

INSPECTION REPORT

CLAVERING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Clavering

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114967

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Bonich

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 15th-17th November 2004

Inspection number: 266630

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:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	140
School address:	Stortford Road Clavering Saffron Walden Essex
Postcode:	CB11 4PE
Telephone number:	01799 550300
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Gerry Dawson
Date of previous inspection:	25/01/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This community primary school is smaller than most primary schools; it has 132 pupils on roll who attend full time and a further 8 reception children who attend part time. They are taught in six classes. Most pupils come from the village of Clavering but a significant proportion, well over a third, come from further afield as a result of parental choice. Pupils come from mixed social backgrounds but the circumstances of most are broadly average. Nearly all pupils are from white British families, although a small number are from ethnic minority backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their home language. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, around 2 per cent, is below average. A below average proportion of pupils, around 8 per cent, are entered on the school's record of special educational needs and of these a small number have a Statement of Special Educational Needs because they need considerable help with their learning. Overall, the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school partway through this phase of their education, around 56 per cent, is well above average, and in several year groups the proportion is exceptionally high. The school is close to Stansted Airport and the M11 motorway, and recent improvements to both have meant that London is more accessible, which in turn accounts for much of the transient nature of the school population, a factor that was not apparent at the time of the last inspection. There is an almost equal number of boys and girls overall but most year groups have an imbalance, some with many more girls and others

with many more boys. In 2003 the school received the 'Healthy Schools' award and the 'Investors in People' award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, French, physical education.
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
20963	Judy Keiner	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, special educational needs, religious education.
27568	Midge Davidson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, science, history, geography.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides its pupils with an effective education.

Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils learn successfully. Attainment on entry is broadly average and most pupils achieve well to attain standards that are above average. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good and the management of the school is effective. The school gives good value for money. Recently a high proportion of pupils have entered or left the school partway through this phase of their education, and this has a negative impact on the standards they attain and on the school's published test results.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils have an enthusiasm for literature, and in Year 6, standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' awareness of their learning and of how they can improve their performance is very good.
- Pupils' social, moral and personal development is very good and they have particularly positive attitudes to learning.
- Although teaching is generally good, and often very good, it varies from satisfactory to excellent according to each teacher's individual strengths.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well in learning to speak French.
- Pupils' spelling is often inaccurate because they do not have a secure understanding of spelling rules.
- Whilst satisfactory, achievement in the reception class is held back because planned activities are not securely linked to the early learning goals specified in the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Communication with parents, about how to support their children's learning, is not always clear enough.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has successfully tackled the issues raised in the last inspection report and the lack of resources is no longer a problem. The good quality of teaching has been maintained. Overall, the standards that pupils attain are very similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. French has been introduced and pupils achieve well due to good specialist teaching. New classrooms have been built and so the accommodation has improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

These grades should be treated with caution as the group taking the tests was very small and so each pupil makes a big difference proportionately.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is especially good in reading and the high standards that pupils attain are a particular strength of the school. Children achieve satisfactorily overall in the Foundation Stage and in personal, social and emotional development their achievement is very good. Most are likely to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Year 2. Most pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school set ambitious targets for its performance in national tests in 2004. It came very close to meeting the targets for mathematics but missed the target for English. The group that took the tests in 2004 was unusually small and had experienced high levels of pupil mobility and changes of teacher, including temporary teachers. The results reflect the high level of teaching expertise in mathematics and science and a lack of sufficient attention to boosting standards in writing, which has since been tackled, and spelling. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and music are average. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is satisfactory in these subjects. Pupils achieve well in French and standards in Year 6 are above average.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They have very good attitudes to their work and have high levels of self-esteem. Behaviour is very good. Relationships are very good and pupils support each other in their learning sensibly. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good quality of education**. The curriculum is broad and well balanced but in the Foundation Stage lesson plans are not linked to the objectives set out in national guidance so activities are not always sufficiently purposeful. The quality of **teaching** and learning is **good** overall but variable as it ranges from satisfactory to excellent. It is too dependent on teachers' particular strengths and is less effective where teachers lack subject expertise. Teaching for children in reception is satisfactory and it is good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers value all pupils equally and strive hard to meet the needs of all. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work, and their very good behaviour, support their learning well. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of learning but in some classes they are not as effective as they might be if given more training and greater direction. The good quality of care and guidance helps to foster maturity and confidence. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory but the use of computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum, especially in numeracy, could be further developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management** of the school are **good**. The headteacher provides good leadership. She works closely with the new deputy headteacher and the senior management team to give the school clear direction. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to continuing improvement and raising standards. The leadership and

management provided by subject leaders are satisfactory but they have too few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in order to identify areas for improvement. The governing body gives valuable support and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. Finances are managed well but an unexpected overspend on the new buildings has led to a budgetary deficit and has restricted developments in other directions, such as ICT.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents are satisfied with the school, are pleased with the quality of education provided, and confirm that their children like school. However a significant minority do not feel that the school seeks their views or takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspection findings show that there is some justification for their view. Pupils are happy with their school and particularly like the friendships that they make.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching and raise the quality to the level of the best.
- Make stronger links between the early learning goals for children in reception and their daily activities so that tasks include a more focused challenge.
- Review the teaching of spelling and ensure that spelling rules are taught systematically.
- Improve communication with parents so that they are better informed about how they can support their children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

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

Children's achievement is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, and most children are likely to attain all the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 so that, by Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This good achievement continues in Years 3 to 6 and, by Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers achieve as well as their peers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the reception year, children's achievement in personal, social and emotional development is very good and they attain standards that are well above average.
- Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about literature and in Year 6 standards in reading are well above average.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in spelling because rules are not taught systematically.
- Pupils' achievement in personal, social, health education and citizenship is very good.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well in French and attain above average standards.

Commentary

1. Children settle quickly and make good gains in confidence during the reception year. This is because staff maintain high expectations of children's ability to become independent and to take an increasing degree of responsibility in the classroom. Staff treat children with great respect and in turn expect children to be able to discuss issues sensibly and in a considered way. Consequently they develop great confidence in speaking and in expressing their opinions. This sets the tone for the rest of their time in school and lays good foundations for the older pupils' very good personal development. Good teaching leads to good achievement and above average standards in physical development. Their achievement in the other areas of learning is satisfactory and most are likely to attain all the early learning goals by the end of reception. Although achievement is always at least satisfactory, the daily activities are not closely linked to the early learning goals. Consequently, opportunities are sometimes missed to provide specific challenges designed to lead pupils towards attaining particular goals. As a result progress is not always as rapid as it could be.
2. Good teaching leads to good achievement in Years 1 and 2. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average in Year 2. These findings are confirmed by the school's assessments. However, this does not concur with the results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 earlier in the year. This is because performance in the tests fluctuates from year to year due to the varying characteristics of successive year groups. Also, great caution is needed when interpreting the

comparative data because the very small number of pupils involved means that a single pupil can have a substantial effect on the school's overall grading. In 2004 there were 13 boys and 6 girls in the group that took the tests for pupils in Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (18.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.5 (17.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.8 (18.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The school's performance in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 was not as high as the previous year, when results were well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, they were above the national average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. The group of pupils that took the tests in 2004 comprised an unusually high proportion of slower learners and more than twice as many boys as girls. The previous year there were well over three times as many girls as there were boys. In the current Year 2 group there are more than twice as many girls as boys and the school's assessments confirm that the school's performance will rise again, especially in writing. These variations in performance from year to year are partly due to the wide gender imbalance in successive year groups and are particularly evident in writing. Nationally girls do better in writing than boys and in this school the trend is exaggerated because there is an exceptionally large gender difference in successive years. Also the proportion of more able and less able pupils varies widely from year to year and this contributes to erratic overall performance.
4. Reading is a particular strength of the school. Reading is taught systematically in Years 1 and 2 and pupils love listening to stories. In Years 3 to 6 pupils gain a growing knowledge of a wide range of children's books as well as timeless classics, such as the works of Shakespeare. Pupils are well read and talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about literature. Standards are well above average in Year 6. However, pupils do not achieve so well in spelling and many make basic errors. This is largely because spelling rules are not taught methodically and insufficient attention is given to the need for accurate spelling.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (27.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.4 (29.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (30.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Pupils again achieve well in Years 3 to 6 in response to good teaching, but in these year groups a high proportion of pupils enter and leave the school. This high level of pupil mobility has a negative impact on the continuity of pupils' learning and constrains the standards that some pupils attain. However, standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. These findings are confirmed by the school's assessments. These standards were not reflected in the national tests

results in English in 2004. This is because in this very small group, only thirteen pupils, there was a high proportion of pupils, mainly boys, who had poorly developed writing skills and who had limited understanding of spelling rules. Four of the group failed to attain the expected Level 4 standard in the tests. This was a year group that had an unusually high proportion of pupils who had entered the school fairly recently. The group also had the continuity of their learning disturbed by changes of teacher, including a number of temporary teachers whose main strengths lay in mathematics and science. Furthermore it comprised an unusually high proportion of summer born pupils who had, therefore, spent less time in school than those born in the autumn and spring terms. There were many more boys than girls and a significant number had major learning difficulties, particularly in literacy. All these factors combined to diminish the school's performance in English. The situation is now very different and standards by the summer of 2005 are likely to be much higher.

6. Pupils' achievement in ICT and music is satisfactory and in both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are broadly average. There were examples of particularly good work in ICT. Pupils in Year 6 are good at creating multi-media presentations, using a program called 'PowerPoint'. They used this well when creating portfolios of their work with computers to pass on to the secondary school so that the standards they had reached could be assessed in order to inform the next steps in their learning.
7. Across the school pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory and pupils' performance meets the expectations defined in the locally agreed syllabus. There were examples of good work in religious education, particularly in Year 3 where teaching was particularly good and pupils demonstrated a good awareness of religious principles. Pupils achieve particularly well in personal, social, health education and citizenship and much of the practice in this area is exemplary.
8. Although insufficient time was available to inspect physical education it was noted that records show that pupils attain high standards in swimming, which is a regular feature of the curriculum. French is taught well and pupils attain standards that exceed those normally attained by pupils in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress in relation to the targets they are set.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development is very good and is supported well by very strong spiritual, moral, and social education as well as strong cultural provision. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and their punctuality in arriving at school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class make a happy start in the school.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their enjoyment and the school's sense of purpose.
- Pupils build very good relationships and they work and play cheerfully together.
- Pupils' maturity and self-confidence are positively shaped by the school's very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Commentary

9. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained attendance levels at just above the national average. Attendance procedures are systematic and messages about maintaining good attendance have a positive influence on parents. Holidays taken during the school term are not significantly high, except in Years 3 and 6. Pupils want to arrive at school on time and are eager to make a prompt start to the school day. The school receives good support from the education welfare service.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.1
National data	5.2	National data	0.2

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

10. Children in the reception class make a good transfer from the on-site nursery schools and the playgroup in the village, and quickly show confidence and build good relationships. They understand the classroom routines, listen to their teacher, and show enjoyment in trying out activities. They respond well to sensitive teaching on such topics as 'Remembrance Day.' Pupils develop good attitudes and behaviour, so that their progress towards achieving their early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development is very good.
11. Pupils maintain good attitudes and behaviour in Years 1 and 2. They listen well and are keen to do their best and work hard. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare. Pupils abide by the behaviour boundaries and classroom rules. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes and behaviour in Years 3 to 6 and gain high levels of self-discipline and maturity. They are keen to succeed and look forward to challenges and are eager to talk about their ideas. Good provision is made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Support staff and classroom teachers have appropriate guidance on how to support pupils in making efforts to improve their behaviour. The very few pupils who present challenging behaviour are managed well and have little affect on the orderly learning of other pupils. The pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and are cared for well.
12. Pupils feel relaxed and play safely together without fear of bullying or harassment. Older pupils look after younger pupils. Pupils listen carefully during discussions and value each other's contributions. Pupils are given meaningful responsibilities, such as acting as play leaders and organising activities at playtimes, and this supports their personal development well. Staff know the pupils very well and quickly detect changes in their moods, so that the occasional incidents of challenging behaviour, mostly associated with a small minority of boys, are anticipated and nipped in the bud. The school has rarely needed to use exclusions as a strategy in the last three years.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
135	2	0
1	0	0

Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

13. Pupils' personal development is very good and by Year 6 pupils show levels of maturity that often exceeds their years. The school places a strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and is innovative in giving pupils unique opportunities to develop their thinking skills, independence and teamwork. They benefit greatly from reflecting on their learning by keeping personal journals in which they contemplate their learning and jot down how effective it has been. They investigate and understand different styles of learning and know what style suits them best. In very good personal and social education lessons, they create short play lets in which they portray social situations where themes, such as sexism and drugs awareness, are examined. Provision for spiritual, moral and social education is very good and for cultural education it is good.
14. Pupils have respect for the celebrations and beliefs of different faiths. Teachers challenge pupils to think about issues such as God and the Christian commitment as well as exploring their own feelings and beliefs. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, which is strongly reinforced through discussions about social issues. Pupils write their thoughts about each other in a class 'Friendship Book', and sometimes use this book to apologise to each other when feelings are hurt. The school council meets regularly to discuss important issues affecting the future of the school. Their views are taken into account when decisions are made. The school encourages pupils to develop a wide range of interests that promote their personal development through participating in memorable events, such as the choir's visit to the Royal Albert Hall, through the highly successful bridge club, through studying literature and the work of a variety of artists. The school has made satisfactory efforts to develop multicultural education, which was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection report, and it welcomes visitors to the school to give pupils effective practical experiences of a range of other cultures as well as information about the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. It is taught thoroughly and meets legal requirements. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils. There are very good links with other schools in the area. A productive learning ethos that promotes enjoyment in learning has been firmly established.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn effectively. Assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A high proportion of teaching is very good and occasionally it is excellent, but its quality is variable and ranges from satisfactory to very good in most classes, depending on teachers' individual strengths.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on their learning and are given good guidance on how to improve their work.
- French is taught well to pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Lessons are planned thoroughly and work is matched well to pupils' varying learning needs.
- Classroom assistants generally make a good contribution to pupils' learning but there are instances where with a little more training they could be even more effective.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	10 (28%)	16 (44%)	9 (25%)	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.

15. The good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching for children in the reception class is always at least satisfactory and often it is good; it is very good in fostering children's learning in personal, social and emotional development. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able pupils, is generally good. The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The teaching of English is particularly good and in a high proportion of the lessons seen was very good. The teaching of mathematics and science is good overall. It is satisfactory overall in ICT and religious education although there were examples of very good teaching in these subjects. It is also satisfactory in music. Insufficient teaching was seen in the other curriculum subjects to be able to make judgements about the overall quality of teaching and learning. However, there were examples of very good teaching in personal, social and health education lessons as well as in French and history.
16. One exceptionally good aspect of the teaching is the opportunities that pupils have to reflect on their learning. Towards the ends of lessons teachers draw the class together and ask searching questions about what they have learned. Having thought carefully about the new skills, knowledge and understanding they have assimilated, the older pupils make brief notes in their 'Learning Journals' about the key skills they have mastered, interesting facts they have noted, how they feel about the success of their learning and what they need to do to improve further. This routine has become embedded in classroom practice and helps to consolidate and extend learning well. Another exceptionally good practice is the way in which pupils are expected to check their finished work. In the class for pupils in Year 6, for example, pupils are required to check their work against graded checklists that remind them about such elements of writing as punctuation, the use of adverbs or features of presentation. They also check their work against National Curriculum attainment targets so that they can themselves assess the standard they have reached and what they need to do to attain the next level. Each fortnight pupils in Year 6 have a session with their 'study buddies'

when they examine their targets and decide whether they have met them, and can request that they move on to new targets. In this way they are exceptionally well informed about the stages they have reached in their learning and where the next steps lie.

17. Very good teaching was seen in nearly every class and so were examples of good and satisfactory teaching. There were no examples of any unsatisfactory teaching but the range in each class demonstrates that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within each class. This is largely because teachers teach the subjects in which they are confident more effectively. Opportunities to spread the high quality teaching across all classes in order to create greater consistency have not been fully exploited.
18. There was an example of highly imaginative teaching in a Year 4 English lesson where pupils were studying how to write effective instructions. They thoroughly enjoyed following written instructions to actually make spiralling snakes from paper plates or to plant hyacinth bulbs. Here learning was highly effective, *'My snake didn't work because I didn't read the instructions properly'*. In this lesson work was particularly well matched to pupils' widely varying stages of development. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and plans detail how work will be modified to match pupils' varying learning needs. Plans do not always include the key vocabulary that is to be introduced and opportunities are missed to explore the subject specific vocabulary that they will be using in lessons. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use computers to support teaching and learning. This is partly because the computer suite is not easily accessible to all classes.
19. Classroom assistants provide valuable support and in many lessons they made a strong contribution to pupils' learning. There were occasions when they spent too long listening to teachers rather than being actively involved in supporting pupils and others where they did little more than supervise groups in a way that could have been accomplished by a volunteer parent. Several teaching assistants are particularly good at asking questions that challenge pupils to reflect on possible solutions to problems but this skill is not consistently well developed.
20. Teachers usually provide pupils with special educational needs with well-planned opportunities that enable them to demonstrate their learning and make good contributions to class discussions. They usually have direct support in lessons from teaching assistants, which helps them make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics lessons. In some lessons where they do not have direct support, or where they are set to work with teaching assistants in the computer suite, teachers sometimes do too little to plan for their needs, and they have difficulty in completing tasks that involve extensive reading and writing. In some cases, the strategies used by the teaching assistants are limited by their lack of training in how best to support the particular needs of the pupils they work with. There is not enough use of ICT tools, for example 'talking' word banks, digital cameras and laptops, to enable these pupils to produce work they can be proud of. Relationships between teaching assistants and pupils are very good.

The curriculum

The curriculum is well planned, of good quality, and covers all National Curriculum requirements. It is enriched by a very good range of visits, special events and extra-curricular activities. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's involvement in recent innovative curriculum projects has enabled it to provide very well for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development and for education in citizenship.
- The activities for children in the reception year are not securely linked to the early learning goals specified in national guidance.
- Computers are not used enough to support pupils with special educational needs.
- The very good range of visits, special events and extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' experiences and promotes their achievement well.
- Limitations in the provision of ICT resources reduce its effectiveness in supporting the curriculum and the library is not easily accessible so the development of research skills is limited.

Commentary

21. The curriculum is well planned to give pupils learning experiences that meet their needs. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted nationally recommended curriculum plans which promote full coverage of National Curriculum requirements and provide an enjoyably broad and well-balanced programme of learning. A strength of the curriculum is the quality and challenge it presents. Pupils read high quality literature; pupils in Year 6 enthuse about their studies of Shakespeare. There are many lessons and follow-up tasks which require pupils to check and judge their work in class discussions and in writing. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a satisfactory start for children through a good variety of activities. However, activities are not often specifically related to the early learning goals specified in the national Foundation Stage curriculum guidelines. This constrains children's progress towards the early learning goals.
22. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans include good individual targets. These are based on teachers' good knowledge of how to support pupils in addressing their particular needs. However, pupils do not always have enough support in removing barriers which hold them back from making as much progress as they could. For example, special computer programs are not used enough to help them make progress in different subjects without being held back by literacy difficulties.
23. The richness, number and very good quality of visits and special events are central to the good curricular provision. There is a good range of theatre and museum visits as well as residential courses. These are closely linked to work in many subjects and help to raise achievement. The programme of visits has recently included a problem solving day visit linked to design and technology studies, a day in Tudor costume recreating sixteenth century daily life and a sculpture day in the Hatfield Forest. A wide range of good quality sports, musical, arts and other extra-curricular activities further enhances this provision and helps gifted and talented pupils do well. The bridge club established by a local resident has enabled its members to compete successfully in national

competitions with other schools. The school has made very good use of links with a wide range of recent curriculum initiatives, particularly in personal, social and health education and in citizenship education, to promote pupils' self-development, learning and personal development. A particularly relevant initiative that the school has joined is the Essex-based 'Write here, write now' project. This is helping to build boys' achievement in literacy by enabling them to work with exciting digital media, including movie cameras.

24. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. A new building has improved the classroom space for most classes. Since the last inspection, resources for subject teaching have been improved, particularly in music, where they are now good. Although resources for ICT have been widened and updated, the computer suite remains too small for a whole class group, and although a small number of laptops have been acquired, there are still too few to enable all the pupils in a class to work on a computer-based task together. The classroom computer facilities are not networked, and this holds back the staff from being able to draw on internet resources in lessons. There are some laptops assigned for pupils with special educational needs but they are not used enough. The library is inaccessible and is not well developed to promote pupils' research skills.

Care, guidance and support

The school's care, welfare and health and safety procedures are good. The school provides pupils with very good support and advice. Pupils are very effectively involved in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school receives good support from outside professional agencies in implementing
- well-defined guidance and welfare procedures.
- Staff and governors are acutely aware of potential hazards and are successful in maintaining a safe and secure learning environment.
- Staff know pupils very well and give a very high priority to pastoral care.
- New pupils are quickly made to feel part of the school family.

Commentary

25. The headteacher is dedicated to caring for pupils and has maintained high levels of support, guidance and welfare. Policies and procedures are well defined and thoroughly implemented by committed and well-trained staff, who are supported well by outside professional agencies. The school nursing service assists with sex and health education that has the total support of parents. The education welfare officer gives valuable service when required. The behaviour support unit helps with vulnerable pupils and has helped to set up the play leader initiative. This involves pupils taking a lead in organising games for others at playtime.
26. Child protection procedures conform to statutory guidelines. Staff training is up to date and the school has a very good focus on any potential risks to children with the help of social services. Health and safety procedures are effective. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of any hazards prior to activities, and in combination with the bus drivers, are vigilant when releasing children to parents and carers at the end of the school day. Staff and governors undertake regular audits of the school premises but findings are not recorded methodically. Risk

assessments are in place for most activities. The school is a safe place, but the school does not rigorously record all minor accidents in order to establish whether there are any patterns so that preventative action can be taken. Accident procedures are thorough.

27. The headteacher and staff give the highest priority to the pastoral care of all pupils. Most pupils feel that they can trust their teachers and receive appropriate advice if they have problems. Pupils talk easily to adults and each other in personal and social education lessons. They discuss their anxieties as well as their enjoyment and happiness in having friends who they value. The school's very good pastoral care is underpinned by very good behaviour procedures. They are not rigid in their application, and rely more on a mutual respect between teacher and pupil. Self-discipline is an expectation. Parents report that the school's approach to pastoral care and behaviour was highly successful in calming the challenging behaviour of a small minority of older boys last year.
28. The induction of pupils new to the school is good, and pupils and parents feel welcome and receive good information about the routines. Children make a smooth transition from pre-school provision to the reception class. A large number of pupils join the school at different times throughout the year and the school is very sensitive in helping both pupils and parents to settle in. Parents are very appreciative of the school's efforts in giving their children a successful fresh start when they move from another school.
29. Teachers and staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils. The assessment of academic attainment and progress is very good overall. The school has a strong commitment to including all pupils, such as those with special educational needs, in its curriculum and pastoral provision. Pupils with problems are quickly identified and there is good feedback and discussion of issues among staff at meetings. There are sound procedures for identifying those pupils who have special needs, and the pupils are involved in discussions about how they think they are doing at this stage and in subsequent reviews. Their progress is regularly checked through the nationally required system of reviews of their individual education plans, but no checks are made of how well they are being enabled to cope with the demands of the wider curriculum.
30. The school is making very good progress in consulting with pupils on wider school issues. Pupils were consulted on the format of Sports Day, although some parents disliked their ideas. Pupils greatly appreciate the school council and they feel that their opinions are taken seriously. Personal and social education lessons include a review of pupils' messages in a 'Worry Box', which causes earnest debate. Pupils are fully involved in setting their individual targets. They have a very good awareness of their levels of performance and a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory overall. The school's links with the community are good and links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff work hard to listen to all parents but communications do not always show clearly how parents can assist in children's learning or how the school works.

- The majority of parents help and support the school well and make an effective contribution to their children's learning and involvement in school life.
- All pupils benefit greatly from the school's good relationships with the local community.
- The partnership with the local secondary school in teaching French is very productive.

Commentary

31. The school's parents are ambitious for their children but are often pressured for time by busy lifestyles. Occasionally, the headteacher and the staff find it difficult to satisfy parents' requests, and their endeavours to provide a rich, innovative curriculum are not always understood by all parents. The headteacher gives a high priority to the school's relationships with parents. Significantly, the number of pupils attending the school is rising as an increasing number of parents in outlying areas exercise parental choice and request places. Many parents were complimentary about the school during the inspection and the inspection team confirms these parents' positive perceptions of the school.
32. Parents are particularly pleased with the arrangements made for their children to settle in, the fact that their children like school, the good quality of teaching and the fact that staff expect their children to work hard and to do their best. The two areas of where a minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction are to do with the extent to which the school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their concerns as well as the information they receive about how their children are getting on. The root of the problem lies in the quality of communications with parents. Written documentation for parents is often lengthy and lacks clarity and interest due to poor layout. The statutory information for parents is comprehensive and represents the essential character of the school. Annual reports to parents are solid but include daunting statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects. School and class newsletters are sometimes poorly presented and information booklets, on how to help children, are wordy and the closely-written format makes it difficult to assimilate the essential information. The school is insufficiently proactive with parents in discussing how they might help their children and explaining new education strategies and initiatives. The school acknowledges that there is a need to review of all communications with parents in order to present a clearer picture how the school works and how well pupils are doing.
33. The headteacher wants parents to be confident in approaching the school and is keen to listen to their views. This is recognised in practice by the many parents living close to the school but a high number of pupils are brought to the school by bus and the school finds it more difficult to communicate with these parents effectively. The governors have researched parents' views through a questionnaire. The school has not received any complaints from parents and is surprised by the dissatisfaction, expressed by a minority of parents, which has surfaced during the inspection.
34. The school is involved in village life. Pupils attend the village fete, discos and the Remembrance Sunday service. The pupils' reputation with villagers is high, and pupils benefit greatly from the close ties. One resident runs a highly successful award-winning bridge club and senior citizens in the village promote an awareness of their local culture by talking with pupils about times past. The school uses the local church

for the major Christian festivals, and the vicar regularly visits for assemblies and to be part of the school.

35. The school has very good links with other schools. The local nurseries and the village playgroup have good links which enable children to transfer easily into the reception class and make a flying start to their school lives. The school is a strong member of the local consortium of primary schools, which has produced joint training for staff and governors. The very good links with the local secondary school, which has specialist language status, has enabled the school to develop French studies for older pupils. There is a satisfactory transfer of information accompanying the pupil on transfer to secondary school and the high levels of confidence of pupils enable them to make an anxiety-free transition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is good and the leadership of other key staff satisfactory. The management of the school is good overall. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's dedicated leadership helps to promote a productive learning environment and an ethos that encourages all pupils to do their best.
- The headteacher's inclusive management style promotes very good staff relationships and effective teamwork.
- The school evaluates and identifies clear priorities for improvement but there is too little long-term strategic awareness of the school's future direction.
- Subject leaders produce action plans for improvement but these do not always place sufficient emphasis on how standards are to be raised.
- Teaching assistants are not all sufficiently well trained to maximise their effectiveness.
- The school manages its finances well but unexpectedly developed a deficit budget, which restricts its capacity for development in some areas.

Commentary

36. The headteacher brings experienced, dedicated and committed leadership to the school. She has promoted the development of a strong inclusive ethos in the school, where all pupils are welcomed and every endeavour is made to meet the individual learning needs of all. The school places a strong emphasis on personal development and citizenship and has introduced highly effective innovations to develop these areas of the curriculum. The changes within the school are popular with pupils, but a minority of parents do not have a clear understanding of the improvements or of the school's educational agenda for their children. This is largely because communications are not always sufficiently clear.
37. The headteacher is creating a stable team of committed staff who share her educational vision for maintaining high standards as well as preparing pupils for the modern world. The new deputy headteacher works in close association with the headteacher to provide effective leadership. The senior management team has the capacity and the enthusiasm to take the school forward. The key issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed and many other aspects, such as the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, teaching, the curriculum and the care of pupils, are at a high level. There are few barriers to the maintenance of high standards although the deficit budget constrains developments.
38. Procedures to analyse data about pupils and their performance in order to pinpoint areas for improvement are being developed. The school has begun to introduce computerised systems to analyse data on attainment, to check on progress and to set targets for further learning. The school evaluates its work effectively and sets appropriate priorities for improvement. The school development plan is a helpful document that clearly defines actions for the coming year, but it does not include a long-term strategy for development.
39. The staff work well as a team and share responsibility for developing the curriculum. Each teacher has delegated responsibility for leading a number of subjects. The quality of subject leadership is uneven and the subject leaders' action plans do not always focus sufficiently strongly on how standards are going to be improved. There is not enough monitoring of teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and to spread the features of the very good teaching across the school. Systems to manage the performance of staff and to cater for their continuing professional development have been implemented well and are having a positive impact. All staff have job descriptions and clear targets. They feel valued and annual appraisals lead to a good identification of training requirements that complement the school's priorities. The school is making appropriate plans for the implementation of the National Workload Agreement. However, the training needs of teaching assistants have not been identified in line with the expectation that they will be required to accept enhanced roles and responsibilities.
40. The governance of the school is satisfactory and the governing body has been successful in ensuring that the school complies with all statutory requirements. The governors are experiencing a period of change and many are new. They are very supportive and have played an essential role over the last three years in developing the facilities and improving the accommodation. They have a good understanding of

the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they acknowledge that they need to develop their roles as critical friends when analysing the school's performance and to extend their plans for the strategic development of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	412,356	Balance from previous year	-17,229
Total expenditure	404,009	Balance carried forward to the next	- 8,882
Expenditure per pupil	3,032		

41. The financial management of the school is good. The school is careful in managing budgets, despite incurring a deficit budget through an unexpected overspend on building new classrooms. Extra funding for this was anticipated but failed to materialise. The governors devised good plans to clear the deficit and are on course to balance the budget by next year. The school secretary makes a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school and to keeping the governing body well informed. She has a very good understanding of school finances and assists with the vigilant monitoring of the budget. Governors are aware of their financial vulnerability as income is closely linked to the number of pupils on roll and in a small school any variation can have a significant impact. All personnel budgets are high in comparison with other schools as the school wants to maintain the provision of support staff in each classroom. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and on maintaining high standards of behaviour. This strategy is sustainable, whilst the number on roll is maintained or growing, but the school does not have a longer-term strategic plan that addresses how further improvements will be funded.
42. The governing body has applied some of the principles of best value well. It ensures that it receives good value for money when purchasing goods and services, for example, but is not so good at comparing its performance with that of similar schools or consulting widely with all associated with the school to gain an understanding of levels of satisfaction and areas that parents in particular might perceive as requiring improvement. The cost of educating each pupil is approximately in line with the average for similar schools. Taking into consideration the generally above average standards that pupils attain, the good leadership and management of the school, the satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the very good ethos of the school, the school gives good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Provision for children of the Foundation Stage in the mixed reception and Year 1 class is satisfactory. Eleven children attend full time and a further eight attend on a part-time, mornings-only basis. Children enter the reception class with attainment that is broadly average, although most children are very confident with their social skills and their speaking skills are particularly well developed. The close links that have been established between the pre-school group in the adjacent classroom, the nursery that occupies the former caretaker's house, and the village playgroup, help children to settle into school well. Teaching and learning are very good in personal, social and emotional development and good in physical development. The quality of teaching in the other areas of learning is satisfactory.
44. The leadership and management of provision are satisfactory overall but curricular planning is not closely linked to the achievement of the early learning goals specified in national guidance. Daily plans do not specify how the activities are intended to help children attain the early learning goals. Also, the planning of the curriculum and the focus of teaching are directed mostly towards the pupils in Year 1 so that, although reception children achieve satisfactorily, they do not always make as much progress in all the areas of learning as possible. Although termly assessments are made, staff do not regularly maintain observational records to identify the progress made by children when involved in their daily activities. Consequently planning is not always tailored to children's particular needs or individual stages of development. The outside area is used well and regularly. Children are involved in sand play, writing and drawing outside as well as using large wheeled toys. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. The well above average standards in personal, social and emotional development have been maintained, as have the above average standards in physical development. The other areas of learning are not as well developed as reported at the time of the last inspection but children's attainment on entry is now somewhat lower than it was then.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and so children achieve especially well, developing high levels of self-confidence.
- Children take a full part in the life of the school.
- Children's personal development is enhanced by good class discussions.
- Children learn to choose sensibly and become engrossed in their play activities.

Commentary

45. Children's achievement is very good and, due to very good teaching, they will easily exceed standards expected for their age at the end of the reception year. The class teacher places a strong emphasis on the development of social skills so that children become very independent, get themselves dressed suitably for physical education and help each other to fasten aprons for messy activities. Children frequently have opportunities to choose their own activities and this fosters responsibility. They concentrate for long periods and sustain earnest conversations with each other. They learn quickly that it is important to complete a task. The children attend assemblies and share lunchtimes with their older friends. High expectations of good behaviour means that they learn quickly to take turns in games and listen attentively at story time and in assembly. They feel very much included in the life of the school. Regular class discussions enable children to share ideas of how they can help each other and act responsibly. Good use is made of large books and well-led discussions help all children to express their feelings and share their own experiences. This creates a firm foundation for the very good levels of personal development observed later in the school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn the sounds of letters well.
- Children make good progress with their reading.
- Children have too few opportunities to write unaided.

Commentary

46. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. Children achieve satisfactorily in most aspects of communication, language and literacy and most will attain the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. The teacher concentrates on the teaching of letter sounds and the learning of words on sight and children make good progress in developing early reading skills. The class teacher puts special emphasis on hearing children read individually and they progress steadily through a carefully graded collection of books. Conversation is sustained throughout the day and children extend their good level of speaking skills during class discussions and by answering questions. Children frequently 'sign in' at the beginning of the day as they learn to write their names. They consolidate their knowledge of letter sounds by drawing and copying. During the inspection week the letter 'r' formed the core of a collection of red fruit and vegetables. Children have satisfactory opportunities to choose to make lists for the toy shop, which links well with their creative play. Most writing activities involve guided or copied writing and opportunities for children to write more freely to create stories or books of their own are too infrequent.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn a wide repertoire of number rhymes, which helps the development of an understanding of counting.
- Activities are not always planned effectively to support learning.

Commentary

47. Children achieve satisfactorily. Most will attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching often takes place as a whole class activity. The teacher's good questioning strategies ensure that all children have a chance to answer and respond in discussion sessions. They join in well with rhymes such as 'Five Fat Sausages Sizzling in the Pan', which help them with their counting and make learning fun. However the activities which follow do not always ensure that learning is consolidated through linked activities. For example, having learned about ordinal numbers by putting animals in a queue for the vets, children could choose to play with these models in the outside area but here learning was left too much to chance. Opportunities were missed to use the initial stimulus and give direction through guidance and encouragement. Activities are not geared specifically to reaching the early learning goals and so they sometimes lack sufficient challenge and purpose. Children's daily learning is not monitored sufficiently to ensure that children are led methodically through the stepping stones described in national guidance. Consequently progress is not as rapid as it could be. The lack of regular observational assessment means that work is not always matched precisely to young children's needs or to the objectives of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

This area of learning was sampled.

48. There was limited evidence available at this stage of the year as some aspects, for example, a sense of time, were only taught to those children who attend full time in the autumn term. The older children were able to reflect on their visit to the local war memorial on Remembrance Day. They enjoyed describing the photographs of themselves at different ages and stages of development. Children are able to talk about the different villages in which they live. They all have satisfactory opportunities to choose to use the computer and most are able to use the mouse effectively to select colours and 'brushes' to make a picture with a painting program. They find out about the world about them by working in the garden and during exciting visits out of school later in the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to be involved in imaginative play.
- The range of other activities is limited.

Commentary

49. Teaching is satisfactory overall in this area. Children make satisfactory progress and most are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the year. Children have plenty of opportunities to be involved in imaginative play. They enjoyed playing in the toy shop, making lists for their shopping and wrapping the presents they had bought. These activities were linked to a favourite story book, 'Just Like Jasper' which the class had been studying. The classroom assistant becomes involved well in these activities by extending play and conversation. Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop painting and printing skills. In one good lesson they enjoyed making robots and enjoyed flights of imagination, *'My robot will have engines and will fly through the sky.'* Others became robots and moved around the room with stiff, jerky movements. However, the activity was not extended or developed purposefully by, for example, including music and creating a march of the robots. Activities are not always sufficiently purposeful.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident with their use of wheeled toys.
- There are fewer opportunities to climb, jump and balance outside.

Commentary

50. Good teaching ensures that children achieve well and most will exceed the early learning goals for this area by the end of the reception year. Children in the reception year benefit from working with their older friends in Year 1. They learn well about using space in the hall, helped by the use of 'dance spots' which are special markers placed on the floor. They recognise the need to warm up before exercise and enjoy stretching. They can make contrasting movements to interpret music. For example, floating movements for bubbles and fast directed movements for the clock-work mouse. These activities link well to the toy theme and make this learning relevant and exciting. Children have good opportunities to use wheeled toys and great care is taken over safety. The outside space is used well for this but there were fewer opportunities observed for children to use large equipment to help them improve their balance or encourage them to climb and jump.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English is reported in full and French was sampled.

51. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy **French** lessons, achieve well and attain standards that are above average. The teaching of the specialist teacher from the local secondary school is good and often very good. The pupils in both Year 5 and Year 6 have one lesson each week. Lessons are well prepared and include a good variety of activities such as studying videos of French life, intensive quick-fire question and answer sessions, work with 'talking partners', quizzes and games, which often include the use

of the overhead projector to study pictures and focus pupils' attention. A brisk pace is maintained throughout each lesson. Pupils had thirty seconds, for example, to discuss with their talking partner six names of places in a town before they presented their answers, in French, to the class. The lessons are mostly oral and follow the Year 7 programme that was previously taught in the secondary school. The teacher is a well-qualified linguist and models a clear, accurate French accent. She maintains high expectations of pupils' ability to perform well and persists with repetition of building words from syllables until the pupils' performance comes close to her model. In this way pupils quickly mastered the glottal 'er' sound in 'patisserie', for example. Pupils made good progress in the lesson seen and pupils in Year 6 made very good progress. It is anticipated that the pupils will be able to start a year ahead in French at the secondary school and that progress henceforth will be more rapid.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of literature and become keen readers.
- Pupils' achievement in writing from Year 1 to Year 6 is good.
- Spelling is not taught effectively and pupils are not sufficiently aware of spelling rules.
- Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of the standards they have attained and of how to improve their work.
- Teaching and learning are mostly good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching.
- The library is not well developed and is separate from the main school, which restricts the development of research skills.

Commentary

52. Across the school all pupils, including the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well and standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Reading is a particular strength and in this strand of the subject standards are well above average in Year 6. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed and are generally above average. The school's strong emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem makes a good contribution to the confident manner in which pupils express their views and opinions. It is noticeable that in the year groups where there is a preponderance of girls, pupils tend to be particularly articulate and in the year groups where boys far outnumber girls the standard of speaking and listening is not so well developed. Teachers are well aware of this and are good at aiming questions specifically at boys in order to encourage responses. Nevertheless, in some classes the boys do not have such a well-developed and extensive vocabulary as the girls. This difference between the genders is reflected in pupils' performance in writing. Standards are above average in writing in Year 2 and again in Year 6. There are many more girls in Year 2 and an almost equal balance in Year 6.

53. Standards in writing are erratic, in part due to the extreme gender differences but also because writing is not as strongly developed as reading. The school has recognised the need to develop a systematic approach to the teaching of writing from children's earliest days in school and initiatives to improve writing have been introduced. These are beginning to have a positive impact on standards but spelling is still an area for further development. Many pupils have too limited an understanding of spelling rules and are often careless about spelling accurately. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are still making simple errors such as 'rattleing' and 'stoping', for example. Work has also been done on stimulating boys in particular to sustain an interest in reading and writing and to encourage them to attain higher standards. This has yet to have an impact on standards across all classes because research by the school on the best way to tackle this issue has not been completed.
54. Teaching and learning are good and there are examples of exceptionally good teaching. One characteristic of the very good teaching is the teachers' high expectations of pupils' performance coupled with a clear structure that helps them to attain high standards. In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 2, for example, the teacher used the popular children's book 'The Gruffalo' as a stimulus for pupils' own writing. The class read the text in unison and enjoyed the rhythm of the language. The class were tasked with writing extra pages of the story in the same style and following a similar repeating pattern of language. They discussed possible content, setting and characters. The class were bursting with enthusiasm and full of suggestions, *'How about using asked instead of said?'* and *'I think it would be better if we used alliteration like roasted rabbit'*. They were acutely aware of the need to select powerful adjectives and to find more interesting words than 'big', for example. The classroom has been established as a very 'wordy' environment with clear prompts on colourful charts about how to choose words and write effectively. The teacher expected pupils to attain high standards and led them step-by-step towards achieving an effective piece of writing. She insisted that pupils used commas accurately and emphasised the need for them between a series of adjectives and she encouraged the correct use of speech marks. Most wrote with great concentration and were eager to read their finished pieces to the rest of the class who listened spellbound. There were many signs that individual needs are attended to. Several pupils had special pencil grips to help them with their handwriting and others used guidelines under their paper to help them present their work neatly. Pupils with special needs were included in those chosen to read their work and were proud of the stars they received for their good performance.
55. In a very good lesson in Year 5 pupils studied a challenging and thought-provoking poem, 'My Mother Saw a Dancing Bear' by Charles Causley. The teacher led an intensive study aimed at seeking to understand the poem beyond the literal and delve into what could be inferred by examining the lines carefully and reflecting on their meaning. The pupils studied the poem thoughtfully as they considered the mood and content of the poem and there was great empathy for the tortured bear. They wrote good prose passages to tell a story that was similar to the one told in the poem. The classroom assistant engaged well with lower attaining pupils as they weighed the strength of adjectives and considered which were most appropriate. When the pupils read their finished pieces to the class it was clear that some powerful writing had been produced. Pupils demonstrated good constructive criticisms of the work, *'He created*

the atmosphere well because he used powerful adjectives and verbs like clambered' and 'I thought it was really good the way she set it in the classroom at first'.

Example of outstanding practice

In an English lesson on developing the skill of autobiographical writing by using Shakespeare's play, 'Macbeth', the teaching was excellent.

Pupils understood that in this autobiographical writing they would pretend to be Macbeth and write in the first person. They used different simplified texts to remind them of the plot; the more able used the original text. Pupils discussed the emotions that Macbeth might have wrestled with prior to the murder. Pupils showed an exceptional depth of understanding and those with special educational needs made strong contributions to discussions throughout the lesson. Pupils studied an example of Level 5 writing on the same theme so they knew exactly what was expected of them. The teacher urged them to use appropriate metaphors, not just similes, to make their writing more powerful. They wrote productively for a concentrated period on Macbeth's feelings before and after the murder. They checked their work against National Curriculum criteria to see if they had included all the elements necessary to attain Level 5. The high quality of discussion at the end of the lesson on such issues as, 'Who was most to blame, the Witches, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth?' was exceptional. Pupils agreed that autobiographies could not always be trusted as much as biographies because the author has an interest in self-aggrandisement.

56. The leadership of the subject is good, as demonstrated by improving standards and the general enthusiasm for literacy shown by pupils. The subject features as a priority in the school development plan, where clear objectives are set to raise standards in writing. Actually how these objectives are to be met is less clear. One method of reaching the objective, for example, is described as 'raising awareness' but how this is to be done is not made explicit. Several members of staff are attending a course designed specifically to provide the skills to raise the performance of boys in writing through the use of film and video to capture pupils' imagination. The subject leader's action plan describes how pupils' work will be scrutinised to demonstrate that standards have improved, but there are no opportunities for examining the strengths of teaching in order to spread the good practice in the school to all classes. Resources are adequate but the school has recognised the need to replace outdated reading books and to make the library more accessible. It is housed in a temporary building away from the main school and is not well developed to encourage research. However, pupils are good at using the internet for research both at home and at school. They use dictionaries and thesauruses well but in some classes the dictionaries are too simple and do not contain the words that pupils are searching for.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. There are good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects, such as note taking in science and the use of literature, writing up the results of research in history and accounts of work in geography. However, the practice of identifying the key vocabulary to be introduced in a lesson and sharing it with pupils at the beginning of lessons has not been introduced in all classes. Consequently opportunities to examine specific vocabulary in lessons are sometimes missed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good and there are examples of very good teaching.
- Teachers make very good use of class reviews and follow-up writing to develop pupils' understanding.
- Pupils' written mathematical presentation skills are not well developed.
- Computers are not used effectively enough as a learning tool to support pupils' learning and more could be done to promote pupils' numeracy skills through other subjects.

Commentary

58. Pupils' achievement is good and standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks show that pupils achieve well in basic number work and some aspects of mathematical investigation and problem solving, but make less progress in shape and space, fractions and simple algebra because they do less work on these areas. The highest attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could because they are not always set work at the level of challenge they need. Above average standards and good achievement across the different areas of mathematics were seen during the inspection in pupils' workbooks in Year 6. There were weaknesses in pupils' presentation of their work, with some work, particularly by pupils of lower attainment, not being correctly aligned and so likely to lead to errors. Very good achievement was evident in pupils' writing about their mathematical learning in the 'learning journals' they use to write follow-up reflections on their understanding of what they have learnt in lessons. Some teachers do not yet require pupils to use the journals regularly, and so miss opportunities to consolidate their achievement.
59. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers understand and use the recommended National Numeracy Strategy effectively. They use mental maths starter activities well to get all the pupils involved and on their toes in mental calculations. Pupils particularly enjoy using mathematical apparatus in these starter lessons. Pupils in Year 3 vied with each other to lead the class in using a counting stick to illustrate counting in threes. Teachers use whole class discussions very well to consider how to solve problems and check their results. Very good teaching and learning were seen in a Year 6 lesson on calculating the perimeters of simple compound shapes. The teacher had prepared good large-scale diagrams which the whole class could learn from together. She ensured pupils with special educational needs made good progress by involving them in talking to the class about their thinking about how to tackle the problems set. In a very good review session towards the end of the lesson she consolidated pupils' understanding by getting pupils to talk through their solutions and how they checked their strategies. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen but some less effective strategies were seen in lessons where pupils with special educational needs were not motivated to work without direct support from teaching assistants. Teachers do not use computers with mathematical software enough to help these pupils stay engaged and produce work they are proud of. Generally there are too few opportunities for pupils to use computers to extend their learning. Teachers assess pupils' work well and give good feedback in written comments, although they do not always place enough emphasis on standards of presentation.

60. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has led the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. A very helpful booklet has been distributed to all parents on how to support their children's mathematical learning. She has drawn up an action plan for improvement, but it does not include any promotion of numeracy through other subject areas, and too little is being done to promote the use of ICT to develop pupils' mathematical learning. She has a broad awareness of recent patterns of attainment and has analysed Year 5 optional test scores to identify areas which need improved teaching. However, she does not make enough use of the published national performance data to identify areas of weakness, such as the relatively lower achievement of the more able pupils at the end of Year 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Very good promotion of numeracy was seen in a Year 6 science lesson where pupils used a variety of mathematical tools to make measurements, including timers, graphs and measuring sticks. As part of their investigations of forces, they accurately recorded the results of experiments into the time it took for objects to fall to the ground from different heights. A Year 6 ICT lesson was used to develop pupils' skills in using spreadsheets as mathematical modelling tools. Displays in Year 3 showed pupils had worked on a timeline to help them understand the distance between their own time and that of the Tudors. Pupils' workbooks in Year 5 showed some good use of line graphs as part of their geography studies, although the opportunity was missed to use computers to make graphs in order to illustrate their work and extend their analyses. There is no systematic policy or planning to develop numeracy across the curriculum as pupils go through the school, and it is primarily left to teachers' individual initiative. Consequently many opportunities are missed to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average.
- Pupils learn effectively through carrying out practical investigations.
- The subject is led well by the new co-ordinator.
- Computers are not always used effectively to support learning.

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Year 2 and again in Year 6. The importance placed on practical and investigative activities is a significant factor in the pupils' good achievement. All lessons observed focused on investigations.
63. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6. The teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good. Pupils learn well in most lessons and

are able to speak knowledgeably about what they have done. Older pupils demonstrate their good understanding by becoming engaged in discussion about the further implications of their experimentation. Having carried out an investigation concerned with the upthrust of air exerted on a spinner, they were able to hypothesise about what might happen with different shapes and wing spans. Skills involving prediction are taught well throughout the school and pupils have a good understanding of planning a fair test. Pupils are given good opportunities to make choices about how to carry out their investigations and what their group will do. Learning is particularly effective where activities are interesting and relevant. Teaching and learning are less effective where opportunities for first-hand observations, investigation and experimentation are not given a high priority. In several lessons teachers spent rather too long explaining requirements rather than enabling pupils to get on with activities. All areas of the curriculum are covered well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

64. Very good attitudes to work enable group activities to be productive. There is a very good level of discussion and co-operation as pupils work very well together. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, either through adult assistance or by recording in alternative, simplified ways. In the best lessons classroom assistants made good contributions to the learning of pupils in small groups. Where lessons were not so successful teachers did not make the most efficient use of these assistants' skills and time was not always used effectively. Older pupils, particularly, make good use of tables, measurement and graphs when recording results. Although computers are used in some lessons, to produce graphs of results for instance, the opportunity to use them effectively to support and extend learning is only at an early stage of development.
65. The recently appointed subject leader has been very perceptive about the development of the subject. She has written a good action plan for improvement which includes a critical review of the curriculum cycle and analyses of the results of national tests. She has already introduced a trial of individual target setting designed to contribute to improved standards. She is keen to use proposals made at the school council to develop the Peace Garden and this links well with environmental science and the Healthy Schools initiative.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well in developing multi-media presentations to present key ideas.
- In some lessons, pupils show good skills in evaluating what represents the effective use of ICT.
- Pupils in some year groups use ICT tools well in a range of subjects, but there is not enough consistency in the use of ICT across the school to support learning.
- Lack of access to ICT resources holds back pupils' achievement.
- ICT is not used effectively enough as a learning tool for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

66. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 use simple database software as part of their personal, social and health education lessons as they compare their personal preferences. They use 'talking' word processors to draft captions and for more extended writing. The highest attaining pupils make good progress because they build on good levels of keyboard skills and program knowledge they bring from home, but other pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, do not make as much progress as they could because of a combination of resource limitations and because they are set tasks which do not match their needs well enough.
67. Pupils in Year 6 use presentation software well to present their findings about people they study in history and religious education. They use spreadsheets to find out averages and work out how the results change when they use different measures. They word process their work confidently, but few show good levels of awareness of choosing different forms of design for different audiences. Pupils achieve very well in using a range of software to find, store and present a range of information to support their learning. Pupils are very familiar with the use of well-known search engines. In Year 6 they use their allocated e-folios of online storage space confidently to identify and keep personal portfolios of their best work and of learning resources they find useful. Pupils with special educational needs do not make the progress they could if they were regularly using software such as 'talking' word-banks and digital cameras to help them.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and within this overall picture there were examples of good and very good teaching. The most successful teaching is characterised by teachers' very careful focus on guiding pupils to identify and produce good quality work in a single well-defined task. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher built pupils' awareness of good communication design very effectively by building a lively and enjoyable dialogue about the most effective features of commercially produced posters in their classroom. She helped them see how bold print, good choices of font size and clear layout could be used to create their own poster of playground rules with maximum impact. The computer room is small and not easily accessible. The constraints of having to use different groups of machines in different areas limit the amount of direct guidance that teachers are able to give and place demands on teaching assistants in support roles for which they are not well equipped. Teachers give satisfactory informal feedback in lessons, but do not yet use a systematic assessment system closely tied to current National Curriculum expectations.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The school is aware that lack of enough hardware for whole class groups and of classroom internet connections is holding back pupils' achievement. Good efforts have been made to improve resources recently and the school is seeing benefits in pupils' achievement from the new laptops. The newly appointed co-ordinator is keen to ensure that all teachers use the good Essex 'Flippi' assessment system to improve targeting of pupils' learning. However, there is not enough expertise in the school on the best ways ICT hardware and software can be used to help pupils with special educational needs

learn, and resources which have been allocated to these pupils are sometimes diverted to support other classroom groups. More remains to be done in ensuring that the best practice in ICT teaching is spread across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. Teachers regularly use word processing, presentation and publishing software to enable pupils to present their ideas and more extended work in different subjects, such as presentations in Year 6 for religious education about people whose Christian commitment has led them to make disadvantaged people's lives better. Some evidence was seen of the use of ICT to support mathematical and scientific investigations, such as recording and ordering sets of data on spreadsheets, but pupils' skills are not being well enough developed in this area. There is little evidence of the regular use of tools such as digital microscopes and data sensing equipment as part of science, physical education or geography investigations. There is also very little evidence of pupils developing skills in using ICT to extend the range of creative work and investigation of artists' work in art and design and music.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

71. One lesson in **history** was seen. This Year 1/2 lesson was well taught and pupils achieved well. There is significant emphasis placed on the study of the local area in the history curriculum. Pupils benefit from listening to visitors. For example, an ex-serviceman came to talk to younger pupils about his experiences, which linked well to a recent visit to the local war memorial on Armistice Day. The curriculum is enriched very well through the opportunities pupils have to visit and investigate old buildings in the village and to examine census entries, as well as to learn further through visits to local museums and mansions, where they act in role in historical period days. Pupils are very enthusiastic about times past and the quality of the work they produce is good. There was very good evidence of research by the oldest pupils. Particularly good work was seen in Year 6 where pupils have been studying Ancient Egypt. Display techniques transferred from ICT contributed significantly to the quality of this work. As part of this project they visited the British Museum and created mummies for homework. Pupils used a publishing program well to describe their visit to the museum.
72. One lesson was observed in **geography**. This Year 5 lesson was satisfactorily taught and pupils made satisfactory progress. Good use is made of the local environment in this subject too. The youngest pupils find out about the villages where they live. Satisfactory emphasis is placed upon the comparison of habitats in different areas of the world. Particularly good links are made with literacy, art and drama where inspiring texts and illustrations enrich the consideration of the development of the environment.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator is a very good role model for the teaching of the subject.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from visits planned to deepen their knowledge of Christianity and their awareness of other religions.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes towards people whose religious outlook is different from their own.
- Evidence from pupils' workbooks and displays shows too little consistency and coherence in the way pupils' skills and knowledge are developed.

Commentary

73. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in Year 2 and Year 6 match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils show strengths in their knowledge and understanding of those aspects which are concerned with their personal experiences of spiritual and moral awareness, because these are very well developed through personal, social, health education and citizenship lessons and assemblies. By Year 6 pupils gain a sound understanding of the local church from their enjoyable, well-focused visit in which they identify the use of such features as the baptismal font. They gain a good knowledge of a key religious figure, such as Mother Theresa, through researching her life using internet sources. They learn about the bar mitzvah ceremony in their studies of Judaism, but some of the tasks they are set, such as designing a bar mitzvah card, do not do enough to deepen their learning about the purpose of the ceremony and what it means to practising Jews. A strength in pupils' achievement is the way in which they develop increasing sensitivity, very positive attitudes and insight in understanding their own and others' spiritual and religious dilemmas, such as the test of dealing with their own experiences of personal loss, or of trying to understand the dilemmas faced by key religious people they study. The level of challenge they encounter as they go through the school is very variable. For example, work by pupils in Year 4 showed they study the very perplexing Bible story of the sacrifice of Isaac in some depth and are asked to imagine the thoughts of Abraham and Isaac as they face the prospect of the father apparently being required to sacrifice his son. Tasks set for subsequent years are focused more on investigating and identifying key events, sacred items and aspects of beliefs.
74. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good. Very good teaching and learning were seen in a Year 3 class taught by the subject co-ordinator, where pupils had an exciting class discussion about their ideas and beliefs about God. The teacher set very high expectations by posing questions about the difference between God and familiar superheroes such as Superman. She also steered them towards high level thinking for their age group by saying, *'If you give me a reason, I cannot say you are wrong.'* The high quality of pupils' learning was shown by pupils' comments such as *'God is almighty, but heroes have weaknesses.'* The sustained high level of the discussion enabled pupils to learn that some pupils imagine God through language and some through visual images. Good teaching and learning were also seen in the Year 6 lesson observed where pupils acquired good knowledge of the driving motivations in Mother Theresa's life through researching a multimedia presentation they were developing. However, not all pupils made equally good progress, since those pupils working most

closely with their class teacher were consistently focused on understanding her motives and commitment, whilst some others became too concerned with producing a slick slide show. A particular strength of the lesson observed was the opportunity taken by two higher attaining pupils to use their own initiative in developing a 'hot seat' presentation where one pupil played the role of Mother Theresa and her partner interviewed her about her life and Christian commitment. Teachers give very good oral feedback in lessons and use end-of-lesson reviews well to draw out pupils' learning, but comments in pupils' workbooks are more variable. Some written comments are appreciative of the insights pupils address, but other marking, such as '*try using metaphors*' is primarily concerned with literacy rather than promoting deeper religious understanding. Teachers do not systematically assess the standards attained by pupils in relation to the agreed syllabus requirements.

75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and very committed to the subject. She has greatly improved the resources since the last inspection and increased the number and range of visitors and expertise drawn on from religious faith groups other than Christianity. However, standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the need to build up pupils' learning from religion as well as learning about it. She has commendably interviewed pupils and scrutinised their workbooks. However, her analysis is primarily concerned with pupils' perceptions and attitudes about the subject and is not focused enough on raising standards. She is aware of the need to establish an effective system of assessment.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music was inspected and is reported on in full. Art and design and design and technology were sampled. Physical education was not inspected.

76. There is clear evidence from displays and collections of pupils' work that **art and design** is well established in the school's curriculum. In Years 1 and 2 pupils use different media to fashion good self-portraits in paint, charcoal and pastel crayons. They study the work of different artists and use these as inspiration for their own work. Pupils designed and made a beautiful 'story telling' chair with special features to support the story reader. Good links are made with other subjects. In Year 5, for example, pupils worked collaboratively to create a life-sized portrait of Henry VIII. In Year 6, pupils studied famous paintings, such as 'Dancing on the Beach' by Edward Munch, and used instruments to translate the mood of the pictures into a musical representation before writing about their responses to the paintings.
77. Good work was seen in **design and technology**. One good lesson was observed in Year 1, where pupils were engrossed in sewing together the two halves of their hand puppets. They had a good understanding of the need to follow their designs when actually making their products and the need to evaluate their work in order to decide where improvements could be made. They concentrated hard on making their stitches evenly spaced but they found it very hard to keep them at an even distance from the edge of the material. This class have also designed and made beautifully finished masks of jungle animals. In Year 2 pupils have designed and made good vehicles with axles and wheels firmly attached. The pupils enjoyed decorating their vehicles carefully before testing them rigorously to see how well they worked. Good links were made with science in Year 4 when pupils used their knowledge of electrical circuits to design and make burglar alarms. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have learned how to make sturdy wooden frames which can be made into many artefacts from motor driven buggies. They have used these as a basis for making moving toys that included cam mechanisms.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for extra-curricular music, including a choir, instrumental tuition and music clubs.
- Resources for music have been substantially improved since the last inspection and pupils particularly enjoy using some impressive new instruments.
- Pupils develop composition skills well.
- There is scope for developing pupils' knowledge and appreciation of classical and world music.
- There is not enough use of ICT to develop pupils' musical skills.
- Planning for the music curriculum is not closely enough tied to current National Curriculum requirements.

Commentary

78. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and in Year 6 standards are broadly average. No judgements about standards were made in the last inspection. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in Year 2. Pupils do well in developing composition skills. They work in groups to devise percussion accompaniments for songs they know, and use both improvised and conventional notation systems. They sing tunefully and have a good sense of rhythm and time. Pupils sing different parts in complex songs competently. They learn an increasing repertoire of songs, including hymns and folk songs. They listen to and comment on a range of musical styles.
79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils were fascinated by and very eager to use some of the most impressive recently acquired new instruments, such as the 'ocean drum' and the large tuned chime boxes. They worked at a brisk pace in experimenting with accompaniments or practising part songs. The teacher gave pupils with special educational needs good opportunities to use and demonstrate instruments and their compositions. Too little was done to extend the skills of the many pupils receiving instrumental tuition by enabling them to play them in the lessons or demonstrate and develop their skills and knowledge of musical terminology. In one lesson, only one group was given an opportunity to play their composition, because the teacher took up too much of the lesson with her comments. There were too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they were learning, for example through making and commenting on tape recordings of their performances.
80. The leadership and management of the curriculum are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has musical expertise and contributes well to the wider musical programme through leading music assemblies and through her work with the choir and other extra-curricular musical activities. She has added well to the music resources, which have greatly improved since the last inspection. Documentation for the music curriculum is based on a long-established commercial scheme of work and is not closely enough linked to the current requirements of the National Curriculum. There is not enough planned use of the school's ICT facilities, such as music composition and

autoplay software, to enhance subject learning for the wide range of pupils' experience and skills in music. The lack of documentation makes it difficult for the school to check standards reached by individual pupils and year groups and identify ways of improving them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and promotes very good achievement.
- All pupils have very good opportunities to express their views in class meetings.
- Pupils use personal learning journals very well to reflect on what they have learned.
- Pupils use computers very well to support and extend their learning.

Commentary

81. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in these areas of their education is very good and they attain standards that are well above average. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were very good. Elements of the school's work were also observed in assemblies, school and class council meetings and lessons such as science, ICT and religious education. Inspectors held discussions with pupils and scrutinised their written work. At the heart of the programme is the range of strategies which enable pupils to have a voice, exchange opinions in a thoughtful and constructive way and take responsibility for themselves. As well as a well-planned programme through each year of drug awareness, sex and relationships education lessons in subjects like science and religious education, pupils in Year 6 take part in an exciting annual community-based day event for Essex schools, 'Crucial Crew', organised by a major supermarket chain working with the police and fire services. It dramatises situations and involves pupils in role playing by making potentially dangerous choices for them to face. Detectives and policemen in disguise engage in ploys where they try to persuade pupils to talk to strangers and accept packages which could contain drugs. The pupils' writing shows how riveting they found the experience, and how much they learned about how easy it was to ignore key rules which they needed to keep for their own safety. The school's work in this field is led and managed very well. In 2003 it received the 'Healthy Schools' award in recognition of its good work to promote pupils' health and well-being.

Example of outstanding practice

Personal, social, health education and citizenship are all exceptionally well developed through class councils.

Class councils play a key role in giving pupils opportunities to develop responsible attitudes and play a full part in contributing to the welfare and development of the school. Each class regularly has council meetings, chaired and minuted by pupils, with each class member taking a turn to carry out these demanding roles. Pupils list items they feel concerned about, confident that they will be discussed at the next meeting and, where appropriate, taken on to the school council by their elected representatives. During the inspection, the agendas had included items from the development of the 'Peace Garden' to insensitive behaviour by classmates. The minutes showed how the class work together in the meetings to decide on how to make playtime a better experience, for example, by restricting the number of footballs that can be played with, or by making a class rule requiring any pupil who says something hurtful to apologise to the recipient. This provision has had a very positive impact on the pupils' self-confidence and readiness to play their part in the

school, as well as on their speaking and listening skills.

82. A further excellent link between this area is demonstrated by the way pupils use the 'Learning Journals' which the school has developed with the support of Cambridge University researchers. A recent evaluation by one of the researchers, who discussed their journals with pupils, showed how much they valued writing the journals because they gave them opportunities to write up what they were learning in lessons without fear of being marked 'wrong'. The pupils said they felt themselves growing in confidence and increasingly developing understanding of how they learnt best. As they prepare to leave the school, a further exceptional opportunity to develop this self-awareness and responsibility by using ICT is provided by the Essex 'e-folio' initiative in which all Year 6 pupils are given their own area of online storage space which they and their teachers can access in and out of school anywhere in the world. It includes information about their achievements, stored web pages and downloaded materials which they find helpful in their work, and shows teachers in their new schools what they know, understand and can do, so avoiding unnecessary repetition of areas the pupils have mastered. During the inspection, one of the previous year's Year 6 pupils demonstrated skilfully how she had incorporated the use of 'Powerpoint' in her e-folio to create a multi-media presentation on what she had learnt at Clavering School. She described how useful the e-folio was to her in helping her to collect web sites that help with homework, assist with research and generally facilitate the transition to secondary school. This initiative represents excellent practice.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
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).

