

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brantham, Manningtree

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124626

Headteacher: Mrs Bridgette Gough

Lead inspector: Mrs Elizabeth Coley

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th May 2005

Inspection number: 266510

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 235

School address: Palfrey Heights
Brantham
Manningtree
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Telephone number: 01206 392291
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Gary Lee-Scott

Date of previous inspection: 22nd March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brooklands Primary School is an average sized village school with 235 pupils. It serves families from a range of social circumstances, but, taken together, these are in line with the national picture. Pupils come from a mainly white British background, and there are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average and their needs are mainly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, visual impairment, specific difficulties with literacy or numeracy and moderate learning difficulties. Nine pupils have statements outlining their particular special educational needs. When they enter school, pupils' skills and knowledge are extremely varied, but are average on balance. There have been four changes in leadership since the last inspection. The new headteacher had been in post for three weeks at the time of the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30814	Elizabeth Coley	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, information and communication technology, art and design, music, English as an additional language
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector	
20704	Terry Elston	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, design technology, physical education, special educational needs
20948	John Linstead	Team inspector	English, religious education, geography, history, citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brooklands is a sound school which provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy very good relationships. Their achievement is satisfactory and, by Year 6, standards are average. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Parents and pupils speak well of the school. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children in the reception classes achieve well, as do those pupils with special educational needs
- Standards in reading are above average by Year 6
- The school successfully provides a good environment where all pupils are valued, well cared for, accept responsibility readily and enjoy coming to school
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and does not generally challenge more able pupils
- Assessment information is not used well enough to identify and rectify pupils' weaknesses
- The good range of extra-curricular activities and the use of expertise from outside the school support pupils' learning effectively
- Links with parents, other schools and the community are strong and contribute to pupils settling quickly when they begin school

There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection. Whilst the school has rectified most of the main weaknesses in the last report well, inconsistencies remain in teaching. In addition, standards of attainment are generally lower by Year 6 and show how the school has been affected by significant staffing and leadership changes. However, good improvement has been seen in better use of the national literacy strategy, the range of extra-curricular activities, opportunities for promoting pupils' awareness of different cultures and the governors' annual report to parents.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	B	D	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	B
Science	C	C	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children join the school with knowledge and skills that are average overall. During their time in the reception class, they make good progress and almost all children are likely to achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, and a few will exceed them. The 2004 Year 2 national test results were above average. Pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching standards that are in line with those expected because there are more pupils with special educational needs in this year group. The 2004 Year 6 results were in line with the national average overall and above average in mathematics, and demonstrated satisfactory progress since the pupils took the Year 2 tests. Standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are average in English and science and below average in mathematics. However, this still represents satisfactory achievement in terms of

their progress since Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, because work is well matched to their needs and they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. In a few lessons, some more able pupils do not achieve as much as they should.

The development of pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is illustrated by their good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is satisfactory overall in lessons and good around the school. Pupils are generally polite and friendly and relationships are very strong. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with particular strengths in reception and in the support given to those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team. Where teaching is good, lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils' understanding is developed well because teachers use questions effectively to make pupils think hard. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and explain their thinking. In some lessons, teachers manage behaviour ineffectively and pupils learn more slowly as a result. Sometimes, teachers do not give work that is challenging enough to more-able pupils. In most subjects, marking does not tell pupils how to improve their work. The school does not use assessments of pupils' progress well enough to rectify weaknesses in learning. A satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors into school, and all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory. Teaching and non-teaching staff take good care of pupils, and pupils views are valued by the school. The school has good links with parents, who support their children's learning well, and links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. It is too early to judge the leadership of the new headteacher, but inspection evidence indicates that she has made a good start in meeting and listening to parents' views, and has a good understanding of how to improve the school. The leadership of other key staff is sound. The deputy head has worked effectively in recent months, maintaining a strong team spirit amongst staff. Governance is satisfactory, with many governors being new to their role, and they are well led by the chairman and vice-chairman. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have a strong commitment to the school. Management is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have positive views of the school. They are relieved that there is now a permanent headteacher and they appreciate her commitment to make better links with parents, particularly her regular surgeries. They believe their children are taught well and work hard. Pupils also feel that they are expected to work hard and they value the range of extra activities. They are confident that they can go to an adult with any worries they may have. Both pupils and parents raised concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Identify and tackle the inconsistencies in teaching and learning
- Ensure that more-able pupils are challenged sufficiently in lessons

- Implement more effective assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress is checked more rigorously and challenging targets are set as a result

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are average overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, but some more-able pupils underachieve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well during their time in reception
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well across the school
- Pupils achieve well in reading and reach above-average standards by Year 6
- There is not enough challenge for more-able pupils in some classes and so they do not achieve as well as they should
- Pupils in Years 4 and 5 often achieve well

Commentary

1. Although children begin school with a wide range of ability, overall they have knowledge and skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. The sound quality of teaching ensures that most pupils make satisfactory progress overall in all subjects as they move through the school. This is true for both boys and girls. The number of pupils who have special educational needs varies significantly from year to year. Those pupils achieve well, especially in their reading. Teachers and teaching assistants provide work which matches their individual targets well and pupils consistently achieve their goals. However, in some classes, more-able pupils are not offered work which is challenging enough, and so they do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
2. Children in the reception year benefit from a wide range of activities which are well-planned by staff who work well as a team. As a result, almost all of the children are on target to achieve all of the learning goals that are expected by the time they begin in Year 1, and a few children will exceed this standard. In all areas of learning, children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well.
3. Results in the Year 2 national tests in 2004 were above average in reading and mathematics. In writing they were average. These results show an improvement on recent years, and are the best results for some time. Standards seen during the inspection indicate that they are above average in reading, and average in writing, mathematics and science. This is because there are more pupils with special educational needs in the current year group. Standards are also in line with national expectations in religious education and information and communication technology, which were the other subjects inspected in full.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.9 (15.1)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.5 (14.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.2 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

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

4. Results in Year 6 national tests were above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English. This showed a dip in standards in English in comparison with previous years. Nonetheless, these results still demonstrated good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English and science in relation to how well these pupils did when they were in Year 2. Current standards at the end of Year 6 are average in English and science, because strategies have been put in place to raise attainment in English. For example, the teaching of writing has been

carefully analysed and improved and extra classes have been arranged to give pupils the boost they need. However, current standards in mathematics are below average because this cohort has suffered from a succession of teachers, but this still shows satisfactory achievement in terms of their progress since Year 2. Current standards at the end of Year 6 in religious education and in information and communication technology are average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (28.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.9 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.5 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Good achievement was seen in English, mathematics and science in Years 4 and 5, where pupils have enjoyed more stable teaching. Writing standards are improving and work in Years 3 to 5 show it to be above expectations for pupils of those ages. Some of the best achievements in science are in Year 4 where the teaching is demanding and pupils are very keen to learn.
6. Achievement in reading is good across the school. A comprehensive system of teaching reading has been successfully introduced, and new resource material has motivated pupils to improve. This focus on reading includes designated reading lessons, which are backed up by parental support at home.
7. Overall, standards are lower in Year 6 than they were at the time of the last inspection, and show that the school has been affected by significant staffing and leadership changes.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attendance and punctuality are good. They have good attitudes to learning, and overall behaviour is satisfactory. Personal development is good. Overall, provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships exist within the school community
- There has been very good improvement in promoting multicultural understanding
- Very good opportunities are given for pupils to take responsibility
- Pupils respond well when the teacher manages behaviour effectively and they are appropriately challenged, but in a small number of lessons unsatisfactory behaviour limits the learning of the class
- Pupils enjoy school and take advantage of the good range of extra-curricular activities

Commentary

8. Pupils come into school happily in the morning and usually enjoy their lessons, and this contributes to their good attendance. The school monitors attendance closely and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. Lessons start punctually with pupils working hard. They enjoy their lessons when the task is at the right level for them and they are clear about what is expected from them, both in relation to work and behaviour. These good attitudes to learning contribute to pupils’ satisfactory achievement. The very good relationships which exist between pupils and teachers give pupils the confidence to express their views and help to build their self esteem. Pupils value the wide range of extra-curricular activities that the school provides and many of them attend these clubs.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	4.4
National data	5.1

School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils behave well around school. They are polite and friendly towards visitors and play well together in the playground. The majority of pupils also behave well in lessons but there are a few pupils who behave inappropriately. In most cases these pupils are well managed so they do not disrupt the learning of others. However, in a few lessons this is not the case and consequently other pupils do not learn as well as they should do. The concerns of parents and pupils about the behaviour policy not being implemented fairly were not substantiated during the inspection. However, the headteacher is monitoring its use and will be reviewing the policy with parents in a future headteacher's surgery. Pupils do not feel bullying is a major problem and are confident that if it did occur staff would deal with it effectively. The school is very committed to keeping pupils in school and only uses exclusion as a last resort.

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	181	2	
White – Irish	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
No ethnic group recorded	27		

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

10. The school promotes social and moral development consistently well. Staff provide very good role models, treating pupils with fairness and respect. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils' social development by organising pupils so that they work together very well in different groups. Pupils have a good understanding of the behaviour policy which gives them a clear moral code. Personal, social and health education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' personal development providing pupils with opportunities to explore moral and social issues, for example, issues relating to the environment. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school community and pupils carry out these roles diligently. Multicultural provision is good; pupils have opportunities to learn about other cultures through first hand experience, for example, by visiting local Indian and Chinese restaurants. Topics, such as celebrations and the Caribbean, make a good contribution to pupils' respect for, and understanding of, different faiths and cultures. Pupils also learn about western-European culture through subjects such as history and art. Provision for spirituality is satisfactory with assemblies and lessons offering opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' emotions. They also create music and writing in response to the natural world.
11. The good attendance seen in the last inspection has been maintained. Improvement in provision for multicultural education has been very good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have declined since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory as is the curriculum. A good range of extra-curricular activities add to pupils' learning and enjoyment. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and pupils are well cared for. The school has developed an effective partnership with parents to support their children's education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; it is good in the Foundation Stage and for those pupils who have special educational needs. Assessment is satisfactory, but targets are not set to enable pupils to know what they should do to improve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons generally move at a brisk pace and include good question and answer sessions, but in a few lessons behaviour is not managed well enough
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils
- Good links are made between different subject areas
- More able pupils do not achieve as much as they should in some lessons
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently rigorous to check on individual pupils' progress

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (2%)	22 (50%)	20 (46%)	1 (2%)	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.

12. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, it is good in the reception year in all areas of learning. Teachers model well for the children, for example, in speaking correctly. Through very good open questioning, they encourage children to think for themselves and express their ideas and opinions. Learning takes place in progressive steps and resources are used well. An innovation is the use of brain gym, a combination of physical and mental developmental activities, at various points throughout the day which helps to develop imagination. The children are supported effectively in their learning by teachers, teaching assistants and parents, and work is matched well to their needs.
13. In the most effective lessons in Years 1 to 6, teaching included good question and answer sessions and lessons moved at a brisk pace. For example, in a Year 1/2 science lesson investigating which toy lorry would go the furthest distance, pupils were able to make good predictions and understood the difference between fastest and furthest because of the teacher's good questioning. Many opportunities were given for pupils to develop their speaking skills, through the use of 'talking partners'. In some lessons, behaviour was managed effectively and resources were used well which made lessons fun. In a Year 5 lesson on comparing fractions, decimals and percentages, pupils enjoyed the activities because of the use of dice to help form fractions and calculators to help them change their answers into decimals and percentages. The good use of resources ensured that all pupils achieved well. Effective links were often made between different subjects, which encouraged pupils to learn how to use their knowledge and skills from one subject area in another. For example, pupils in Year 2/3 used the facts they had already collected about minibeasts from science to build up a database in ICT.
14. The quality of teaching is inconsistent, because the new programme for checking on the quality of teaching and learning is not yet focused sharply enough on pupils' achievements. In the less effective lessons, behaviour was not managed well enough, and pupils talked while either the teacher or their peers were talking, which slowed down the pace of the lesson and reduced the amount of learning that took place. Planning for more-able pupils was not as good as it should have been in some lessons and so they were not given work that was challenging and did not achieve well enough.
15. The very good relationships that staff have with pupils contribute to a good learning environment. Pupils like their teachers and have very good attitudes towards their work, being keen to participate in questioning sessions and in practical tasks. Good support is given by teachers and teaching assistants and pupils are very comfortable in asking for help if they need it, so that they approach their work with a positive attitude.

16. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils are fully involved in lessons. They carefully prompt pupils to enable them to answer questions, and this does much for their confidence. Regular work on pupils' reading skills gives them sound strategies for working out new words and they make good progress as a result.
17. The assessment procedures now in place to check on pupils' progress are satisfactory. Individual performance in tests is recorded and analysed. This informs teachers about which pupils need to be given extra support, and this support is then put in place. However, assessment is not yet used well enough to rectify weaknesses. The progress of pupils is not checked sufficiently rigorously to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they should be. Whilst targets are set, they are not referred to regularly enough for pupils to know what they need to do to improve. In addition, national test results are not analysed carefully enough to identify topics which pupils find difficult. In mathematics, information from observation and evaluation in lessons enables teachers to plan further work effectively, but this is not consistently done in all subjects.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and the use of visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' learning well. Staffing is good with the school deploying a generous number of teaching assistants and making effective use of the expertise of outside coaches and teachers. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school's accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good providing a wide range of learning opportunities
- The school provides pupils with a large number of extra activities which enrich the curriculum
- Effective planning enables good links to be made between subjects
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and a large number of teaching assistants are effectively deployed throughout the school
- There is inconsistency in the implementation of the school's numeracy strategy
- Opportunities for developing ICT skills are restricted because of unreliable equipment

Commentary

18. The curriculum has developed satisfactorily since the last inspection and a minor issue about the range of extra-curricular activities has been successfully rectified. These now enrich the curriculum well and pupils in all year groups can take part in one or more of the activities on offer. These include sports such as football, badminton and netball as well as dancing, French and gardening. Pupils value this range of extra activities. The skills and expertise of outside teachers and coaches are used well by the school to enhance pupils' experiences, for example in providing music lessons, instrumental lessons and dance tuition after school. It is also well-illustrated by the quality of the coaching provided by Colchester United F.C. staff in games lessons for older pupils as well as in the after school football clubs.
19. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children are given many opportunities for developing their skills in a practical way, thereby encouraging independent learning. The children enjoy choosing their activities within the structure of the learning objective for each lesson from the *Busy Bears* chart. These activities are well planned and appropriate for the needs of the children.

20. The curriculum is broad and balanced with good planning that links different subjects together well. This aims to make effective use of the available time and to make learning relevant and purposeful. For example, studies in the history of the Celts provided the stimulus for work in art and pupils making 'belt purses'. The school's efforts to improve writing are also well served through this means and pupils write for a variety of 'real' purposes. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used their visit to Felixstowe to create their own definitions of words associated with the port's activities. Older pupils describe in detail their science experiments as well as writing at length about their own research on such matters as the history of the cinema. The school recently introduced initiatives designed to help develop pupils' thinking skills. Teachers use a variety of strategies to this end, for example, encouraging pupils to produce 'webs' to show how different ideas are linked to a central theme. These are gradually becoming embedded and form part of many lessons. Whilst time is generally used well, religious education is often taught in a short period before lunch, and, during the inspection, pupils were disappointed when the lesson had to finish, because they had not been given enough time to complete the work required or to share their findings. The amount of learning which took place was therefore restricted.
21. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' targets for learning and behaviour are clear and reviewed regularly. The balance between support provided in lessons and in the small withdrawn groups is good and pupils make rapid progress as a result. The school makes every effort to include these pupils in all activities on the curriculum. The school deploys a large number of teaching assistants who provide valuable support for pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
22. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about sex and relationships education through personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils also learn about the effects of drugs misuse and healthy life styles. In addition they are taught about environmental issues and different cultures as part of their work in citizenship. Visitors to the school play an important part in this and have taught pupils about such things as road safety, bullying and first aid, including resuscitation techniques.
23. The school's planning and implementation of its strategies in mathematics are not good enough which is affecting the standards pupils are reaching. At the moment there is a lack of consistency in the common strategies used to develop pupils' mathematical skills. Whilst standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations, pupils' skills in ICT are currently restricted because the hardware available can be unreliable. This is a priority in the school development plan, and governors have budgeted for the improvements needed. Opportunities for developing skills are not as frequent as they should be, and are limiting pupils' achievement.
24. The school's accommodation is good; classes are light and airy with large shared areas used to good effect for a host of practical activities. The school's grounds are extensive with varied and attractive gardens, a very good field for PE and games and with a swimming pool on site.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils. It provides good support and guidance to pupils and involves them well in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction procedures are in place for children joining reception
- There are very good arrangements to ensure that pupils have at least one responsible adult they can go to if they have problems
- A good range of procedures are used to take pupils' views into account
- Good support ensures that all pupils are included in the life of the school

- Pupils' progress is not yet being checked rigorously enough

Commentary

25. Staff successfully provide a caring environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils are confident that they can take any concerns they may have to an adult and that they would get good support. In addition, for pupils who are experiencing specific problems, for example with friendships, the school agrees with the pupil a specific adult with whom they can discuss their worries. The nurture group¹ provides effective support for younger pupils who find socialising difficult. The school has very good procedures for enabling any pupils who have been excluded to rejoin the school that include very good support to help them manage their behaviour. Teachers use test results well to identify pupils who need extra support for mathematics and English. They are beginning to use data which check pupils' progress to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they should, but, as yet, this is not being consistently used to improve the learning of all pupils.
26. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well and this ensures that the support provided is effective. Pupils' contributions are valued highly by teachers and this gives them confidence to answer questions in class discussions.

¹ A group to help pupils who find lunchtime difficult.

27. The school has good health and safety procedures, including those for first aid and the administration of medicines. Risk assessments are routinely carried out for all trips and visits but staff have not done this for activities on the school site. Arrangements for child protection are securely in place and staff know what they should do if they have any concerns.
28. The school's systems for supporting children joining reception are very thorough. The good links with local pre-school providers contribute to this. Where information is available from the pre-school setting, teachers use it to help children have a smooth start to school. In addition, staff visit local pre-school settings and provide three settling in sessions for the children in the reception class before they join the school. Parents are invited to ask for a home visit if they so wish.
29. The school values pupils' views and has good mechanisms that enable pupils to influence the work of the school. In particular, the school council meets regularly and as a result of their requests the school purchased extra play equipment for lunchtimes. The council was also involved in the process of appointing the headteacher. Pupils' opinions are sought through questionnaires and in perception interviews² with the headteacher. The most recent of these focussed on pupils' experiences of writing.
30. The high commitment staff have for the care of pupils has been maintained, but overall the support and guidance, particularly in relation to the use of assessment data, is not as good as reported in the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good.

Main strengths

- The headteacher's surgery is very effective in developing partnerships with parents
- Links with other schools and pre-school settings contribute well to the induction of pupils into reception and in preparing pupils for secondary school
- Links with the local community extend the curriculum well
- Information for parents is good

Commentary

31. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide good information about the life of the school and curriculum. Although the majority of parents are still positive about the school there is some disquiet about the effect of the unsettled leadership on their children's education. Good links with local schools and the community have been maintained.
32. The headteacher has set as a priority improving communication with parents, and parents appreciate her commitment to improving these links. She has already made a good start on this by introducing headteacher's surgeries. At the first one of these, parents discussed what they wanted to be covered in future surgeries; for example, the behaviour policy and how friendship groups can be managed when classes are split. This is a very good system for gaining parents' views and dealing with their concerns.
33. Information about the curriculum and events in school is good, as is information about pupils' attainment and progress. Although reports to parents give them good information about what pupils know and can do, they do not consistently report whether pupils are attaining above or below the national expectations for their ages. There are further opportunities for parents to gain information about their children's progress through the "at home" sessions where they work with their children in the class once a term, at class assemblies and through consultations with teachers. Parents have positive views in their belief that their children are taught well and they are expected to work hard.
34. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well with their children's support. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns, consulted in all procedures and provided with good information about the support offered to their children.

² Discussion groups with selected pupils for a specific topic.

35. Parents who help in school are effective in supporting pupils' learning and the school has helped them by arranging a course to enable them to fulfil their role effectively. This has been received with enthusiasm by those parents involved. The parents' association raises substantial amounts of money that has improved the resources of the school, for example by financing coaches for school trips and buying digital cameras.
36. Links with local businesses effectively contribute to pupils' understanding of different cultures. Pupils visit local Chinese and Indian restaurants where they experience foods from different cultures. Local people also come into school to enhance the curriculum, for example talking about local history, and church leaders taking assemblies. The school also contributes to the life of the community with local groups using the school facilities.
37. The school works well with other schools, and this results in pupils moving smoothly from one stage of education to another. In addition links with local specialist schools support pupils' learning in science and provide the school with specialist help in teaching pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. The close links with other schools also contribute well to teachers' professional development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher had only been in post for three weeks at the time of the inspection, and so no judgement about her leadership could yet be made. Leadership of other key staff, management and governance are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has made a good start
- The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good
- Systems to evaluate teaching and learning lack the rigour to raise standards quickly
- The school has good systems to get the best value from its spending

Commentary

38. The leadership of the school is satisfactory. Until the appointment of the new headteacher, the acting headteacher provided solid direction over recent months and parents and staff speak highly of the way the school was led and managed during this difficult time. There is a good sense of teamwork among the staff who have a clear understanding of the challenges ahead. All staff are committed to the personal development of every child and are concerned to support their needs.
39. The new headteacher had been in school for only three weeks at the time of the inspection, but had already worked closely with the acting headteacher and governing body to start to plan future developments. These show that senior leaders have a good awareness of what needs to be done to move the school forward and how to achieve improvements. A useful initiative by the headteacher was to invite parents to a 'surgery' that gave them a good early opportunity to air their views about the school.
40. A strength in the leadership lies in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and this has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator works very closely with teachers to ensure that pupils have the support they need to make very good progress. Teachers have clear guidance on how to set targets for pupils and these are reviewed regularly. The school uses its funding to support pupils, and monitors the effectiveness of this spending, well. The governing body supports the provision very well and takes a keen interest in the pupils' achievements.
41. The management of the school is satisfactory. The school runs smoothly and staff are clear about their responsibilities. A priority for the school is the support offered to new staff so that they can contribute effectively to school life as soon as possible. Good opportunities are given to staff to develop professionally in order to raise pupils' achievements. The systems to enable the school to evaluate its effectiveness through assessment and the evaluation of teaching and learning are

satisfactory, overall, but lack the rigour to get the best out of teachers and pupils. For example, most senior staff have had some opportunities to observe teachers teaching but these have lacked the sharp focus that would achieve consistency in the way lessons are planned or taught. This helps to explain the wide variations, for example, in the way numeracy lessons are taught and why behaviour in some classes is better than others. Similarly, the school has started to develop systems to track pupils' achievements using computer programs, but these are still at a very early stage and there are still gaps in teachers' knowledge of which groups of pupils could do better.

42. The finances are managed well, with the bursar working closely with the governing body to get good value from the funds. The school has good systems to compare its performance and spending with similar schools and challenge the way services such as cleaning are allocated to contractors. Consulting parents and pupils about new initiatives is in the early stages of becoming part of the school's culture.
43. The governance is sound. Governors, well led by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic chairman and vice chairman, are committed and provide good support to the staff. Many have been appointed recently, but overall governors have a sound awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and many visit the school often to monitor their areas of responsibility. They are keen to raise pupils' standards, and have made a good early start with the headteacher in producing a new improvement plan.
44. The four changes in leadership since the last inspection have contributed to insufficient improvement. However, the new headteacher together with the new governing body know the challenges the school faces and have the capacity to take the school forward into its next phase.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	702,947
Total expenditure	726,821
Expenditure per pupil	3,092

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	41,148
Balance carried forward to the next	17,274

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.

Commentary

45. Children enter Reception with a wide range of ability, but overall they have knowledge and skills that are in line with those normally expected for their age. The provision for learning in Reception is good. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and they make good progress, particularly in personal, social, and emotional development. Teaching is good. A wide range of learning opportunities is given for all children, including those with special educational needs. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all children achieve the expected goals for children's learning in all areas, and a few exceed them. Standards overall are in line with expectations for children of this age.
46. The curriculum is good. The children enjoy choosing their activities which are well planned and meet their needs. Staff are supportive of the children, they value their contributions, and relationships are strong. The accommodation is good, giving plenty of space for all activities, including role-play areas. Resources are satisfactory and are in the process of being increased for various aspects of the curriculum. Satisfactory provision is made for outdoor play apparatus with the children being able to use the adventure playground. The little garden adjoining the reception classroom is used well for outdoor learning activities.
47. Leadership and management are good. The staff work together as an effective team. Appropriate areas for improvement have been identified and an action plan has been drawn up. Effective daily assessment and procedures for checking on pupils' progress are in place, which give staff a clear view of each child's achievement of the early year's 'stepping stones'. Staff make very good arrangements for children to become familiar with school life before they start, and they offer families home visits. Links with local nursery schools are very strong. Supportive links with parents are established, and some parents come in to school to support the learning within the classroom. Good arrangements enable children to make a smooth transition into Year 1. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Multi-cultural opportunities and activities are good and writing activities are now given appropriate focus.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction procedures create an ethos of partnership between parents and school
- Staff have clear expectations about behaviour
- A few pupils can sometimes become over-excited and want a great deal of attention

Commentary

48. This area of learning has a high profile throughout the Foundation Stage. The very successful induction procedures and the welcoming atmosphere ensure that children and their parents become familiar with the surroundings and the routines very quickly. At the beginning of each session, children remove their bear from their pocket on the wall and put him on the bears' message board for registration. They respond well to finding out how many children are attending. They know and trust their teachers, teaching assistants and supporting adults and are happy to come to school. Teaching is effective because teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and achievement. Work is planned so that

each child gains in confidence and is successful. The activities provided help them to learn the difference between right and wrong. A system of rewards, including stickers, stamps and certificates, motivates children to try hard. Children often share a task, such as offering other children their snack or working together on the computer, and they generally work well together. They were able to describe Kesby Bear's feelings in circle time and gave sensible reasons for their choice of words, for example, 'He looks grumpy because he feels tired and sleepy.' Staff plan many opportunities for children to develop social skills and they continually offer support, encouragement and praise. However, a few children become over-enthusiastic and try to gain the teacher's attention by calling out and not respecting the needs of others.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers develop children's listening and speaking skills well, but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage them to extend their answers
- Children become confident readers and writers and enjoy these activities

Commentary

49. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good and most children learn to speak clearly and listen attentively to each other. Teachers take opportunities for correcting children's speech, as, for example, when a child declared, 'I drew it on her back.' The teacher sensitively replied, 'You drew it on her back? Well done.' Whilst pupils respond appropriately during group discussions and talk sensibly to each other during role-play activities, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage them to answer in short sentences, as the teacher occasionally accepts one word answers. The writing area is well used; many children can write their names and during the inspection were busy writing instructions for a seed packet. Most children know the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet because they are given short bursts of phonic activity every day. They are beginning to write simple words confidently and independently. All children form most of their letters correctly and they take a pride in their work. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books for themselves when they arrive at school in the morning. Some children read well from the reading scheme and clearly enjoy their success. Most activities during the day give good opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is good.

Main strengths

- Children learn to count correctly
- Many opportunities are given for using mathematical language

Commentary

50. Teaching and learning are good. Nearly all sessions include counting or number work and the children join in with enthusiasm. For example, sessions often include partner work where one child draws with a finger a number on the back of a partner. The partner then has to guess the number. The children think this is great fun! A puppet is sometimes used to motivate and interest the children, and they respond well when he does something wrong, like putting the numbers on the number line in the wrong order. Almost all pupils can count up to 10 and some can count beyond 20. Children can compare the height of objects and say which is taller or shorter. The teacher gently corrected one child who used the term 'smaller'. During the inspection, the outside area was set up as a garden centre. Children were busy counting the number of beans they were planting, and other children were counting magic beans in a tray. They were able to record their answers in a simple

number sentence accurately, and very few children reversed their numbers. A computer program was used to consolidate their counting and recognition of numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths

- Children develop good ICT skills
- Children's understanding of their world is enriched by visits and visitors

Commentary

51. Many activities are planned so that children have a growing understanding of the world around them. Visitors into school, such as a mother and baby and a local author of a favourite book, help children to understand more about themselves and develop their imagination. They also learnt more about animals and how things grow when they visited Colchester Zoo and a local garden centre. Children have daily opportunities to improve their keyboard skills and mouse control by using the class computer. They were observed matching pictures to letters and sounds. Children's awareness of other cultures is also developed appropriately, with African musical instruments around for them to see and hear. Artefacts were very well used to discuss the differences between people, for example when children responded with awe to a picture of a sari and to the beautiful colours and texture of a Muslim prayer mat.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is good.

Main strength and weakness

- A wide range of opportunities is provided to extend children's manipulative skills
- There are not enough outdoor bikes for the development of physical skills

Commentary

52. There are good opportunities for children to learn to climb and balance through the use of the school's adventure playground. They also have their own secure garden in which to run around and play games and there are plans to extend this area. Currently, there are not enough outdoor bikes for the number of children in reception to develop their physical skills on wheeled equipment on a regular basis. Children also have the use of the school hall for their physical education sessions. Staff develop well the children's understanding of the use of space. They are able to throw and catch a variety of objects, such as bean bags and small and large balls. They co-operate well in team games, although one or two children become over-excited very easily. Planning shows good provision for the development of specific skills such as hand/eye co-ordination, pencil control, cutting, sticking, handling paintbrushes and manipulating materials. During the inspection, children made sealed packets for their seeds, working independently when choosing how they were going to make the seal work.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is good.

Main strengths

- Teachers continually foster the children's imagination
- Activities are well planned and cover all aspects of creative development

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are good with appropriate opportunities given for children to explore colour and shape with a wide range of techniques and materials. The children had painted brightly coloured butterflies in connection with their topic of the life cycle of a butterfly. Another display featured flowers. One of the role-play areas had been turned into a market garden, and the outside area was used as a garden centre, where children were selling pots and plants. Children interacted well with each other when setting up their displays for their customers. While planning to develop children's understanding of life around them, teachers do not miss any opportunity to cultivate fertile imaginations. During the inspection, a snail was brought into school. Having spent the day with the children, Sid the Snail sent them a letter the next day, which read, 'Thank you for being my friends. I've got to go home now. My wife Sadie is waiting for me. I've left you a special slime trail. Isn't it lovely?' The children were very excited about Sid and his letter, and thought they knew where Mossy Stone, Big Field was, so they could visit him at his home!

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for English development through other subjects
- Standards in reading are good
- Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of writing opportunities
- The school's support for pupils with weaker skills and for pupils with special educational needs is good
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and more-able pupils are not always given appropriate work

Commentary

54. By Year 2 standards in English are average overall although pupils' reading is above this. By Year 6 most pupils are reaching an average standard but few are exceeding it. Progress in reading is maintained and pupils' speaking and listening skills have also developed well. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily as their English skills on entering the school are broadly average. Pupils with weaker literacy skills or those needing a boost to reach the levels they are capable of are catered for well in the many extra classes the school provides. These are largely responsible for the levels of achievement reached. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the level of support they receive and provision of work at the appropriate level. The work done by pupils in Years 3 to 5 indicates they are achieving well and are on course to reach standards that are above those of the current Year 6. This reflects the unsettled and sometimes disrupted teaching experienced by this year group in the past.
55. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly average when they enter the school but by Year 6 have developed well and pupils have become confident speakers. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabularies throughout the school. For example in a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils devised their own definitions of words associated with their recent visit to Felixstowe. Although a challenging task, pupils rehearsed their 'answers' and ideas to good effect. This led one pupil to declare that a crane was, "A *mechanical machine for lifting heavy things*." Teachers make good use of 'talking partners' to help pupils understand a new concept or develop their ideas through discussions. Pupils in Year 4, for example, found that their discussions about the publicity put out by different political parties then enabled them to ask relevant questions about the claims being made.
56. Pupils read well so that by Year 2 and by Year 6 their attainment is above average for their ages. The school has successfully introduced a comprehensive system of teaching reading, together with resource material that can be used in all lessons and is designed to improve literacy skills. This is helping pupils in all areas of English including reading. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and teachers provide good support in planned reading lessons. Pupils' progress in reading is followed up well through regular assessments. These are also used to identify those who need further help which is often successfully delivered in small groups withdrawn from classes. Pupils' comprehension skills are good. For example pupils in Year 5 grasped the implicit meanings in protest letters supposedly written to the local newspaper. Year 4 pupils read some challenging texts giving the ideas of different politicians. They were able to paraphrase the main points, often gleaning the meaning of unfamiliar words from their contexts.
57. Pupils' writing standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6. Writing standards are improving and work in Years 3 to 5 show it to be above expectations for pupils of those

ages. In literacy lessons pupils are taught to write for a number of purposes. These include play scripts, letters and instructions as well as extended stories and factual accounts. Most pupils convey their meanings well in correctly punctuated sentences with familiar words usually spelled accurately. Handwriting is satisfactory although there is no consistent use of pens in the older classes.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most teachers provide activities and use resources that engage their pupils' interest well. This results in pupils working hard and enjoying the tasks they are given. Teaching assistants provide effective support and enjoy good relationships with teachers and pupils. There is, though, inconsistency in the teaching of literacy skills. Although some teachers see and take the opportunities that occur to reinforce the aims of lessons, others do not. This results in missed opportunities to use pupils' responses in order to add to the general understanding of all the class. In some lessons teachers do not focus sufficiently on the skills needed to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding so that progress is slow. There is also inconsistency in the provision of appropriate work for pupils of different abilities. This mostly affects more-able pupils and they are often not extended enough.
59. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school recognises the need to raise pupils' attainment, especially of boys and in writing in general. It has taken steps to address these areas and they are beginning to have a positive effect. All members of staff have been observed teaching and good training and support has been provided. The plans to improve the subject are well drawn up and set out clearly what is to be done, when and how.
60. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained in reading and speaking and listening, although they are lower in writing by Year 6. This reflects the disruption to the learning of the present Year 6 cohort. The attainment of pupils in Years 4 and 5 indicate they are on course to achieve well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their writing as well as their speaking and listening skills in other subjects. In religious education lessons, for example, pupils wrote prayers and poems while pupils in Year 2 prepared reports about 'Remembrance Day.' In science pupils write their own detailed recordings of the experiments they have carried out. Overall, pupils' language and literacy skills are average.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as the result of good support
- The school has done much to improve pupils' problem solving skills
- Not all teachers plan well enough to extend more-able pupils
- Assessment data is not used well enough to raise standards

Commentary

62. Standards by Year 2 are average and by Year 6 they are below average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, overall, but not all of the more-able pupils in Year 6 achieve well enough. Standards have dipped since the last inspection because the teaching is not as strong this time and some groups of pupils, notably those in Year 6, have had to cope with a succession of temporary teachers. Pupils achieve well in Years 4 and 5 where they have enjoyed more stable teaching.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are skilled at planning tasks at the right level and teaching assistants provide good support in lessons and in withdrawn groups.

64. In Years 1 and 2, teachers provide lots of useful practice on basic number skills and this gives pupils the confidence to tackle new work. They take careful note of how well pupils are doing and use this knowledge effectively to plan further work. For example, in the Year 1/2 class, the teacher saw that pupils were struggling with their understanding of place value and provided work the next week that gave pupils valuable tasks that showed them clearly what happens when you add 10 to a number. This worked well and pupils learned much from discovering for themselves how place value works. Teachers are good at making lessons fun by using games, practical tasks and interesting resources so that pupils enjoy mathematics. As a result, pupils achieve well in much of their work on shape, measurement and graphs of their data. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well, but some time is wasted when, for example, pupils ignore requests to put up their hands to answer a question or chatter away when someone else is talking.
65. In Years 3 to 6, although the overall planning of lessons is satisfactory, that for the more-able pupils is not always good enough. While a few teachers plan tasks that interest and challenge budding mathematicians, too often they have work to do that is too easy, and this is why too few achieve the heights of which they are capable. Teachers have done lots of work to improve pupils' problem solving skills, and they are now confident finding sequences of numbers, for example, and working out complex bus routes. In some lessons, teachers work hard at making the mental starter session fun and pupils learn quickly as they respond with quick-fire answers. In other lessons, however, the starter is too brief and does little to hone pupils' skills. This helps to explain why, by Year 6, many pupils are slow to calculate quickly in their head and some are still counting with their fingers. Many pupils in Year 5 and some in Year 4 are quicker and more accurate in their mental work than those in Year 6. Teachers provide lots of work on shape and space, including perimeter and area, and pupils achieve well in these tasks as a result. Teachers use questions well to make pupils think and they include all groups of pupils in these sessions. In one lesson, for example, the teacher delighted one pupil with special educational needs by asking a question at just the right level for his ability and his face shone with pride when he got it right. Teachers use ICT to a limited extent to improve pupils' data handling skills and produce different graphs, but they miss many opportunities to use computers to extend their work in mathematics.
66. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a good understanding of how to improve the provision and has a clear plan of action to raise standards. There has been some useful recent evaluation of lessons but not enough to ensure a consistent approach yet to teaching the subject. This helps to explain variations from class to class in the quality of planning, management of behaviour and marking of pupils' work. The school has sound assessment systems to check on pupils' attainment, but is only just starting to track their progress as they move through the school. There is some analysis of pupils' national test results, but it is not sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to plan work to rectify weaknesses. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, because standards have dipped and teaching is not as strong.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Teachers make satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects. In physical education, the Year 6 teacher linked a throwing exercise very effectively to previous work in mathematics by asking pupils what the best angle would be to propel the ball the furthest. Pupils thought carefully and decided that 45 degrees would work best and they were right. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils built well on their work on data when producing a clear pie chart to evaluate the taste, smell and appearance of sandwiches they had made. In science, pupils have used forcemeters in their experiments, and in design technology there is much evidence of them measuring accurately to make sturdy models. Their competence overall in mathematics is below average.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good focus on experimental work means that pupils enjoy science and learn a lot about how to discover things for themselves
- Teachers provide too little to challenge more-able pupils
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Pupils achieve well in Year 4 where teachers' expectations are high

Commentary

68. Standards in science are average by Year 2 and Year 6 and, overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. While standards are similar to those at the last inspection by Year 2, they are lower by Year 6 because fewer more-able pupils are attaining the high standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs do well because teachers have a thorough knowledge of their difficulties and set tasks that are challenging but achievable. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
69. The teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2, teachers lay good foundations for experimental work, giving pupils lots of opportunities to discover, for example, how light travels and how shadows are formed. Pupils develop a sound grasp of what animals need in order to thrive by constructing suitable habitats and studying 'minibeasts' in the school grounds. In some of their best work, pupils investigated 'food chains' and those in Year 2 achieved well as they made a chain starting with a small plant and ending with a big creature. Most teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour, but occasionally the pace of learning slows as they allow pupils to call out in question and answer sessions instead of putting up their hands.
70. In Years 3 to 6, teachers are good at planning experiments for pupils to learn, for example, how light travels through materials or whether shadows change as objects get closer to the source of light, and most pupils achieve well in these tasks. Teachers provide too few opportunities, however, for more able pupils to plan their own experiments and this helps to explain why too few of them achieve well enough by Year 6. Pupils have a good knowledge of the organs of the human body and, in Year 6, teaching made excellent links with work done in literacy when getting pupils to write detailed accounts of how the eye works. Some of the best achievements are in Year 4 where the teaching is demanding and pupils are very keen to learn. Their work on plants and animals in one lesson, for example, was of a high quality and some pupils were working well at the higher levels expected of pupils in Year 6.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school supports teachers' training needs well, and the benefits of recent work on developing pupils' investigational skills are starting to show in the wealth of practical work happening throughout the school. Assessment systems are satisfactory, but there is not enough attention paid to looking in detail at the national test results to identify the topics that pupils find difficult.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of ICT in linking learning between subjects is good
- Current ICT resources are not sufficient to enable teachers to raise further the achievement of all pupils
- Pupils work on computers with enthusiasm and enjoyment

Commentary

72. Overall, standards in ICT are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Displays around the school and from a portfolio of collected work show that pupils in Years 1 and 2 can enter, store and retrieve information, and they can present it in a variety of different forms. For example, they can represent the different types of toys in the garden on a bar chart. Pupils in Year 3 can combine text and graphics and design repeating textile patterns using graphics software. In Years 4 and 5, pupils learn how to make multi-media presentations, and in Year 6 they learn how to make a mini-animated film. For example, in a project called *Lights, Camera, Action*, pupils made their own video film based on a PSHE theme. They wrote their own storyboard, brought in the props and positioned each article for over 50 frames. The final outcome was a good animated film and clearly represented good standards and achievement. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the computers in the ICT room because the hardware available is now fairly old and can be unreliable. Some improved provision has already been made in the form of eight laptop computers. The governors are aware of this situation and have made the upgrading of the ICT equipment a priority in the school development plan and in their future budgeting plans. There are opportunities to use the digital camera and the computer microscope, although these were not seen in use by pupils during the inspection.
73. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were discovering the advantages of a computer database in comparison to using index cards from which to glean information. During the lesson, the pupils collected information about each other, such as colour of eyes, height, etc., and then began to put together some carefully phrased questions which they would use to interrogate the database. This lesson was a paper-based exercise and prepared the pupils for transferring their information on to the computer in the next lesson. In a Year 2/3 lesson, pupils were collecting and storing data in an organised way, and enjoying the activity. They were familiar with some technical terms such as fields and record cards. However, the process was slow and laborious as they took some time to enter their data because their keyboard skills were not strong enough.
74. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, and are good when pupils have the chance to use the equipment. They respond well to the challenge of the tasks set. Teachers build on pupils' prior knowledge well and continually check their understanding. Good demonstrations are given and pupils are given the support they need to complete the task. Teaching assistants are always on hand in the computer room to help all pupils and particularly those who have special educational needs. In some lessons, the pace is slower at the beginning when all pupils are so keen to get on with the work that they do not follow instructions carefully enough and then need more support than would otherwise be the case. Pupils have to share computers, and it was observed that in some pairs, one partner dominated the other, thus reducing the hands-on experience for the quieter pupil. In discussion, older pupils' enthusiasm was clear and they said that they really enjoyed using the computers, particularly when creating presentations on topics which interested them.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A scheme of work has been put in place and textbooks have been bought to support the curriculum. There is effective teamwork amongst the staff, and they share their expertise. An action plan has been devised, and assessment is one of the issues which still needs to be developed further. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning does not yet happen on a regular basis. Improvement since the last inspection has been insufficient. A computer room has been set up, but not all the hardware is now reliable enough for pupils to have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills to a higher level. Whilst the subject is now taught separately as well as through other subjects, standards are not as high.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The school has made satisfactory use of the opportunities to develop ICT skills through other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 used a multi-media presentation to present a poem on fireworks, and in geography Year 6 pupils accessed the internet and used webcams around the world to record temperatures for a graph. Years 1 and 2 pupils made links with art by using a paint program to develop pictures inspired by Jasper John's *Zero through nine* and Anthony Frost, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 created pictures on the computer based on their visit to the local church. Overall, pupils' competence in ICT is average.

HUMANITIES

Judgements cannot be made about the overall provision in history and geography as too few lessons were seen.

77. In **history**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have studied the Celts, Romans and Anglo Saxon Britain. This includes the lives of ordinary people as well as significant events associated with these times. A significant feature of pupils' learning was a musical production put on by the pupils earlier in the year illustrating a Viking saga. Teachers link historical studies well to other curriculum areas. For example pupils have made Celtic belt purses in design technology lessons. Older pupils have written about their own research, including use of the Internet.
78. The school makes good use of visits to enhance pupils' learning in **geography**. For example younger pupils visited the port of Felixstowe and surrounding shoreline. This experience has helped pupils well with subsequent work. This has included defining words in literacy lessons and discovering the goods that pass through this port. In the one lesson seen, pupils used maps and globes to good purpose to identify where a wide variety of items came from. They were surprised, for example, to learn that tuna is sometimes imported from the Seychelles and that a large number of goods come from China.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Main strength and weakness

- Pupils enjoy their work and have a very positive attitude to the subject
- Too little time was available in the lessons seen for work to be completed

Commentary

79. Standards at the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 know a number of creation stories from different cultures. Their knowledge of the Christian and Islamic religions is adequate and they are familiar with some of the differences and similarities of other religions. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge of different religions has increased, for example, their knowledge of customs and festivals such as Divali and Sukkot. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory in the lessons seen.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers motivate their pupils well so that they are keen to take part. Good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided and pupils readily share their ideas and experiences. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 for example wrote poems and prayers inspired by the natural world. These they read out with confidence and showed they had given some deep thought to their tasks. Teachers often allow pupils to work and discuss ideas with each other to help their understanding. In Year 5, for example, this worked well when pupils scoured texts for 'facts' about the Bible. These researches produced several hitherto unknown pieces of information that were shared with the whole class, adding to everyone's knowledge. Teachers also provide practical activities which engage pupils well. For example pupils have produced Mendi patterns, eaten Jewish bread and made a Sukkah in their classroom. Visitors to the school such as the local vicar and Divali dancers have also added to pupils' experiences. In the lessons seen, thirty-minute time slots were used just before lunchtime. This time was insufficient for all work to be finished. In all instances pupils were keen to share their work or were loathe to stop what they were doing. This impetus was therefore lost and follow up lessons were seldom planned or possible on the same day.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school ensures the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are met but uses ideas and material from a number of sources. Whole school collaborations are used well to enhance pupils' experiences and understanding. For example, in the Spring term, each year group studied 'celebrations' with displays of these from different religions. The coordinator has provided members of staff with training to help their teaching, and resources have been improved since the last inspection. Checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning through an audit of teachers' views, discussions and looking at pupils' work. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Too few lessons were observed in art and design, music and physical education to be able to make judgements about provision in any of these subjects, and it was not possible to observe any lessons in design technology. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection.

82. In **art and design**, pupils in Year 3/4 were continuing to develop their cutting and sticking skills while exploring photographic images and then creating a picture in the style of Francis Bacon. Pupils were inventive in their distortion of facial features to create the required effect and showed great enjoyment in undertaking this task. In Year 1, pupils made good use of the outdoor space by using natural materials within the grounds to sculpt a circle in the style of Andrew Goldsworthy. Previously, pupils had studied photographs of Goldsworthy's *Circle of sticks* and looked at the unending circle in preparation for this lesson. Some pupils found it hard to follow the teacher's

instructions, but most groups had tackled the task correctly and had come up with some creative designs of sculpting with twigs, sticks and dead stems.

83. Evidence in **design technology** was gained from talking to staff and pupils, looking at photographs of past work and examining models on display around the school. Teachers make some very good links between design technology and other subjects. For example, in Year 2, pupils have made some good 'Victorian' dolls' houses that made the most of their knowledge and skills in history and design technology. In Year 3/4, pupils built very interesting houses of sticks and fabric following work on how people lived in Anglo-Saxon times. In Year 5, pupils linked their science work on space very effectively when making very good 'moon buggies' that worked very well. Year 6 pupils achieved well in their work designing and making bridges after researching different types of bridges around the world. Pupils make honest evaluations of their projects that show a good understanding of how they could be improved.
84. In **music**, pupils in Year 1/2 were exploring long and short sounds using words and drawings to help their understanding. They used various instruments, such as Indian bells and claves, to play a rhythm against a regular pulse. Pupils developed their skills satisfactorily and were able to maintain their own part when the class split into two groups. Pupils in Year 6 benefited from the skilled teaching of an external music teacher. They were beginning to prepare for an end of term production, and their musical skills were progressively developed through various activities. The lesson included giving a rhythmic answer to the teacher's clapping, focusing on both pulse and rhythm, learning a Hungarian dancing song, and using tuned percussion instruments to develop performance skills. The teacher's high expectations resulted in pupils' listening skills improving well as the lesson progressed.
85. In **physical education**, pupils' games skills are enhanced by very skilled teaching provided by a local professional footballer. Pupils love these sessions and are quick to improve their skills as the footballer demonstrates techniques and gives valuable tips as they practise. In one session observed, both boys and girls in Year 4 achieved very well as they dribbled with impressive control and passed the ball accurately. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils made good progress in their throwing and catching skills. The school has good facilities for swimming with its own pool and makes good use of the local pool for older pupils. As a result, nearly all pupils swim the expected 25 metres by the time they leave. A good range of activities after school help to develop pupils' skills in sports such as football, netball, badminton, climbing and skiing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject but elements of citizenship are included in personal, social and health education lessons.

86. Inspectors saw two good PSHE lessons. In the Year 4 lesson, pupils were discussing the importance of road safety. Through the good questioning of their teacher, they developed their understanding of associated issues, such as the speed of cars, and what happens if drivers jump red lights. A good cross-curricular link was made with art and English when pupils moved into a practical activity of designing a poster which would persuade children to cross the road safely. Pupils in Year 1 discussed how different toys are appropriate for different ages and why. They extended their knowledge about different stages of development of a child. Their views and contributions were valued by the teacher, who constantly reinforced the need for pupils to make appropriate choices in their behaviour.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	0

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).