some pupils. The inspection team agrees with them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all issues relating to unacceptable behaviour by a minority of pupils are effectively managed.
- Improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics in order to raise standards.
- Develop assessment procedures to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' widely varying learning needs.
- Improve curricular provision to ensure sufficient resources and that ICT is used across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements: Ensure that all aspects of the ICT curriculum are taught.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Girls achieve better than boys. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in National Curriculum tests is increasing each year.
- Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment and poorly developed personal skills.
- Achievement has improved since the previous inspection.
- Whilst most pupils with SEN achieve satisfactorily, a significant minority of boys with complex learning needs do not do as well as girls. These pupils distract others and this impacts negatively on overall achievement.
- Pupils achieve well in reading.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in ICT.

Commentary

1. Most pupils enter the school with very poor skills, both academically and personally, and the school works hard to compensate for their disadvantage, establishing clear expectations and a positive climate for learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching. As a result, most pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, pupils' achievement overall is constrained by the minority of pupils with challenging behaviour who take up too much of their teachers' time. The support given to these pupils is beginning to have a positive effect.

The tables in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point below the national, their pupils are, typically, a term behind.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (23.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.1 (24.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	25.6 (26.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 71 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The 2003 results were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are similar this year, although more pupils are likely to reach the expected Level 4. Average points are increasing year on year in English and mathematics, but it is the high number of pupils at lower levels that affects the overall average points score.
3. There are several reasons why achievement has improved since the previous inspection and pupils now do as well as similar pupils in other schools in English and mathematics. The school has worked hard to establish a consistent behaviour management policy, despite the significant staff turbulence, and the majority of pupils try to conform and work hard. The older pupils have lots of catching up to do because the programmes of study in the National

Curriculum in some subjects have not been taught for all their time in the school. This affects standards.

4. Other reasons for the improvements include the support that the school has received from the Education Action Zone and the local education authority in raising standards in literacy and numeracy. However, the turbulence amongst the teaching staff means that not all teachers have benefited from this support. The emphasis that the school places on reading means that standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average this year. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 3 have made rapid progress in reading this year and this is likely to impact positively on standards as they move through the school.
5. The achievement of pupils with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language is mostly satisfactory. Those boys with complex needs who are unable to conform to the school's expectations of behaviour tend not to achieve as well as they should. The team of classroom assistants provides good support and is successful in assisting teachers in helping most pupils to achieve adequately and attain reasonable standards, given their learning difficulties. There is a shortage of resources and equipment to assist teachers and support staff in meeting the particular needs of all pupils and this constrains their achievement and that of others.
6. Pupils do not do well in ICT because there has been little focus on the subject; pupils have poor skills on entry, there is no subject leader and some teachers lack confidence. Some staff have not been at the school for long enough to benefit from training opportunities. All these factors impact negatively on standards and achievement, but a clear action plan has been drawn up to address the weaknesses and progress has already been made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are keen and willing to learn.
- The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils with complex needs distracts other pupils and affects standards and achievement.
- The school promotes attendance very well and most pupils attend school regularly.
- There is a high number of exclusions but the behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive impact.

Commentary

7. Pupils enter the school with very little idea about how they should settle to work, concentrate and listen to their teachers. However, all staff are working consistently to help pupils develop their learning skills and the majority of pupils are beginning to show interest and enjoyment in what they do. This was evident in a good Year 3 ICT lesson. The teacher made good use of the digital interactive white board to explain the task and the pupils concentrated very well and eagerly commenced the writing task. Teachers actively promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem through celebrating their achievements by giving *credits* for good work and behaviour. Although attitudes to work are satisfactory overall, there is a significant minority of pupils whose behaviour can be very demanding and diverts the work of the class for varying periods of time as the teachers' attention is directed to managing a few pupils and recapturing their interest in their work. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in class and work well with the more challenging pupils so that they are more fully involved and have less opportunity to distract others and prevent them from learning. Pupils join in with enthusiasm with sports and after-school clubs and especially enjoy football. At playtime, with careful supervision, they are beginning to share and enjoy each others' company and they are developing good relationships

with each other. Pupils also show a positive attitude to their school and to their work in the willing way they undertake jobs in class and around the school.

8. The headteacher and senior staff have worked very hard to improve standards of behaviour and they recognise that pupils' achievements during their time at school have been handicapped by the poor behaviour of the minority. There is now a well-structured and consistently applied behaviour policy, which has been fully discussed with parents and pupils. Pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and more and more are meeting these standards. Parents expressed concern about the behaviour of some pupils and the inspection supported these concerns. Pupils themselves recognise that the behaviour of some pupils is unacceptable and this has formed part of the discussions for the School Council.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	195	15	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	10	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. Exclusions are high but have been used with deliberate care to emphasise that poor behaviour is unacceptable. There are a significant minority of pupils, especially older boys, who have specific difficulties and require a high level of specialist care or who are aggressive and seek to dominate in class and around the school. The behaviour of this minority destroys what would otherwise be a calm learning atmosphere in the school. This challenging behaviour is increasingly well managed as all staff work closely together and are well supported by the headteacher. As a result, in class, the periods of concentrated learning are gradually extending. There is good monitoring of behaviour and sanctions, and the new rewards system of *credit cards* is popular and increasingly effective in promoting good behaviour. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, pupils know that it must be reported. The pupil support worker acts effectively as counsellor and pupils know that they have someone to talk through their problems with them. There has been much improvement in behaviour, but because some of the older pupils have not experienced a consistent behaviour management strategy until recently and have become disaffected, it will take time for all the benefits of the current system to take effect. Improving the climate for learning is a major challenge for the school and a good start has been made on this.
10. The school cultivates pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. In lessons, teachers value the contributions that the pupils make, thus developing their self-esteem and self-respect. Through assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils are encouraged to respect the feelings of others. For example, during the inspection a Year 6 *circle time* discussed friendship. Pupils carefully considered what helps and what stops a friendship. The School Council is helping pupils to understand what living and working in a community means. This is a genuine opportunity for them to shape decisions in school life and express their views, whilst at the same time having to represent the opinions of others not necessarily shared by themselves. This is assisting in their understanding of the principles of democracy and good citizenship.
11. Pupils explore many elements of their own culture; for example they have greatly enjoyed finding out about life and times in Victorian England, including a visit to a Victorian school.

Through religious education (RE) and geography, pupils learn about other faiths and ways of life, such as what it is like to live in an Indian village. Pupils with experience of other cultures such as South Africa and Malaysia are encouraged to share their knowledge and cultural inheritance with their classmates.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

- The majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time. Attendance has improved because the school has very good and efficient procedures to encourage good attendance. The new attendance league table is a fresh initiative and greatly enjoyed by pupils, with each class competing to be top of the league each week with the best attendance. In the current academic year, attendance is broadly in line with the national picture. Punctual arrival at school has improved because of a sustained and positive approach to parents to encourage them to bring their children to school in good time each day. The presence of the headteacher in the playground each morning to meet and greet parents and pupils helps to reinforce the school's message about punctuality. Despite all that the school does to try and improve attendance and punctuality, a small number of families fail to arrive on time or to bring their children to school regularly. The education welfare officer works closely with the school and matters of attendance and punctuality are very well monitored.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Satisfactory teaching enables all pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities but the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils are cared for well and links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. They are satisfactory in all subjects where judgements could be made. Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage their pupils well, including those with significant behavioural difficulties.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and, as a result, teachers do not always match tasks closely to pupils' widely varying needs.
- Time is not always used effectively in some classes and some tasks are uninspiring and this leads to restlessness.
- Teaching assistants support teachers well and contribute to the standards attained.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3%)	10 (33%)	18 (60%)	1 (3 %)	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.

13. The significant turbulence amongst the staff has led to disruption for several classes and many teachers have not been in the school for long enough for the senior management team to monitor the quality of teaching in all classes in order to raise it to that of the best. Several teachers were establishing their routines in their first weeks in the school and some overseas teachers were less familiar with the National Curriculum than might be the case. However, the commitment shown by all teachers means that there was very little unsatisfactory teaching and examples of good teaching were seen in all year groups.
14. Numerous examples were seen where teachers, including those very new to the school, made their expectations of behaviour clear to the pupils and used the behaviour management policy to good effect. A good example was seen in a Year 3 English lesson, where a disturbed pupil, who had been having time on his own, returned to join the group of his own accord, without disrupting other pupils. In a good Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher forestalled any misbehaviour by ensuring that all resources were set out ready for pupils to begin their group work. In a very good session for pupils in Year 6, the teacher began the day with enjoyable physical activity to motivate them for their numeracy lesson. This was successful and they settled to their work with enthusiasm. Teachers use the *credit card* system effectively to reward good behaviour but the significant minority with complex behavioural and emotional needs, particularly in Years 5 and 6, find it difficult to respond to the school's high expectations of behaviour because they have not received specialist support to address their needs when they were younger.
15. In some classes, lessons start late, over run or the timetable is not adhered to, often because teachers have to spend time managing the disturbed behaviour of this small number of pupils and this adversely affects achievement. However, on other occasions, introductions are too long and tasks, although challenging, are not as inspiring as they might be. For example, in a history lesson for pupils in Year 4, the lesson began late and there was no time to start the written task. In an English lesson in Year 3, pupils spent too long copying the learning objective from the board, leaving insufficient time for the planned activity. In mathematics, the best lessons featured good opportunities for pupils to generate their own numbers to use in their calculations and this motivated them to work hard, whereas in less successful lessons, there was too much emphasis on the completion of the same worksheets. This was also the case in a science lesson, where a practical activity might have motivated the pupils rather than a worksheet. Sometimes, pupils were offered tasks that were too similar for all levels of attainment, being expected to complete more or less work, sometimes with support. This was sometimes the case with new teachers as they were getting to know their classes.
16. The unsatisfactory assessment procedures are affecting the challenge offered by teaching and hence the pace of learning. Pupils' attainments are not assessed sufficiently rigorously, and teachers do not have a clear and comprehensive overview of the pupils' progress over time. This is partly because there was little assessment data available when the headteacher was appointed and so there is little information available to show what the older pupils know and can do. Some useful information is beginning to be collected on individual pupils; however, teachers do not always use this data effectively enough in their planning to move pupils on to the next stage of learning. There are few specific references to pupils with SEN in teachers' daily lesson plans and there are occasions when the whole class is taught as a whole without adjustments

being made in order to modify tasks so that they enable groups at varying stages of development to enjoy success. A good tracking system has recently been introduced, but it is not yet used to track pupils from their starting points on entry to the school and predict what they should be achieving year by year as they move through the school. Pupils themselves have too few opportunities to be involved in assessing their own learning, or to know the targets they are working towards in some subjects. The school has already identified assessment as a major focus for development and has made a start, but as in many aspects of its work, progress has been inhibited by the large turnover of staff.

17. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to extend learning. They are well prepared and know the pupils well. All share the same expectations of behaviour and those who support pupils with statements of SEN do their best to ensure that their complex needs are met with as little disruption to others as possible. Teaching assistants often note their observations of pupils' skills to assist with their assessment. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, the teaching assistant usefully recorded pupils' speaking and listening skills. In a mathematics lesson in another Year 5 class, the teaching assistant sensitively helped a pupil with SEN to understand the concept that the teacher was demonstrating on the board, so boosting his self-esteem. During the group activities, she ensured that a pupil who speaks English as an additional language understood what she had to do.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is an adequate range of activities beyond the classroom. Accommodation is satisfactory. The quantity and quality of resources to support teaching and learning are inadequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is relevant and places a strong emphasis on improving social skills as well as developing pupils' proficiency in language and communication.
- ICT is not taught sufficiently to meet statutory requirements.
- Time is not always used effectively.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

18. The school recognises that it has a great deal of curricular development to accomplish and that it cannot do everything at once. The headteacher has helped to establish priorities according to the school's most pressing needs. There is a strong emphasis on programmes and initiatives that are intended to improve social skills and help to promote positive attitudes to school work. These are proving to be successful. There is also an appropriately strong emphasis on developing language and literacy skills and many lessons include planned opportunities for discussion. The breakfast club is well attended and provides good opportunities for pupils to socialise and start their school day positively. A *Brain Busters* club is run after school to provide extra support for higher attaining pupils. There are very few visits and little attention is paid to the arts by, for example, organising theatre visits or inviting artists into the school. The school runs football and netball teams and members of a local football club visit the school twice a week to provide coaching. Overall, the breadth of curricular provision and opportunities for extra-curricular activities are satisfactory.
19. Each of the four year groups has a comprehensive set of plans designed to maintain the breadth of the curriculum and promote the systematic teaching of each subject. These plans are based on nationally recommended planning frameworks. They provide good guidance for staff and help to achieve coverage of most of the National Curriculum. One exception is ICT, where the strand of the subject that deals with developing ideas and making things happen is not taught in sufficient depth to meet statutory requirements. There are several reasons for this. The support that the school is receiving from the local education authority and the Education

Action Zone focuses appropriately on literacy and numeracy and ICT has been somewhat neglected. There is also no subject leader due to staff turbulence and many teachers lack confidence in the subject and have not received training due to the short time that they have been at the school.

20. Appropriate amounts of time have been allocated to each subject to promote the establishment of a well balanced curriculum. However the balance is not secure because teachers do not always stick to their timetables. Lessons sometimes start late, over run or are cut short. The time allocations do not in fact correspond to the amount of time that the school intends that each subject should be taught for. Also teachers do not all have the necessary expertise to teach all subjects successfully and therefore tend to spend less time teaching those subjects, such as ICT, in which they lack confidence. This results in an imbalance.
21. There is no proper school library. This hampers the development of research skills. Resources to support the teaching of pupils with SEN are poor. There are too few computer programs to help these pupils with their learning, the books provided are often tattered and in need of replacement and there is very little apparatus and equipment available to help them to overcome specific learning problems. These factors constrain their achievement, particularly those with complex needs. Resources to teach food technology are poor. Although resources for science are adequate they are not easily accessible. There are insufficient up-to-date atlases to support learning in geography. There are too few computer programs to enable ICT to support teaching in other subjects. This severely constrains learning and restricts pupils' achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Good provision is made for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The care and welfare of all pupils is given a high priority by all staff and pupils are provided with sound guidance. The views of pupils are actively sought and valued and their involvement in the development of their school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection and all health and safety matters are well managed.
- All staff assign a high priority to the care of pupils.
- Pupils do not know how well they are doing because marking and assessment are not well developed and informative.
- The School Council is effective and allows pupils to make a valuable contribution to the school.

Commentary

22. All pupils are well known to the staff and newly appointed and temporary staff make a conscientious effort to find out about the pupils in their care quickly. They are strongly supported in this by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. There are clear and sensible procedures for medicines in school and looking after pupils who are unwell. The policies relating to health and safety are implemented well and regular inspections of the school premises and equipment are carried out so the school provides a safe environment for pupils. There are careful and well-organised induction arrangements for new pupils entering the school and parents appreciate this. Regular visits between the infant and junior schools ensure that pupils feel happy and comfortable when they come to their new school. Transfer arrangements are developing well with the two secondary schools to which pupils transfer.
23. Pupils are well cared for and supported by all staff and this has a positive effect for most pupils on their confidence and desire to do the best they can in class. Pupils with behavioural difficulties and those who sometimes try to dominate lessons are also well supported to help them with their problems and this is beginning to lead to an overall improvement in behaviour. Personal development is monitored informally but is nevertheless effective and closely supervised by senior staff. Less well developed is the monitoring of pupils' academic progress.

Pupils are not clear about how well they are doing and how they can improve because the marking and assessment of their work is not always sufficiently well developed to be informative. Pupils are not sufficiently well involved in their work plans and are not yet full partners in their own learning. The school is aware of the need to improve this area of its work so that pupils know how well they have done and what they could do to make their work better. All staff happily spend time with pupils, listen to their problems and help and encourage them. Pupil support workers are a valuable addition to the care of pupils and work well with teaching staff to support pupils and help them to find workable strategies to resolve their difficulties. The education welfare officer, educational psychologist and other professional support workers play an important part in the good level of care provided for pupils.

24. Pupils with SEN are appropriately supported. Good individual education plans have been written and they include clear, precise targets for development. The teaching assistants are fully aware of the targets and direct their support towards meeting them. The SEN administrator helps to maintain detailed records of each pupil's progress. Records are meticulous. Pupils and their parents are kept very well informed about their children's needs and their targets for development. Review meetings are held regularly and provide good opportunities to share information and to determine the next steps to be taken in supporting pupils.
25. Pupils are well involved in discussing important matters relating to their school, especially through the School Council. They have good ideas to put forward and these are respected and valued. For example, pupils have been fully involved in the development of the new behaviour policy and draw attention to things around the school which can be improved. All year groups contribute to the Council and pupils learn in a practical way about the democratic election process and the responsibilities of representing their classmates' views. Pupils support a range of charities and show concern for others in the world less fortunate than themselves. When asked to carry out tasks in class or around the school, pupils do so efficiently and sensibly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has worked with determination to establish good links with parents and ensure that they are well informed about their children's progress and are more involved in the life of the school. Links with other schools and the community are good and are still expanding.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of information for parents, including *Family Learning* initiatives with the community.
- Parental involvement is strongly encouraged and parents' views are canvassed well.
- Not all parents are willing to become involved in partnership with the school.
- Reports are not always as helpful as they could be for parents.
- There is a very supportive PTA and Parent Council.

Commentary

26. Parents are satisfied with most aspects of the school and are now more involved and informed about their children's progress and what is happening in school. They feel that their children are treated fairly and expected to work hard and do their best. Parents feel confident about approaching the school and it is sensitive to parents' concerns and responds to their queries quickly and conscientiously. The school has worked with commendable enterprise to improve and extend the range of information available to parents and involve and seek their views. The Parent Council provides a useful forum for parental discussion and has helped to research a number of changes and new initiatives, so that parents' wishes are taken into account, for example, in the introduction of a new school uniform and the revision of the home school agreement. Many parents remain reluctant to become closely involved with the school, but new

initiatives and ways of forming a productive partnership with all parents are being tried with increasing success.

27. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are helpful documents that give a clear picture of the school. Reports are mostly helpful and provide parents with a concise picture of their children's progress through the year, as well as highlighting some areas in which they can improve their work in English, mathematics and science. However some of the targets set for pupils are very general and not helpful in setting out a clear path for improvement. The language used in a few cases, both to describe the work covered in class and in the targets, is very technical and so not as clear to parents as it could be. Regular newsletters are lively and informative, keeping parents in contact with routine matters as well as special events. A valuable and much appreciated link with home has been established through a home contact book which gives staff and parents another helpful way to keep in touch for the benefit and support of the pupils. The Parents' Association provides good support through regular social and fundraising events. The funds raised are used very effectively to enhance the school through the purchase of books and new equipment. Parents are supportive of school functions and the revised timing of the parent consultation evenings has helped to encourage more to attend these events to meet teachers and discuss their children's achievements.
28. The school has a good range of community links through visitors such as the local police and firemen, who help introduce pupils to local community services. The links with West Ham Football Club, who help with the coaching of football in the school, is greatly valued by staff and pupils alike. There are strong links with the local church and pupils attend services. Through *Family Learning* initiatives with the local community, parents are able to learn about areas of the curriculum such as ICT. Links with the neighbouring infant school, with which amalgamation is proposed, are now strong and this is helpful to pupils when they transfer to the junior school because staff and the buildings are familiar to them. Through the local initiatives such as Excellence in Cities, strong links have been forged throughout the local education community and there are joint initiatives such as those to improve attendance and punctuality in local primary and secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. The leadership of senior staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory as is governance, although statutory requirements are not fully met for ICT. The school has managed the significant turbulence amongst the staff, the unsatisfactory resources due to the deficit budget, the very low attainment on entry and the very challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils appropriately to ensure that it provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed to continual improvement and the good initiatives she has introduced since her appointment last year are beginning to impact positively on standards and achievement.
- The headteacher is leading the staff forward successfully and all share a determination to overcome the many barriers to improvement the school faces.
- The headteacher organises provision for pupils with SEN well and the administrator for this provision manages it exceptionally well.
- The deficit budget has created difficulties in managing the school effectively.

Commentary

29. Since the previous inspection, two years ago, 11 teachers have left and 16 have been appointed. This significant turbulence has had a negative impact on improvement and has disrupted the pupils' education. The majority of the current staff have been appointed since the arrival of the headteacher just over a year ago, and there is now a core of stable staff who

share her commitment to improvement and to the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of background or level of attainment. However, difficulty in the recruitment and retention of staff means that, at the time of the inspection, two teachers were in their second week in the school, another joined last term and the deputy headteacher took over her class two months ago when a teacher left unexpectedly. Almost half the teaching staff are temporary overseas teachers. The proposed amalgamation with the infant school also contributes to uncertainty amongst the staff.

30. Most of the governors are also newly appointed and there are difficulties in filling vacancies. They fulfil their responsibilities appropriately and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have not been able to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements for ICT by including all aspects of the programmes of study because it has not been possible to appoint a suitable subject leader to monitor this due to the staff turbulence. The support provided by the local education authority and the Education Action Zone has focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy and, because of this, the school has been unable to place sufficient emphasis on ICT. In an attempt to improve provision, the school has given a teaching assistant specific responsibility for supporting the subject and a teacher from another school provides his expertise on one day each week. The governors have done the best they can in the circumstances and inspection evidence shows that the low standards are mainly a result of a lack of basic skills due to the very low attainment on entry rather than a lack of provision.
31. Other barriers include the significant number of pupils with complex behavioural difficulties who do not readily adapt to change. Many of these pupils have difficulties that the school has neither the expertise nor the resources to deal with as well as it would like. On her appointment, the headteacher changed an ineffective behaviour management policy to one which is more appropriate and this is proving successful. However, because some pupils at the top of the school have poorly established personal skills they are easily distracted by the behaviour of a minority and this impedes their progress.
32. Examples of the way that the headteacher and senior staff are bringing about change include the use of a learning mentor, funded by the Excellence in Cities initiative, who supports pupils at risk of exclusion and those who are under-achieving as well as contributing positively to after-school clubs. A pupil support worker talks through problems with pupils and acts effectively as a counsellor. As both Year 6 teachers are recent appointments from overseas, the school has gained support from the local education authority to provide an expert unattached teacher to support them as part of her role. Other initiatives include the provision of pupil and parent councils to give them a voice in the running of the school. All these initiatives are contributing positively to improvement.
33. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with SEN are good. The school employs an administrator who manages procedures extremely well. She tests all pupils to determine their particular stages of development in literacy and numeracy soon after their entry to the school. This provides the school with a detailed analysis of each pupil's performance on entry to the school. The results are analysed carefully and pupils who need extra support in their learning are identified. Further follow up tests are conducted at regular intervals to establish how much progress pupils have made. Any pupils who do not make satisfactory progress are identified and become the focus for special extra support in order to help them to catch up with the others. This system works well. The administrator liaises closely with the headteacher, who has good specialist expertise, as well as with teaching and support staff. The headteacher provides very good guidance and the team of classroom assistants employed to assist pupils are very well informed about the most appropriate methods to use. The teamwork established between the headteacher and the administrator helps to ensure efficient provision, but the lack of resources to support pupils diminishes the effectiveness of their work. The governor with responsibility for overseeing provision is knowledgeable and supportive but feels frustrated that there are insufficient funds to improve resources.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	659911
Total expenditure	671271
Expenditure per pupil	2642

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-18783
Balance carried forward to the next	-30143

34. The headteacher and governors are managing the budget carefully and a suitable plan is in place to reduce the over spend that was in place when the headteacher was appointed. A result of the financial difficulties is that the school's resources are unsatisfactory and this affects standards in some subjects, and particularly for pupils with SEN. The headteacher and governors are sensibly prioritising where improvements are essential and have improved some of the inadequate toilet facilities and the reading materials. Funding from the Education Action Zone has helped to improve resources in English and mathematics.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In writing, standards are well below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils start school with poorly developed writing skills.
- Learning in classes for older pupils is disrupted by the very challenging behaviour of a few boys.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and this year, standards are average by the end of Year 6.
- Whilst satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching and learning could be improved.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and teachers do not have a clear and comprehensive overview of the pupils' progress over time.

Commentary

35. Standards in English overall are well below average by the end of Year 6. However, standards are slowly rising with more pupils reaching the expected Level 4 each year. Achievement is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, where achievement was unsatisfactory. Pupils do as well as those in similar schools. There is, however, a difference in standards between reading and writing. Writing skills are very much weaker than reading skills when pupils enter the school and the school works hard to raise standards. Standards in writing are well below average throughout the school and pupils slowly develop their skills. Strategies have been put in place to raise standards for boys and the subject leader has demonstrated the teaching of writing skills. However, pupils' reading skills are a strength as a result of the well-planned opportunities for guided reading outside of the literacy hour and the emphasis staff place on the importance of reading development. Pupils frequently read to an adult individually. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average and pupils achieve well. There is clear evidence of improvement for the younger pupils as reading records for Year 3 show that pupils have made significant progress this year.
36. The recently appointed subject leader is providing good leadership. She has received effective support from the local education authority and the Education Action Zone which has helped to improve resources and to enable her to fulfil her management role successfully. She recognises many of the weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment, and she is starting to address these. For example, the system of tracking pupils' progress is developing, but currently there is insufficient data available and therefore it is not consistently used to effectively inform teachers' planning. Pupils' self-assessment is also underdeveloped. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject has been mostly undertaken by the local education authority but the subject leader has also monitored in some classes. Resources are improving and the recently purchased books are helping to instill positive attitudes to literacy. However, the library is inadequate and impedes the development of research skills.
37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' lesson plans follow the National Literacy Strategy, but insufficient account is taken of pupils' existing levels of attainment. As a result, individual work programmes do not always raise attainment in line with pupils' potential and needs. Marking is variable and opportunities are not often taken to show pupils exactly how to improve their work. The attention-seeking behaviour of a small minority of boys in the older classes diverts the attention of the teacher, sometimes for significant periods of time, so that important learning opportunities are lost for the whole class. This adversely affects achievement.

38. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 6 shows very little evidence of extended writing. There is generally a lack of descriptive vocabulary, erratic spelling and some poor presentation. Pupils are generally articulate, but many have difficulty in presenting their thoughts in writing. Throughout the school, presentation is variable. Some improvement is occurring. For example, in a Year 4 lesson a text was chosen which gained the interest of boys and girls. The pupils were given guidance sheets appropriate to their individual levels of attainment and were helped where necessary by the classroom assistant. This resulted in the production of extended writing in the form of a diary.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Language and literacy across the curriculum is being developed satisfactorily. In RE, for example, pupils have written about the suffering of the Jews during their exile. In science, pupils record the results of their investigations. In geography, they write letters describing conditions during *Hurricane Isabel*. In history, they record changes in Britain since 1948. Word-processing skills are not well developed in ICT.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average by the end of Year 6. This is similar to the previous inspection.
- Standards are rising slowly with more pupils reaching the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6.
- There are insufficient opportunities for investigative and problem solving activities.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and, as a result, tasks are not always closely matched to the needs of the pupils.
- Whilst satisfactory overall, there is room for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

40. All pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, where pupils did not achieve as well as similar pupils in other schools. There are several reasons why pupils are doing better now. The school's involvement with the Education Action Zone has provided funds to purchase practical equipment and to release the subject leader to enable her to fulfil her management role satisfactorily. The quality of teaching has been regularly monitored by external consultants and *booster* groups have been established in a drive to raise standards.
41. Assessment has become more firmly established since the appointment of the headteacher but although a good start has been made, there is more to do. For example, record sheets are being compiled this year to give a *snapshot* of each pupil. These show at which level pupils are working each term and give a clear view of how much progress has been made. These useful sheets are at an early stage of development and should help to establish accurate targets when they are fully established. Plans are in place to use them to monitor progress in investigative and problem solving activities next term. Few examples of investigative activities were seen during the inspection and the school has already recognised this as an area for development.
42. Examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection, for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. In these lessons, pupils were motivated by the tasks, worked hard and made good gains in their learning because they were able to generate their own numbers to use in their calculations, either through rolling dice or by choosing from cards. This meant that their individual needs were well met because they were offered dice or cards with higher or lower numbers.

Teachers quickly picked up on pupils' misunderstandings and opportunities to explain their strategies for calculations meant that pupils learnt from each other. Where teaching was generally satisfactory, there was too much emphasis on copying calculations from the board or completing worksheets and pupils were less motivated. Sometimes higher attaining pupils were expected to complete the whole worksheet while lower attainers were expected to do less, often with adult support. This was sometimes because teachers were unsure at which level to pitch tasks for individuals as the use of assessment is underdeveloped. On occasions, lessons over ran or had to be shortened as teachers had spent too long on introductions or on managing the behaviour of a minority.

Mathematics across the curriculum

43. Numeracy is developed appropriately in other subjects and contributes positively to the standards attained. For example, in science, pupils count spoonfuls of soil as they plant beans and record the results of their investigations in block, line and pie charts. In history, pupils use their measuring skills to imagine the real size of an artefact on a poster. In geography, pupils use line graphs to illustrate monthly rainfall.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching has improved and now skills are taught more systematically.
- There are significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and are enthusiastic about their work.
- There has been too little attention paid to improving provision because the staff turbulence left the school with no subject leader for a period of a term.
- Resources are not used effectively to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

44. There have been some improvements since the last inspection. Planning has improved and now the full National Curriculum programmes of study are taught without so much repetition of work in successive year groups. A clear set of planning documents for each year group has been introduced and is now implemented. This provides good guidance for teachers. Teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. There is now a greater amount of time allocated to teaching the subject and all classes now have two lessons each week.
45. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall and there were several examples of good teaching. During lessons, pupils learned a reasonable amount and were generally enthusiastic about their work. However, in the longer term pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Several significant factors have hindered their progress. The continuity of pupils' learning has been interrupted by numerous changes in teaching staff. Until recently, teachers were not following a clear planning framework designed to teach skills cumulatively. As a result, pupils often repeated work that they had already mastered and were not introduced to some of the National Curriculum material that they should have been covering. This has resulted in gaps in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently, their achievement has been uneven and has not followed a progressive sequence. Although achievement has been unsatisfactory overall there are clear indications that the position is now improving. The school has good plans for developing the subject and most pupils are now achieving satisfactorily in lessons. The work in pupils' books is well presented and it is clear that the curriculum is now being covered systematically.

46. Pupils are keen on the subject. It was very clear that pupils' behaviour improved significantly in lessons where they were provided with opportunities to become involved in practical, first hand activities. Pupils, who in other lessons demonstrated a tendency to be awkward, restless and uncooperative, became engrossed in practical work. This was particularly evident in a lesson in Year 6 where pupils were absorbed in the construction of different electrical circuits. It was also very apparent in a lesson in Year 4 on the growth of bones where pupils became thoroughly intrigued in measuring the circumference of their skulls and the length of their limbs. The lack of prior experiences and understanding was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 3 where they were totally fascinated by a lesson that involved planting runner beans. Few appeared to have seen a bean before and there were gasps of excitement when they were told that they would be planting their own beans in order to grow beanstalks. They demonstrated a naiveté about the conditions needed for successful growth and were clearly attaining standards that were well below average. Similarly pupils in Year 6 were extremely excited when they successfully created circuits to make bulbs light, but the standards they attained were well below average. Pupils were far less interested in a lesson that involved talking about the classification of common wild plants and filling in worksheets. In this lesson, several quickly became restless because the teacher did not provide opportunities for them to engage in first hand activities, such as actually collecting plants from outside and sorting them into different groups.
47. Leadership and management of the subject are currently unsatisfactory. As a priority, the school has been concentrating on the urgent need to improve standards in literacy and numeracy with the support from the Education Action Zone, and so science has not featured as an area for development. The subject leader has only recently taken over responsibility for improving provision as the previous leader left the school. She has begun to introduce a system designed to assess pupils' progress in one strand of the subject. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was identified as a weakness in the last report but systems are still not complete. Consequently, teachers do not know what point the different groups in each class have reached in their learning. Therefore they cannot match tasks accurately to pupils' widely varying stages of development. It is evident in pupils' work and in the lessons seen that the whole class is usually presented with the same task. As a result, the specific learning needs of pupils with different levels of attainment are not fully met. This is particularly the case with the higher attaining pupils whose performance is constrained by lack of appropriate challenge. The national test results confirm this finding and show that the proportion that exceeded the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard last year was below the national average for similar schools. The test results also show that boys tend to be further behind national averages than girls. This is because it is mainly a minority of boys who are quick to lose interest and become restless. Also there is a higher proportion of boys rather than girls who have SEN in each class. There is no systematic programme for monitoring teaching and learning to determine where improvements are needed. There has been no detailed analysis of test results to identify areas of weakness and where pupils need greater input.
48. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning but they are not easily accessible. For security reasons they are kept in a locked cupboard and few teachers are fully aware of what is available. The school possesses, for example, a microscope that can be linked to computers to display enlarged images but it is rarely used. This is largely because teachers lack confidence and expertise. Similarly computers are rarely used to support teaching and learning. The subject leader is aware of all the weaknesses in provision and has devised a good action plan designed to improve them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should and standards are well below average by the end of Year 6.
- There are examples of good teaching where skills are taught systematically.
- Computers are not used enough to support teaching and learning in other subjects.
- The full National Curriculum is not taught adequately.

Commentary

49. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. There are many reasons for this. Pupils' achievement is constrained by a lack of basic computer skills. Many pupils lack fundamental proficiency and are not as advanced as would usually be found in most schools. Their limited skills mean that they do not know their way around the keyboard. Skills are not taught methodically in all classes and there are serious gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers purposefully. There are no assessment systems to determine what pupils already know and what they need to learn next. As in science, the school has been unable to focus sufficiently on the subject while receiving support for literacy and numeracy.
50. Although the overall picture is unsatisfactory there are some strengths in provision. The teaching was good in several lessons where skills were taught well in a step-by-step approach. In a good lesson for pupils in Year 3, for example, the teacher used the computerised white board well to demonstrate the use of functions such as the *undo* button, the *shift* keys and the *spell checker*. Most pupils learned quickly and effectively because the teacher's explanations were clear and measured. Teaching was energetic and pupils worked enthusiastically. However, for many, their narrow vocabulary and weak spelling skills restricted progress. Pupils in Year 4 were appropriately challenged in a good lesson where they were required to use a mathematical program to draw shapes. Again, explanations were clear and the teacher taught a sequence of specific skills. The task was simple and most pupils succeeded, but the skills they demonstrated indicated that most are at a very early stage of developing computer skills. Teachers are supported well by a skilled classroom assistant who has developed good specialist knowledge. She helps to manage the computer suite, works alongside the teachers in each class for one lesson each week and assists with sorting out technical problems. A teacher from a neighbouring school also provides support one day each week. These initiatives contribute positively to improvement.
51. Teachers who are confident use the computer suite well to teach computer skills and to use computers to extend learning in other subjects, such as word-processing to develop story writing. The Internet is used well in some classes to research information but little use is made of email. Generally computers are not used enough. There was little evidence of computers in the classrooms being used effectively. The computer suite is not used well by all classes. Teachers do not know about the full range of equipment available in the school and there has been no complete audit of resources. The projector and computerised whiteboard are under-used. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning. There is no subject co-ordinator to lead and manage developments. Consequently progress has stalled. The school is well aware of these shortcomings and a good action plan designed to improve provision has been devised but its implementation has been slow. Improvements have been made, such as moving the server into a locked cupboard to prevent pupils from turning it off in passing. Again, the turnover of staff makes it difficult for the school to ensure consistency between classes.

52. The statutory requirements for teaching the National Curriculum are not met in full. Parts of the subject, such as the strand that deals with developing ideas and making things happen, are not taught sufficiently. Although there is a good planning framework that teachers are supposed to cover, parts of the programme are not taught. This is largely because several teachers lack confidence and expertise and there has been insufficient training to develop their skills. It is also because there is a lack of appropriate resources to address parts of the statutory curriculum. The good provision reported at the time of the last inspection has not been maintained.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. Opportunities are frequently missed to use computers to support teaching and learning in other subjects. The use of computers for handling and illustrating the data that pupils collect in, for example, scientific investigations, is at a very early stage of development. The Internet is sometimes used for research in history and geography and computers are used occasionally to support work in literacy and numeracy. However, there is no coherent strategy designed to promote the systematic use of ICT across the curriculum. The school is well aware of this and the expansion of cross-curricular links features in its development planning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education and history were inspected and are reported below. No report is made on geography.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average by the end of Year 6.
- The lack of sufficient high quality resources impacts negatively on standards.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to talk in pairs and small groups about what they know.

Commentary

54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils achieve appropriately. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Much work is oral because many pupils have such limited writing skills and this enables them to explore historical topics appropriately without being inhibited by having to record their work. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 worked in pairs to discuss what made travel and communication difficult in Ancient Greece. They used atlases to research the terrain and made sensible suggestions. However, there were not enough atlases with a suitable scale for the pupils to use and some became confused by the distances between places. The lesson might have been enhanced by books and pictures to illustrate the forms of transport and communication, but none were available.
55. In another lesson, for pupils in Year 6, a similar situation occurred. Here, pupils were learning how the world has changed since the Tudor period. Again, a lack of suitable atlases meant that it was difficult for some pupils to compare known countries in Tudor times with modern times because the atlases showed physical features and not the names of countries.
56. As was identified in the last inspection, there is no subject leader. This is because the turbulence amongst the teaching staff means that there are insufficient established teachers to manage all the subjects effectively.

Religious education

Provision in religious education (RE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are knowledgeable about all major world faiths because of good curricular coverage.
- There is good promotion of self-esteem and care for others.
- Assemblies encourage spiritual development and respect for one another well.
- The unacceptable behaviour of a minority of older pupils hinders the learning of all pupils.

Commentary

57. Standards are below the requirements of the Essex locally agreed syllabus because pupils' poor literacy skills impede the way that they can record what they know. Achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. In the past eighteen months, time and effort have been spent to good effect on improving the quality and quantity of resources available for teaching about the major world faiths. All pupils have the opportunity to see and handle artefacts relating to each religion and to learn about their use and meaning, such as the *Menorah* and the *Magen David*. Assemblies are used to underline themes of the Christian religion and to relate them to today. For example, the *Parable of the Sower* was used well to illustrate how we learn from each other. Pupils then reflected on lovely things that grow in the garden. Visits to the local church give pupils the opportunity to find out more about the Christian faith. The school places good emphasis on caring for others and helping pupils to recognise the importance of their own family and friends.
58. Although most pupils are from the Christian faith, by Years 5 and 6 they are knowledgeable about the world faiths, in particular Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism, because they have followed the areas of study set out in the agreed syllabus. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils enthusiastically discussed the meaning of different Jewish religious symbols. Unfortunately this lesson was slowed down because of the disruptive behaviour of a minority of boys that affected the learning of the rest of the class. The teaching seen and evidence from work scrutiny indicate that teaching is satisfactory. Scrutiny of work demonstrates the very low levels of writing that pupils have on entry to the school. Teachers encourage pupils to make use of their literacy skills in RE; however, the limited writing skills of a number of pupils means that work is not always finished.
59. The subject leader is enthusiastic. She has worked hard to ensure that all aspects of the agreed syllabus are covered. She has taken action on the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection but has not yet monitored pupils' attainment and progress. The subject leader fulfils her role satisfactorily.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and physical education were sampled. No reports are made on design and technology and music.

Displays in **art and design** cover a range of applications and materials. The observational drawings of trainers by Year 6 demonstrate that pupils have acquired good skills in observational drawing. Pupils are receiving a variety of interesting work and it is sometimes related to a specific topic they are studying. For example, Year 5 have produced a colourful textile story of Christian Creation and in Year 3, drawings of Saxon crosses support their work in RE. There was no evidence of the use of the computer in art and design. Pupils have sketch books but these are not used for assessment.

Physical education is taught to all classes and all aspects are covered, including swimming. Some specialist teaching is provided and pupils have the opportunity to take part in after-school activities

such as netball and football. During the inspection, an overseas teacher taught a very good lesson to promote the pupils' fitness. Here, the pupils played ball games in teams, showing good control and sportsmanship. On returning to the classroom, the physical activity continued with a pupil calling the instructions and pupils catching a soft ball accordingly. For example, on the call *Kangaroo pouch* the pupils caught their ball in the front of their shirt and were out of the game if they dropped it. The learning mentor joined in and the way in which the pupils behaved was very good. As a result of this session, pupils were able to start their numeracy lesson ready to learn.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled.

The school has a positive and caring atmosphere where pupils' personal, social and health education is considered carefully. *Circle time* helps pupils to express their ideas and thoughts in a safe and sensitive manner. These sessions help pupils learn that they are valued and important members of the school community. The sessions seen helped pupils to discuss how we are all different and what are the important qualities to have in a friend. The School Council is well organised and pupils represent one another's views with a clear sense of responsibility. The subject is developing rapidly and effectively.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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