

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **CHERRY TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 132833

Headteacher: Eileen Lynch

Lead inspector: Sue Orpin

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 266599

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	327
School address:	Church Road Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS16 4AG
Telephone number:	01268 523017
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Betty Finch
Date of previous inspection:	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is an above average sized primary school with 327 pupils. Pupils are organised in fifteen classes, two in each year group and one nursery class. Pupils come mainly from localities close to the school. Many are from homes where incomes are considerably lower than nationally and where levels of overcrowding are higher than those of most families nationally. Forty-one per cent of the pupils have free school meals, which is above the national average. Pupils' attainment when they start school is very low when compared with the level expected for their age. One hundred and eleven pupils, a well above average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs, which are mainly moderate learning difficulties. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. The school gained the Schools Achievement Award in 2002 and is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. There have been very high levels of staff and pupil mobility in recent years. At the time of the last inspection, the school was found to be providing an acceptable standard of education, but with serious weaknesses.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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32670	Graham Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
32367	Jo Pike	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology
30691	Kath Yates	Team inspector	Music, physical education, Foundation Stage
31222	Sue Croft	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, geography, history, special educational needs
33367	Jackie Krafft	Team inspector	Science, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a satisfactory and improving school** that is well placed to build on its current successes. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Despite the very good efforts to promote attendance, very high levels of absence, and the very high numbers of pupils and staff leaving and joining the school, have adversely affected achievement and some aspects of the school's development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are now effective in raising standards and the quality of provision in most areas. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Attendance is steadily improving due to the school's action but remains poor because not all families send their children regularly to school
- Standards in Year 6 are very low compared with national averages but pupils' achievements are satisfactory and there are better standards and achievement in some other years and in science
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is sharply focussed on raising standards. However, the unsatisfactory leadership and management of the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes) are having insufficient impact on improving children's achievement
- Behaviour and attitudes have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good
- Although teaching is satisfactory and much is good, very occasionally a few teachers are less effective in managing their pupils
- The assessment of pupils is unsatisfactory so not enough are clear about how to improve their work
- The school is safe and caring, and it works well with most parents, the community and other schools

**Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory**, including progress on the key issues. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined until recently, but are now showing signs of rising as a consequence of very good improvement in the management of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E*	E*	E*	E
mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E*
science	E*	E	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E\* - lowest 5%  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievements are satisfactory.** Children start at the school with standards that are very low when compared with those that are typical nationally. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but very few reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards that are very low (E\*) when compared with the average in English and mathematics, and in science they are very low (E\*) in Year 2 but improve to well below (E) in Year 6. Pupils reach standards that are well below those expected in information and communication technology and art and design. The grades for similar schools do not take full account of the high number of pupils who join and leave the school. Most pupils who have spent most of their time at Cherry Tree have improved well in the last year. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.** Pupils' attitudes to school and their work are good because most of their lessons are interesting, although a few do not attend regularly enough. They behave well because teachers usually expect them to and relationships are good. Pupils' sense of right from wrong, their respect

for each other and their social development are good and everyone is included well in all aspects of school life. Pupils' spiritual awareness, and their appreciation of their own and other cultures are satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage behave well and their attitudes to school are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.**

**The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory** and improving. Teachers usually manage their pupils well and pupils are encouraged to learn so they work hard in their lessons. Activities are usually stimulating and lessons generally paced well. In those few lessons where teaching was less effective, pupils did not behave as well because the teacher did not make clear what was expected. Teachers' assessment of their pupils is unsatisfactory because, although pupils' progress is tracked well in English and mathematics, there is very little assessment in other subjects. Also some pupils are not clear about their level of work or what they need to do to improve. Some teachers are not yet fully using the information they have to plan their lessons. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of extra activities provided for pupils. The school provides well for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and listens to pupils' views effectively. Parents are welcomed into the school and it is establishing strong links with the local community and other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The new headteacher's determination for pupils to do well, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, has established an improvement to teaching and some standards. This is despite barriers relating to pupil and staff mobility and low attendance that are beyond the school's control. The leadership of most other key staff is satisfactory. The governors perform their role in a satisfactory way and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Teachers are provided with very good induction and their work is monitored well. Strategic planning is very good. Financial management is good.

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

Parents are pleased with the work of the school and the way it is led and managed. Although parents were concerned about bullying, the school deals with it effectively. Most pupils are very happy at school and feel they are cared for, listened to and taught well.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Reduce the amount of absence
- Raise standards by making sure that all classes are taught consistently well
- Establish the assessment of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics
- Develop the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school but standards remain very low.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' test results in English, mathematics and science have been very low over recent years but standards seen during the inspection show signs of recent improvement in science in Year 6, in writing in Year 2, and in some other year groups
- Pupils' achievements in science are good
- In a small number of lessons, a few higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might

#### Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage, in both the nursery and the reception classes, the standards achieved by the majority of children are very low in all areas of learning except in personal, social and emotional development where they are below the expected levels. All children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas their achievement is satisfactory. Although a few children are likely to gain the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of their time in reception, it is very unlikely that the majority of children will reach those levels because the unsatisfactory leadership is not improving teaching sufficiently.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.3 (12.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.1 (11.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	12.7 (13.5)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.1 (23.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	22.2 (22.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	25.2 (25.5)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. National test results in English and mathematics at Years 2 and 6 have remained very low, although writing in Year 2 is beginning to improve. However, results in science at Year 6 have risen steadily in the last two years representing better achievement in this subject. The standards seen during the inspection reflect these results. The standards have been slow to rise because the recent appointment of a new headteacher, and subsequently the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and leadership team, have not yet had sufficient time to affect the quality of teaching significantly. Combined with very high levels of staff mobility, the quality of teaching has been slow to improve and is not quite sufficiently good to raise standards at a faster rate. However, the pupils who have spent most of their time at Cherry Tree Primary School show signs of having improved well in the last 12 months. Most pupils start Year 1 with standards that are very low when compared with those found nationally. They make satisfactory progress and their achievements are satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes. Nevertheless, very few are likely to achieve the learning goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils' achievement in science is good and standards are improving because the inclusion of more practical activities in lessons enables pupils to learn well, despite their difficulties in English and reading in particular. Pupils' standards in reading and writing are very low in both years 2 and 6. Pupils lack a range of strategies to help them read and unless prompted, tend to rely on sounding out letters. Their speaking and listening skills



are also very low and although they can share discussion, they tend to have limited vocabulary and have difficulty in using longer explanations. Pupils' standards in mathematics are very low and improvement is slowed by their lack of number skills caused by gaps in their prior learning. In information and communication technology and religious education standards are higher and are well below those expected nationally.

3. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in most lessons and their progress towards the targets set for them is sound. Well-trained teaching assistants help them learn effectively in group activities, and usually tasks are adapted appropriately for the needs of each pupil. The needs of pupils who are particularly talented in music, art or other subjects are beginning to be met. In a small number of lessons, a few higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might because the teaching is not taking sufficient account of their varying levels of understanding.
4. Pupils' gains in knowledge and understanding are better than their achievements in developing particular skills. Pupils' reading skills are notably weak and this has an impact on the development of their investigational and research work throughout the school. For example, pupils' lack of skills limit the way in which they investigate and research in mathematics and in English.
5. Since the last inspection, there has been limited success in raising standards, most of which has taken place in the last 18 months despite high levels of staff mobility. Teaching is beginning to improve, but further improvement and consistency are needed to improve standards and achievement at a faster rate. The school has appropriately chosen to focus on improving standards and achievement in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) in particular, so the other subjects of the curriculum have not progressed and are currently underrepresented in the school's curriculum.
6. The continuing low levels of attendance combined with very high levels of pupil mobility depress the achievement of some pupils.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and on occasions very good; this has a very positive impact upon life at the school. Their personal development is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good and for their spiritual and cultural development, it is satisfactory. Although attendance is now improving, it remains poor overall.

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

- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils have improved significantly since the last inspection so pupils are proud of their school and take every opportunity to discuss their work and activities
- The school has implemented innovative and very effective strategies to monitor and improve attendance but a small yet significant number of parents fail to ensure that their children attend the school regularly
- The school has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere where pupils show initiative, consideration and courtesy to each other and adults in the school, and gain a clear understanding of right from wrong

#### **Commentary**

7. Pupils' attitudes regarding every aspect of their school life make a good contribution to how they learn. They show care and consideration towards each other. This is coupled with consideration and respect towards all teachers and other adults that they encounter whilst at school. They respond well to staff expectations as to how they should behave. The whole-school strategy of behaviour improvement ensures that any occasional lapses or challenges are well managed by staff with a minimum of fuss and pupils clearly respect and respond to this. In the playground they play together harmoniously and enjoy each other's company. Midday mealtimes are sociable and enjoyable occasions. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their studies. The staff make sure pupils believe they can do well and give them confidence so they are encouraged to do their best.
8. The school is a close community with a sense of happiness, care and bustling activity. Visitors receive a warm welcome. Pupils are polite, confident and anxious to talk about what they have learnt or have been doing. They are interested in their school, and older pupils are able to give

descriptive comparisons as to how and why life in the school has improved so much over the last year or so. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and they sometimes have the confidence to take the initiative. On a number of occasions during the inspection they would volunteer, without prompting, to take responsibility and guide inspectors to a specific part of the school building or would make sure that inspectors had all they needed at meal times. Although the number of exclusions was high in the last year, they represent appropriate and suitable action for the circumstances and also reflect the higher level of challenging behaviour displayed by some pupils in the last year. Behaviour has improved significantly in the current year.

#### ***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	138	13	
White – any other White background	3		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – African	5		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		
Any other ethnic group	2		
No ethnic group recorded	124		

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

9. As the school continues to improve its provision for pupils' moral and social development, most pupils display self-assurance and maturity. The consistent and effective procedures for promoting good behaviour have helped to secure a reflective understanding of what is right and wrong. Teachers and other adults set good role models; they treat pupils and one another with fairness, respect and courtesy. In those very few lessons when teaching is less effective, the behaviour of some pupils deteriorates. Although some parents were concerned about bullying, the school deals with any incidents effectively.
10. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst there are already clear opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of living in a diverse society, these are not yet extensive. They continue to be expanded and included across the curriculum. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies, religious education and other lessons enable pupils to reflect on and discuss issues such as "understanding how others feel" and to express their own feelings and beliefs.
11. Whilst the majority of pupils attend school punctually every day, attendance remains well below the national average. A small number of parents and carers continually fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. This has previously been coupled with avoidable absences such as taking family holidays during term-time to minimise family holiday costs. The school is working tirelessly to counter these attitudes and has developed a number of innovative strategies to encourage parents to fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that their children regularly attend. Initiatives include an "attendance raffle" for pupils who receive a ticket for a prize draw following consistent weekly attendance. The school has invested in a software system linked to the daily registration data which automatically and persistently contacts parents by telephone, enquiring why their child is not in school and requiring them to provide a valid reason for the absence. In cases where there are causes for concern, personal contact is also immediately initiated.
12. Attendance is closely monitored by a dedicated member of support staff who works in conjunction with the headteacher, Education Welfare Officer and the school's own learning support mentor. Every absence is followed up and explanations are demanded from parents and carers. These robust and uncompromising initiatives are beginning to produce positive results and the attendance rate is improving. Given that parents and pupils hold the school in such high regard, the situation

regarding poor attendance is all the more paradoxical and frustrating for the headteacher and her staff.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	1.8
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there is not yet enough consistently good teaching to drive up standards faster, particularly in the school context of very high levels of pupil and staff mobility. The assessment of pupils is unsatisfactory and, while better in English and mathematics, does not yet indicate to all pupils how they can improve. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched well by additional opportunities, together with the school's effective links with other schools and the local community. The school cares for its pupils well and has a good partnership with parents, except those few who do not respond to the school's very good efforts to raise attendance.

**Teaching and learning**

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Whilst there are many strengths in teaching, these are not yet consistently developed across the school. Although the school tracks pupils' progress closely in mathematics and English, assessment is unsatisfactory overall because it is not yet used effectively in lessons, and most pupils do not have a clear idea of how to improve.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers use a good range of methods and activities which ensures that pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate well
- Teachers plan well-structured lessons, and where pupils receive good support they make steady progress, but where the pace of a lesson slows or the teacher does not manage pupils' behaviour effectively, achievement is lessened because time is wasted
- Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills
- Relationships between pupils and the adults in the school are good, and teachers usually manage behaviour effectively so that learning time is maximised
- Marking of pupils' work does not always give advice on how to improve, and assessment is not consistently used across the school

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	2 (4%)	29 (59%)	16 (33%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- Teachers plan and organise their lessons thoroughly, so that learning is carefully structured, and resources are appropriate. They are aware that pupils' previous learning has gaps so they plan activities which try to cover work from previous years as well as introducing new ideas. Learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs, and the support from adults is effectively planned. A final session at the end of the lesson is included to check on pupils' understanding and to consolidate their learning. Good preparation was a strong feature of the good, and occasionally very good, teaching seen. For example, in a Year 5 numeracy lesson about measuring angles, the teacher used a brisk starter activity, using the seven times table. This gained pupils' attention and interest, and was followed by effective use of the interactive whiteboard. Pupils enjoyed showing each other how to measure angles using a protractor. They then split into groups, where they concentrated well on a variety of well-matched tasks. The lesson ended with a final session which

effectively checked the understanding of all the groups, with pupils confidently explaining their strategies to the rest of the class.

14. Another feature of good teaching in the school is the wide range of interesting activities which teachers use that result in pupils concentrating hard. In a Year 2 literacy lesson, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed learning about letter sounds. The teacher and teaching assistants made this fun, and the pupils' confidence visibly grew. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, about addition and using number pairs effectively, the group activities ensured pupils learnt actively. One group were totally absorbed in playing a card game identifying number pairs, and they made steady progress in their knowledge. The teacher moved the class from one activity to another smoothly so that no time was lost. The different activities helped to build pupils' understanding progressively.
15. Teachers and teaching assistants are adept at supporting pupils' learning, so that pupils feel confident to try new skills, because the tasks represent simple and easy steps in their learning. In a Year 5 English lesson, about complex sentences, the teacher and teaching assistants provided effective support for all pupils. With support, pupils could identify the features of complex sentences, such as the main clause. Skilful questioning ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs felt comfortable in suggesting answers. One pupil with special educational needs explained very accurately what the word 'carcass' meant. Although most teachers do support and structure learning well, pupils often achieve less when they work on their own because they have not yet had many opportunities to work independently, so the leap from being supported to being independent is sometimes too great.
16. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good opportunities for speaking and listening, across all subjects, to help pupils build their confidence and skills. In a Year 2 personal, social and health education lesson about peoples' feelings, the teacher used a variety of strategies. In her initial question session, she praised pupils' vocabulary, which engendered confidence. After well-managed discussions, pupils were able to ask thoughtful questions. The Philosophy for Children lessons (where pupils are grouped with those of different ages and are given opportunities to discuss thought-provoking pictures) encourage pupils to ask questions and share ideas. This is helping pupils to improve their skills, for example, how to turn statements into questions.
17. Teachers and teaching assistants show respect and care towards pupils. They have high expectations for behaviour and work. These qualities result in pupils working hard and behaving well. Classrooms have a positive atmosphere, and pupils who do become unsettled are quickly corrected. Only where teachers do not manage behaviour well, because they accept low-level chatter, or they allow activities to go on too long, does behaviour become unsatisfactory.
18. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good in personal, social and emotional development. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in this area of their learning. However, the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly in communication, language and literacy, means that children do not progress as well as they might. Unsatisfactory leadership and management of this stage mean that there is not enough good teaching to help children learn at a faster rate. Overall teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Assessment of children in the Foundation Stage is still at an early stage of development and staff are not yet using information gathered to plan for the next steps in learning in a rigorous way. Children enter the school with skills and understanding that are very low compared to what is typical of children nationally. Their achievement in the nursery and in the reception class is enhanced by the additional support they receive from the nursery nurse and teaching assistants.
19. Most pupils do not have a clear idea of how well they are doing. Some marking of pupils' work is detailed and gives good advice on how to improve, but often teachers do not give clear guidance. Although teachers use questioning well to assess pupils' understanding in lessons, they do not always use this information to plan future learning. Assessment is regularly carried out in English and mathematics, and pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Action is taken to help those pupils who are underachieving to improve, and parents are informed of their children's half-termly targets. However, pupils are not always aware of these, even though they are set tasks to reach them to complete at home. Assessment in other subjects is not fully in place and pupils' progression is not sufficiently tracked. Pupils do not know how well they are doing or how to improve. Overall assessment is unsatisfactory.

20. The teaching and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Pupils are supported well in class by teaching assistants, who have communicated previously with the class teacher, and their progress is monitored closely. They work to an individual plan to meet their needs, which is updated regularly.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that helps pupils learn. There are good opportunities for enrichment through activities during and outside of the school day. Accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Interactive whiteboards are used well by teachers and make lessons interesting and stimulating for pupils
- Pupils have too little time to learn the foundation subjects and provision in art and design is unsatisfactory. However, there is a good programme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education
- Links between subjects are not used sufficiently to help pupils' learning and development, and the use of ICT, across the curriculum is unsatisfactory
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their experimental, investigative and researching skills, which limits their development as independent learners

### **Commentary**

21. The school makes satisfactory provision for the interests and needs of its pupils by providing a broad curriculum. It has appropriately placed most emphasis on the core subjects of English, science and mathematics, only recently starting to develop links between them and other subjects. As a consequence, pupils have less time for studying other subjects which limits the variety and breadth of their experience. There are missed opportunities for pupils to develop their abilities in art and design because provision in this area is unsatisfactory. However, the good provision in religious education enables pupils to develop their understanding of world religions and their skills of reflection. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is taught to all classes through timetabled lessons and makes a good contribution to helping pupils think about the opinions and views of other people and develop their speaking and listening skills.
22. There is a satisfactory programme for information and communication technology (ICT) that is taught in the well equipped ICT suite. Teachers are using the recently-installed interactive whiteboards extensively and effectively in every class; this is providing good opportunities to help learning in all subjects. However, as yet, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use the whiteboards themselves, nor are there sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other subjects to help them learn. Although the school is developing its planning to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to develop their skills of investigating and researching for themselves, this remains an area that is weaker than other aspects of learning. As yet pupils have too few opportunities to use the library or the Internet to help them develop their skills of research.
23. Curriculum planning for each age group is detailed and being developed for all subjects. Although the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, day-to-day planning does not show clearly how the next steps in learning are to be introduced.
24. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in activities which enrich the curriculum. Clubs are well supported and cover a wide range of skills. They include sport, music, ICT, languages and thinking skills and provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their particular areas of interest and talent. Pupils take part in sporting competitions and there are many visitors who enrich the school day. These activities contribute much towards the positive attitudes to learning which pupils display.
25. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from satisfactory provision and suitable access to the full range of subjects. The recently introduced programme of Early Reading Research (a scheme that provides regular practice to help pupils learn to read) makes a positive impact on the reading standards of some pupils and so helps their learning in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to learn by a well-qualified and committed team of teaching assistants whose work is beginning to show good effect.

26. As they progress through the school, pupils are prepared for the next stages of their education in a satisfactory way. Teachers' relationships with pupils and their concern for their well-being ensure that they feel safe and secure for the next step in their school life, and further security is provided by good communication between teachers and pupils' parents.
27. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as the quality of the curriculum and resources has been maintained. However, the accommodation is now good and shows good improvement since the last inspection. As well as classroom space there are facilities for group work and the whole school environment promotes the ethos of care and respect which permeates the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a safe and caring place for pupils
- Pupils have a strong sense of ownership and a close affinity with the school because their views are sought and acted upon
- The induction arrangements for children starting school are good
- Although pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning, they are not always given clear guidance on how to improve their work

### **Commentary**

28. All staff show committed concern for the welfare of children in the school and good relationships are fostered. This creates a comfortable and cheerful atmosphere where pupils feel valued and cared for, so they settle quickly and happily into learning within the classroom. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in lessons, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. They help pupils settle and feel secure by demonstrating what needs to be done and asking good questions to help pupils understand what they need to do. The learning mentor works well with pupils, parents and staff so that those who need someone to talk to or help with a particular problem are well supported. The school counsellor makes a valuable additional contribution to the care and support of pupils who have particular emotional or family issues.
29. Procedures for dealing with matters of health and safety, child protection and first aid are well developed and understood by staff. Clear records are kept and appropriate action taken. The school site is well maintained and in good condition. Safe practice is promoted well in lessons and pupils learn how to keep safe.
30. The school council successfully promotes pupils' independence and confidence. Pupils of all ages are represented and their views are sought and acted on regarding a range of issues including behaviour, playground ideas and catering. Pupils feel their views are listened to and therefore are proud of their school.
31. Parents agree that the arrangements for pupils starting at the school are good. There are opportunities for children and parents to meet their teachers before they start school and this helps them to settle quickly. Pupils joining the school at a later stage are helped to adjust to their new school in a satisfactory way. Pupils develop trusting relationships and know there is always someone they can turn to if needed.
32. Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their personal development effectively. In lessons, teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning and praise achievements but marking does not always give clear advice or enough guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents. There are good links with local schools, colleges and the community.

## **Main strengths**

- The school has established constructive and collaborative links with parents and carers
- Parents are welcomed into the school, and are encouraged to contribute and participate in every aspect of school life
- The school has raised a positive profile in the locality and is establishing strong community links
- The school works closely with other local schools to raise standards and widen opportunities for pupils

## **Commentary**

33. The school has further developed and improved its partnership with parents since the last inspection. Most parents are very satisfied with what the school provides for their children. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection were very supportive of the school, which was confirmed by the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in many conversations with parents during the inspection. They have confidence in the staff and feel that the teaching is good. They are appreciative of the support the school gives to them as well as to their children.
34. The school has sought the views of parents through questionnaires and parents' meetings where the headteacher and her staff have discussed issues of mutual concern, including homework, behaviour strategies and attendance. Parents feel consulted and better informed over almost every aspect of life and work in the school. They know they have better access to the school and that their concerns and worries will be taken seriously and acted upon. Many parents commented that the individual educational needs of their children were now being rapidly identified and that their opinions and views were sought prior to any action by the school which would then work in partnership with them. They are informed at all stages of the identification process and are involved in the review of individual plans for their children. This positive partnership brings increased learning benefits to the pupils.
35. The headteacher, staff and governors are working very hard to further engage parents in the life of the school and to support their children's learning. There is always good attendance at parents' meetings and school performances. The recently-reinvigorated parents and friends association has raised substantial funds for the school from a Christmas bazaar and social functions, which have been very well supported by parents and staff. Parents said that the school is developing into a key component of the local community. The school now further enriches pupils' understanding of life in their community by visits and trips locally, including to the local church and other venues in the area. The school choir visits and entertains a nearby home for the elderly.
36. Information provided for parents is good. The prospectus and a newly-published governors' annual report are well presented and contain helpful and relevant information. A particularly good feature is the weekly newsletter sent out by the headteacher, which keeps parents well informed of current and future events together with individual class activities. School reports to parents are detailed, informative and above all easy to understand. They are well set out in plain English with targets set for pupils that have been established through discussions between teachers, pupils and their parents. However, some pupils and their parents are not clear about these targets. Parents are invited to add their own comments and to discuss any concerns they may have. This reinforces the open approach the school offers to parents.
37. The school has taken direct action to ensure that its activities and profile are positively raised in the area. Many aspects of school life now appear in the local newspaper which has willingly and extensively reported these events with photographs. This has contributed to the tangible sense of pride now evident in the school. The local MP has become a regular visitor and supporter of the school and this has also been reported in some detail.
38. There are good and productive links with other schools and colleges. The school is actively involved in a cluster of schools in the area. Good practice is shared in joint training and in the discussions of common issues and goals with other schools. There are strong links with local secondary schools, some of which are also part of the Local Education Authority's Excellence Cluster of schools (a group whose purpose is to improve teaching and learning) and thus provide strong support and co-operation with each other. The school's learning mentor is also funded through this initiative. A nearby secondary school provides coaching in a range of sports. Secondary teachers visit the school prior to transfer and visits are arranged for pupils to see their next school, familiarise

themselves and take part in activities and sample lessons. This reassures pupils and their parents. The school is a Graduate Teacher Partnership School and welcomes and supports trainee teachers.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is good and she is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Leadership and management of key staff are satisfactory. These are very good improvements on the findings of the previous inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership
- The leadership and management of art and design and the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory
- The school improvement plan identifies priorities very clearly
- Financial management of the school is good

### Commentary

39. The headteacher is strongly committed to the school and its community and is dedicated in her determination to improve the standards the school achieves. She has a very clear vision of how to improve the school and in the short time she has been in post she has worked successfully and at a brisk pace to make many necessary changes to improve the ethos of the school. She is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher enjoys good relationships with staff, parents and pupils who support her strategies to rectify areas of weakness.
40. The headteacher's influence is beginning to take effect on other key staff, although it is still at an early stage. The leadership and management of English and of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. In most other subjects, the leadership and management are satisfactory. Most coordinators are new and have good ideas, but have not yet had sufficient time to impact on raising standards. The exception is art and design where the leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is not enough focus on improving teaching, learning and achievement. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient attention to improving teaching and therefore there are fewer signs of improvement at this stage than elsewhere in the school. In other years, the evaluation of teaching and learning is beginning to be effective in improving teaching and learning. The use of assessment data and an analysis of pupils' progress are helping to identify areas for improvement in core subjects but consistent use of assessment procedures is not being applied with enough rigour to raise standards.
41. The headteacher is responding very well to the main weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Constant and rigorous evaluation and keen attention to most areas of priority have meant that much progress has been made in the last year, although the results in terms of rising standards have yet to show fruition. The programme of staff training and objectives for improving staff performance, which are closely linked to the school improvement plan, are a very good investment and are helping to improve the quality of teaching. Induction procedures for newly qualified staff and those who are newly appointed to the school are very good and help them to settle in quickly. The school has been successful in stabilising staff for the current year.
42. Governors enjoy very good relationships with the headteacher who is helping them to become more knowledgeable of their responsibilities. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses and the challenges facing the school, and are supportive of all the new initiatives to drive up standards and attendance. The school believes strongly in equal opportunities and now complies with the legal requirements for the daily act of worship.

### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,092,465
Total expenditure	1,084,054
Expenditure per pupil	2,745

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	103,933
Balance carried forward to the next	112,344



43. Financial management of the school is good. Although there was a significant balance from the previous year, finances are now well targeted and used effectively. The balance from last year remained larger than average but is well planned to support the existing class arrangement and thereby maintain the recently stabilised staff situation. The governors and the headteacher apply the best value they can for its expenditure. Day-to-day financial administration is good and allows accurate monitoring of the budget to take place. The recommendations of the latest audit report have been implemented fully.
44. The principal aid to the school's future development is the commitment of the headteacher and senior staff to work together to help the school to succeed. Improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and in the quality of teaching also contribute significantly to better learning experiences. The principal barriers are the constraints imposed by pupils' poor attendance and until recently, the very high turnover of staff, which have prevented the school to carry out necessary changes at a faster rate.

## **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 satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low when compared with the level expected. Arrangements to introduce children to the school are very carefully and sensitively carried out and help them to settle quickly. Most children are very unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year because there is insufficient good teaching and many children have a very short time in the reception class because of the school's organisation of transfer from the nursery to the reception classes. Provision for children with special educational needs is satisfactory. However, insufficient use is made of assessments to help teachers plan in sufficient detail for greater progress in the next steps in all children's learning. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because leadership and management of this very important stage of learning are unsatisfactory and are not helping to drive up standards, which was also the case at the time of the previous inspection.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is good.

##### **Main strengths**

- Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development because teaching and learning are good
- Relationships between all staff and children are good
- There is a strong emphasis on daily routines

##### **Commentary**

45. Although all children achieve well, it is likely that the attainment of most will be below the expected levels by the end of their time in the reception class. Most children start in the nursery with very low personal, social and emotional skills. However, all staff provide good role models and a quiet caring atmosphere where all children feel safe and secure so that they settle happily. By playing and working alongside them in small groups, adults help children to develop confidence, so that the more able interact well with each other and the less able who stay close by adults receive the attention they need to build up their self-esteem. Daily routines continue to be well promoted in the reception class where higher-attaining children are confident to take responsibility for their own actions. Adults praise and value the efforts and good behaviour of less confident children and this motivates them well to try harder.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

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

- Although children's achievements are satisfactory, their attainment by the end of the reception year is likely to be very low
- Good use is made of adult support
- The pace of learning in both classes does not always offer sufficient challenge to higher-attaining children

##### **Commentary**

46. Many children enter the nursery with very poor speaking and listening skills. The attention span of most children is very limited and staff purposely select short, well-illustrated stories, which are read in small groups. This gains the attention of most children who are beginning to listen more readily and encourages them to describe what they see and hear. The more confident children join in with rhymes and remember, for example, how the 'spider spins his web'. Lower-attaining children, who lack the vocabulary to describe the brightly coloured pictures, indicate their understanding by pointing, while others remain silent. In the reception class most children participate well as they discuss in pairs the characters of stories in response to the teacher's careful questioning. A small proportion of higher-attaining children are beginning to write simple sentences unaided, while lower-

attaining children have little sound recognition. Reading books are regularly sent home, and record books show that a growing number of parents contribute to their children's learning by sharing books with them. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, in both classes lessons lack sufficient challenge for the few children who are able to work at a faster rate to make greater progress.

### **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although children's achievements are satisfactory, their attainment by the end of the reception year is likely to be very low
- Staff use of resources makes learning meaningful and fun, but on occasions they are not used sufficiently
- Activities do not have sufficient challenge for higher-attaining children

### **Commentary**

47. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Resources are used well and good links are made to developing children's oral skills by exploring number through the counting of spiders' legs and the matching of spiders to sections of webs. However, in the same lesson, lower attaining children watched while adults counted as they did not have suitable resources to help them count. In all activities, adults speak clearly, emphasising good mathematical language, but lesson plans lack any detail of how higher-attaining children are to be challenged further in their learning thus restricting the progress some of these children make. In the reception class, where the teacher promotes mathematical vocabulary well, lower-attaining children count and arrange petals of a flower while higher-attaining children demonstrate their growing understanding of addition of three numbers. The progress of some children was slowed by the lack of a number line to help them learn the sequence of numbers.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

48. Too little direct teaching was seen to make an overall judgement for knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff make good use of ICT as a teaching aid and children show an increasing interest in their learning. Nursery children enjoy operating the switches of listening centres and counting the number of shells effectively as they learn to 'tap' in answers. In a lesson where teaching was good, all children achieved well and enjoyed learning how to load a program, explained very carefully by the teacher. Higher-attaining children progressed to rotating characters, while lower-attaining children were well supported by a teaching assistant as they were guided to 'click and drag' pictures around the screen.

### **Physical development**

49. Too little direct teaching was seen to make an overall judgement for physical development. Nursery children enjoy daily opportunities to develop physical skills by playing with large, wheeled toys in the enclosed playground. As at the time of the previous inspection, the outside area for reception children is restricted and uninviting which means opportunities to develop their physical skills are limited. The outside areas used by all Foundation Stage children are very difficult for adults to supervise, have uneven surfaces and offer little shelter to protect children from the elements.

### **Creative development**

50. Analysis of previous work shows children have suitable opportunities to experiment with colour, to paint, to use crayons and to develop three-dimensional art. However, too little direct teaching was seen to make an overall judgement for creative development. Resources for role-play in the nursery and reception classes have improved and teachers use role-play satisfactorily to promote speaking and listening skills and mathematical understanding. Children in the nursery begin to join in the singing of rhymes about counting and ordering the activities of spiders. Children in the reception classes were not observed taking part in creative development.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is satisfactory.

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

- Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory, standards and results are low
- Teachers structure and support pupils' learning well and provide good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills in English and other subjects
- Although assessment is satisfactory, the marking of pupils' work does not always give pupils advice on how to improve
- Good leadership shows determination to raise standards and appropriate strategies are in place
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning, and behave well

#### **Commentary**

51. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were very low for reading and well below average for writing, but the number of pupils gaining higher levels in writing was average. When compared to similar schools, results for reading were well below average and results for writing were below average. Results in the national tests in Year 6 were very low. The school's and Local Education Authority's data suggest that standards are beginning to improve, particularly in the progress made by current Year 5 pupils which was seen during the inspection. Year 5 pupils wrote an appropriately structured report about the tsunami disaster, and used adjectives effectively to create interest for the reader.
52. Standards seen in Years 2 and 6 were very low, for both reading and writing. No difference was seen between boys and girls. In reading, Year 2 pupils use their growing confidence to sound out letters in words, while higher-attaining pupils can split long words into smaller sections. However, unless prompted, pupils do not make use of other reading strategies. Pupils can retell simple stories, and more able pupils can compare characters in a story. Pupils write simple stories using a sequence of sentences, with a very limited vocabulary. When supported, higher-attaining and average pupils, use capital letters and full stops fairly accurately. They can also use simple connecting words like 'and' or 'then'. Pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds effectively to guess the spellings of unfamiliar words.
53. In Year 6, pupils use sounding out letters as their main reading strategy. They are also beginning to use other strategies, such as context. Their reading is fairly fluent, and they sometimes use expression. Lower-attaining pupils are hesitant, but with support can sound out letter sounds. Pupils use complex sentences in their writing, they use speech marks accurately, but do not understand how to use commas. Their vocabulary has made satisfactory progress since Year 2, but is still limited. When they work independently, their writing is not so well organised. Handwriting standards are below average, which represents good achievement since entering the school.
54. Pupils' speaking and listening skills in Year 2 and 6 are very low. Year 6 pupils can give explanations, and share in a discussion, but use limited vocabulary. Without support they have difficulty organising their thoughts for longer explanations. Pupils' speaking skills are better than their listening skills. Pupils' skills of research are very low. In Year 6, pupils know how to use the contents page, and an index to find information.
55. With support, pupils in both Year 2 and 6 reach almost average standards, but without support pupils' standards drop. Pupils make steady progress, but this is slow because pupils' prior learning is insecure and their language experience is limited. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and much seen during the inspection was good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to structure learning carefully. They use effective strategies, such as modelling writing on the interactive whiteboard. In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants provide good support, which enables pupils to make progress in their learning. However, the transition for pupils to put into practice their new learning is sometimes not sufficiently supported.

57. Teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour effectively. They create a culture of confidence, and this results in pupils having positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. They enjoy writing about the film Shrek as part of their literacy project, and this is contributing to developing their reading and writing skills. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise editing their work and redrafting, and this is helping them to improve their skills.
58. Teachers provide a variety of activities which encourage pupils' oral skills, such as the Philosophy for Children lessons, where pupils are encouraged to ask questions and discuss ideas. Pupils use partners well to discuss ideas. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extend pupils' understanding, such in a Year 5 lesson where pupils identified characteristics of a complex sentence because the teacher gave them time to do so. Pupils with special educational needs also contributed answers, because they felt confident.
59. Teachers' marking is inconsistent in quality. Pupils are not aware of their targets or how to improve. Assessment in lessons is not yet fully effective in informing teachers and pupils of the next learning step.
60. Effective leadership and management have put in place a range of appropriate strategies to raise standards, and is monitoring these closely. Action is swiftly taken to address weaknesses. The senior management team provides good support in helping to drive up standards. Pupil progress is tracked carefully, and underachievement tackled relentlessly. All the staff work hard in trying to improve pupils' confidence and skills. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and marking, and how teachers use assessment in lessons. The library is not used well to help develop pupils' research skills. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection, with effective strategies in place to improve standards.

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

61. The use and development of pupils' language and literacy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to express and discuss their ideas; this is helping pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills which are very low. In a Year 3 art lesson, pupils enjoyed explaining how their playground sculpture designs would be constructed. Other pupils benefited from understanding how to listen and contribute. The Philosophy for Children course has a strong focus on encouraging pupils to listen and discuss.
62. The school is working hard to provide pupils with opportunities to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects, such as history and geography, to help them improve. Teachers make very good links between English and projects such as the Victorians. Year 5 pupils wrote about Scrooge's character from Oliver Twist. The school does not make enough use of the library to help pupils in developing research skills, though pupils do regularly use the Internet. Pupils know how to skim and scan information to find key points.

#### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

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

- Results and standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are very low although in some other years there are signs of improvement
- Pupils' lack of skills in number, particularly in older classes, limits their achievement because they have missed important aspects of learning in earlier years
- Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and pupils work with enjoyment and enthusiasm
- Lower-attaining pupils are supported well, particularly by teaching assistants, who help them to achieve as well as their peers
- The assessment of pupils provides data that is used effectively to identify how well pupils are achieving and when additional help is needed. However, it is not yet consistently used by teachers to plan activities for pupils' differing levels of attainment or to inform pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve
- Teachers are making good use of interactive whiteboards to help pupils learn, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to help them learn

## Commentary

63. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory, although there are recent signs of improvement in some classes, despite the difficulties created by very high levels of pupil and staff mobility. The results in recent years reflect standards. The standards achieved by pupils who have attended the school throughout their school careers also show signs of improvement and these pupils report that their achievements are better since they have been helped to improve their behaviour. Older pupils' achievements are frequently limited by the difficulties that some experience in using number and particularly their tables, which is the result of gaps in their earlier learning. However, more recent consistent teaching throughout the school is beginning to improve these shortcomings. Throughout the school, pupils' inexperience in working without help and thinking for themselves when faced with a problem limits their confidence and their ability to work independently of the teacher. The national strategy for numeracy is used for planning and it is improving provision generally. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and teaching assistants support them well, throughout their lessons.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and improvements to teaching are beginning to take effect, particularly in relation to the management of pupils and the structure of lessons. Lessons generally begin with brisk challenging mental activities that pupils enjoy. All pupils are interested and want to do well. They usually behave well, even on those few occasions when a few are confused or cannot understand. Teachers are using the recently acquired interactive whiteboards well to provide good explanations and demonstrations and this helps pupils understand and also engages their interest well. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and demonstrate this through the correct use of terminology. Generally teachers use questions well to help pupils understand and some teachers are planning a good variety of tasks that match pupils' differing levels of attainment well. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson, where pupils were learning to add three and four numbers, the teacher used her very good assessment of pupils' needs to provide suitable activities for a wide range of ability so that they were all able to learn different strategies. The higher-attaining pupils added three numbers over 20 together, while, the lower-attaining pupils were using numbers which add to make 10. In a less successful lesson, the teacher talked for too long, so pupils lost concentration and at times, the tasks were insufficiently challenging for a few higher-attaining pupils. At times, there are too few opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, so pupils do not learn to think and work independently of the teacher.
65. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. Thorough and regular assessments are made with good analysis of trends and pupils are set targets in some classes, although this and the marking of pupils' work are not yet consistently carried out by all teachers. However, this information is not yet sufficiently used to inform pupils about how well they are doing or how they might improve. A few teachers are not using assessment information sufficiently to plan their lessons with the result that tasks sometimes do not suit all pupils' levels of attainment nor do teachers always plan sufficiently for the gaps in their knowledge. The co-ordinator and headteacher have regularly monitored standards of teaching and pupils' work, although, because of many staff changes, this has not yet had sufficient time to fully impact on the current teachers. Work is marked regularly with constructive comments from some teachers, but as yet there is little indication to the pupil of the level of their work, nor regular opportunities for pupils in all classes to assess themselves. As a result, pupils are generally not clear about precisely how well they are doing and the areas they need to concentrate upon to improve.
66. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a clear vision for the subject and good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The range of resources available is good and they are used well. Although the subject is being developed satisfactorily, there is still too much emphasis on the use of number, making it too narrow and at times less interesting than it might be. Pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to help them learn, particularly in relation to data handling. Since the last inspection, standards are lower, but the quality of teaching has been maintained and assessment has improved well, so improvement since the last inspection overall is satisfactory.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

67. The use and development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects are unsatisfactory as, apart from science, pupils have too few opportunities to use their skills in other subjects. In science, pupils learn to measure accurately, for example, when measuring 100g of soil, sand or clay to test for air by using 100ml water, and using a stop-watch to record the time taken for soil to absorb water. They used simple block and line graphs to record data and Venn diagrams to help them sort and classify people according to their height and shoe size. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were learning to enter formulae into spreadsheets. However, much of this work shows little progress from year to year.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although pupils achieve well, standards are very low in Year 2 and well below expected levels in Year 6
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, providing a wide range of interesting and practical activities that are enjoyed by all pupils
- Pupils are well supported by adults but are not always able to develop their own ideas
- Marking and assessment in general do not always give enough guidance on how work can be improved

### **Commentary**

68. National test results in science at the end of Year 6 were well below national average in 2004 but have improved since 2002 when they were very low. Compared to the results in Year 2 which are very low, pupils achieve well from a low level of understanding because the quality of teaching and learning is good.
69. Teachers plan their lessons well and build on what pupils already know and understand to help them learn more. Pupils in Year 5 were able to use their knowledge of insulators and conductors to identify safety rules before carrying out an experiment to prove that burning is an irreversible change. They were able to work together in groups and record findings accurately. A wide range of practical activities feature strongly in science lessons. Pupils enjoy these so they concentrate well and work hard. A carousel of three activities in lessons encourages pupils to investigate and think about science in an enquiring way. Skilful questioning by the teacher and teaching assistant challenged pupils to explain their ideas, for example, when using a Venn diagram to sort photographs of themselves according to similarities and differences.
70. There is a strong emphasis on pupils using accurate scientific vocabulary when talking about their work and recording their findings. Crosswords and word games, which are well matched to the needs of pupils, are used to develop this and enjoyed as a fun way of learning. A wide range of resources are used effectively in practical lessons to interest pupils. An interactive whiteboard was used well in one lesson to record the weight of a burning candle over time and plot the findings on a graph. Pupils are well supported by adults in lessons so make good progress but are not always given enough opportunities to develop their own ideas. There is some overuse of worksheets and copied texts to record findings.
71. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory overall. The subject leader has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has established an after-school booster class to raise standards. Monitoring activities are developing and include looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and some lesson observations. Evaluations of units in the scheme of work have recently been introduced so are not yet well established.
72. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills during their investigations to record findings. Although teachers use ICT well in the lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Marking does not tell pupils how they can improve. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although achievement is satisfactory, standards are well below those expected
- The recent provision of interactive whiteboards in classrooms has impacted positively on pupils' learning
- The system for electronic storage and assessment of pupils' work is not organised in a way that allows simple retrieval
- The new co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future

### **Commentary**

73. Pupils join the school with standards that are well below those expected. Although there have been recent developments in the subject, all new initiatives are at an early stage and have not yet had time to make a difference to the pupils' achievements and learning. The installation of interactive whiteboards is very recent and, although teachers use them extensively, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to use them interactively. On the rare occasions when they do, for example in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when pupils were finding different ways to make seven, their motivation and focus increased at once.
74. Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were satisfactory and much was good. Teachers explain what pupils are expected to do clearly and ask them to anticipate possible problems so that they will know how to solve them. Teachers provide good demonstrations and use accurate language to explain. Teaching assistants and teachers supported pupils well so that they can all make progress. For example, in a Year 4 lesson about branching databases to record animals, the teacher's explanation about what to do was very clear, so pupils knew exactly what was expected from them. The teacher and teaching assistant worked together well and the teacher's willingness to admit a mistake provided a good role model for pupils who then were encouraged to try the unfamiliar.
75. Teachers plan to meet all pupils' needs, but this is not always carried out in the lesson. In those very few lessons that were less effective, the pace of the lesson was slower because the teacher had not set clear deadlines, and the pupils were less attentive because the purpose of the activity, for example to learn about a database to categorise animals, had not been made clear. In one lesson, the teacher's inconsistent approach to pupils' calling out their answers led to the teacher talking over pupils who were talking and a consequent lack of attention.
76. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new in post and has a clear vision for the way forward. There is little evidence, however, of any previous work by pupils, owing to the absence of the school technician, and there were difficulties in retrieving work from the system for storing and assessing work. The lack of regular procedures for monitoring and checking pupils' work means that assessment of ICT is unsatisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory as the quality of teaching has been maintained.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

77. ICT is used insufficiently to support learning in other subjects and the use and development of pupils' skills in other subjects are generally unsatisfactory. Cross curricular links are beginning to be developed. In Year 5, children were using Excel spreadsheets to create a formula for addition and multiplication while in Year 6 there was evidence of PowerPoint presentations on Mountains and Tudor Exploration.

## **HUMANITIES**

In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography with only part of one lesson being seen in geography and two in history. It is therefore not possible to form overall judgements about provision in these subjects.

78. Pupils' work in **geography** shows that standards are well below those expected. Pupils have covered a basic range of topics including a comparison of the local Basildon area with a seaside location, compass directions, tsunamis and the study of mountainous areas. In the lesson seen



during the inspection, Year 5 pupils were learning to obtain information from a map and locating desert areas on a world map. In this lesson pupils achieved well because activities were well planned to meet the needs of all pupils with opportunities for them to work in groups and independently. The co-ordinator is new in post and has good ideas for improvement but it is too soon for these to have taken effect.

79. Pupils' work in **history** shows that standards are well below those expected. The topics covered include Guy Fawkes, Samuel Pepys, the Great Fire of London, the Victorians and Tudor exploration and show only a very basic coverage, particularly in the older years. In one of the lessons observed, pupils were learning to use pictures of the past to find out about how people lived. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory because the teacher used a good variety of different strategies, but the quality of the pictures made it difficult for pupils to interpret them. In another lesson, which involved using the Internet to research about Sir Francis Drake, pupils' achievement was good. The teacher's good explanation and high expectations meant pupils were interested and successful in using ICT for research. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new in post and has some good ideas which will raise the profile of the subject within the school and move it forward.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is good.

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

- Teaching is good so pupils enjoy the subject and work hard
- The scheme of work ensures that there is satisfactory coverage of the syllabus
- Marking and assessment generally do not sufficiently tell pupils how they can improve

#### **Commentary**

80. From the two lessons observed and the limited amount of pupils' work seen, it was not possible to make a judgement about standards. In the lessons and by talking with pupils, achievement overall is satisfactory because, although teaching is good, there are many gaps in pupils' prior learning. Pupils in Year 2 understand that Christianity and Judaism are world religions and that they have common features such as stories and symbols. Pupils in Year 6 know that prayers are a feature of many religions and can explain and use the main features of a prayer.
81. The quality of teaching is good so pupils enjoy the subject and learn well. The lessons are carefully planned, resources are used well and teachers build on what pupils know and have experienced. In Year 2, pupils were able to relate the parable of the two sons to their own experiences of making and keeping promises. Good questioning by the teacher helped them to understand how breaking a promise might make others feel. In Year 6, pupils were able to write their own prayers by using the list of key features developed in previous lessons. Teachers use a variety of activities such as story-telling and role-play and build on the good relationships they have with the pupils to make the lessons interesting and fun so pupils enjoy what they are learning and work hard.
82. The written work pupils do in the subject shows that they have covered a range of study in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 2 have compared the features of a Christian and Sikh wedding and studied symbols of Judaism. There is some overuse of worksheets for recording. In Year 6 pupils generally present their written work with care but marking does not tell them how they can improve.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and teaches the subject to two classes. She has revised the curriculum in line with the locally agreed syllabus and new bibles have been purchased. There is a good range of religious artefacts. Some monitoring has taken place but is not yet fully developed to include classroom observations. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

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

84. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** so there is no judgement about overall provision. From discussion with pupils and looking at their work, standards are very low. Pupils' shelter designs in Year 6 show underdeveloped skills in planning the structure and in the materials to use. Pupils had used appropriate materials for their models, and they had learnt how to join the

materials together. In Year 2, pupils learn about matching materials to the task, such as why polystyrene is used to make model surfboards for Barnaby Bear. They also learnt about which tools were best for cutting different materials. Pupils had made simple suggestions for improving the decorations on the boards. Time allocation is limited, and this lessens the opportunities that pupils have to develop their skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

85. Only two **music** lessons were seen so there is no judgement about overall provision. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory, as was pupils' achievement. Teachers encouraged pupils to listen well and good links were made to pupils' reading and writing skills. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils learned the meaning of new musical terms such as 'tempo' and recognised and explored ways in which sounds such as 'ocean waves' can be made by selecting from a wide range of instruments. In a Year 3 lesson, where teaching and learning were good, pupils achieved well as they identified how loud jungle music could be used to describe the stomping of a heavy elephant. Good questioning by the teacher and teaching assistant enabled pupils to pick out the playing of a trumpet and a drum. Pupils contrasted this well with the playing of slow quiet music representing a swan gliding peacefully down the river to the music of a violin. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed who has good ideas to improve the subject.
86. No judgements are made on **physical education** as no lessons were seen. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a broad range of sport, including swimming and dance, during the year, both in lessons and after school. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed who has good ideas to improve the subject.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is unsatisfactory.

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

- Standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6, and achievement is unsatisfactory because insufficient time is provided for developing pupils' artistic skills, knowledge and understanding
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because they are not focussed on improving learning and achievement
- Pupils can generate simple ideas for a design, taking into account its purpose and visual appeal
- Where pupils are given well-structured opportunities to develop their drawing skills, they achieve well
- Pupils are not assessed, so progress cannot be monitored and pupils do not know how to improve

#### **Commentary**

87. Pupils have many opportunities for drawing in art and other subjects, but the standard of their work is well below average, because there is no structured development of their skills. In one Year 6 class, pupils' drawings portraying movement show accurate observation and proportion, because their learning was well supported. Pupils' painting skills are undeveloped, and standards are well below average. Brushwork is often clumsy and colour mixing underused. In Years 2 and 6 pupils have little knowledge about artists, and as a consequence their work is not enriched. Opportunities are missed to link art work with artists, such as Year 5 pupils' wallpaper designs to William Morris. Achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not systematically developed, and there is insufficient time to practise skills and learn about art.
88. Pupils have positive attitudes towards art; they work well together sharing ideas. They enjoy talking about their art work.
89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good planning links activities effectively to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils became more creative in their ideas for designing a playground sculpture because the adults used good questioning to challenge their thinking. Teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to discuss, explain and evaluate their work, and this helps pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills.
90. Pupils' art work is not assessed sufficiently, so pupils' progress is not tracked. Pupils do not know how well they are doing, apart from informal evaluation at the end of some lessons.

91. The amount of time for art is insufficient. The scheme of work is not coherent, and neither is it consistent across the school, in developing pupils' artistic knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils do experience a range of media and techniques, and learn about design, but this is not progressively planned. Pupils do not use computers enough to explore ideas and designs. Leadership has identified some appropriate priorities, but these are more focussed on teaching, rather than learning. Monitoring is not sufficiently in place to ensure consistency and to enable good practice to be shared. Insufficient assessment is carried out. Management of resources is good, and they are well organised. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

92. Only one lesson was seen in this subject and there was little past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. In the Year 2 lesson seen about how people feel when they are different or feel left out, teaching was very good. The pace of the lesson together with the level of challenge stimulated pupils and ensured that they achieved well. The teaching approaches could usefully be shared with other teachers at the school. The subject is well planned and there is a good programme and variety of activities.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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